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The Geographies of Young People's Experiences of Participation in Dance

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Abstract

Dance is a popular activity for children and young people in the UK. However, children and young people's participation in dance has yet to receive attention within work on both children's geographies and the geographies of dance. This thesis addresses this gap in the literature by exploring the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance. It provides a geographical account of young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances at a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. The research was conducted with young people aged 10-25. It used a multi-methodological qualitative approach, drawing on participant observation, autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews, in order to investigate young people's lived and embodied experiences of participation in dance within these three settings. The thesis highlights the multiple and complex ways in which dance is understood, experienced and situated within young people's everyday lives. First, the thesis examines the space of dance within young people's everyday lives and imagined futures. Second, the thesis demonstrates how young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance are informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies. Third, the thesis explores the formation and significance of the friendships that young people built with each other and their relationships with their dance teachers. Fourth, the thesis considers the significance of the emotional experiences involved with dancing. The thesis concludes with a call for further research on the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance.

The Geographies of Young People's Experiences of Participation in Dance

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Department of Geography

Durham University

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Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This thesis explores the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance. It provides a geographical account of young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances at a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. The research was conducted with young people aged 10-25. It used a multi-methodological qualitative approach, drawing on participant observation, autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews, in order to investigate young people's lived and embodied experiences of participation in dance at these three settings. The thesis highlights the multiple and complex ways in which dance is understood, experienced and situated within young people's everyday lives. The thesis examines: the space of dance within young people's everyday and imagined future lives; how young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies; the formation and significance of the friendships that young people built with each other and their relationships with their dance teachers; and the significance of the emotional experiences involved with dancing.

In this introductory chapter, I discuss the research rationale and context. In Section 1.1, I situate the research within the geographic literature on children's geographies and the geographies of dance. In Section 1.2 and Section 1.3, I provide an overview of young people's participation in dance within educational contexts in the UK and discuss the position of dance within current UK policy contexts. I outline my personal rationale for conducting the research in Section 1.4. Following this, in Section 1.5, I discuss the research design, aim and questions, and in Section 1.6, I provide an overview of the fieldwork conducted. Finally, in Section 1.7, I provide an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Children's Geographies and the Geographies of Dance

Much attention has been given in recent years to the geographies of children's and young people's everyday lives within the discipline of human geography. Since the 1990s, children's geographers have researched children's and young people's experiences in a diverse range of spaces and places across the Global North and South, including schools, the home, neighbourhoods, playgrounds and online spaces, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to explore a variety of thematic areas such as play, education, work, mobilities, popular culture, technology, emotions and identity (Kraftl et al., 2015). However, children's geographers have not yet researched the place and space of dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances in children's and young people's

everyday lives. This thesis aims to fill this gap in the children's geographies literature by exploring the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance at a dance school, secondary school and dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. There are four key ways in which the thesis does this: first, it examines how dance is situated within young people's everyday lives; second, it demonstrates how young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies; third, it investigates the social relationships involved with participating in dance; and fourth, it considers the embodied and emotional experiences involved with dancing. In doing so, the research responds to recent calls for geographers to attend to children and young people's experiences of learning across a wide range of educational spaces (Holloway et al., 2010) and to the role of extracurricular activities in their everyday lives (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014), and makes an original contribution to geographical work on children's and young people's bodies and embodiment (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009), emotions (Blazek and Windram-Geddes, 2013) and friendships (Bunnell et al., 2012).

Over the past 15 years, there has also been a proliferation of research on the geographies of dance. Geographers have researched dance in a diverse range of geographical locations and contexts, using a variety of theoretical perspectives, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches (Pine and Kuhlke, 2014), from the politics of salsa dancing in nightclubs in North Carolina, USA (Johnson, 2011), to the standardisation of Ballroom dancing in early twentieth-century England by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (Cresswell, 2006), to the process of globalisation, cultural tourism and the Spanish Flamenco industry (Aoyama, 2007, 2009, 2015), to the role of rumba dance in creating social differentiation in Cuba (Hensley, 2010, 2011). Dance has also notably been the subject of debate in cultural geography on non-representational theory (Nash, 2000; Thrift, 1997, 2000), used as an exemplar in discussions considering 'the respective gains to be made from focusing on performances, rather than (or as well as) texts and representations' (Horton and Kraftl, 2013: 150). However, there remains scope for further research and methodological exploration in geography on dance, and particularly in relation to children and young people's experiences of participation in dance given the current lack of geographical research in this area. Thus, this thesis also makes an original contribution to literature on the geographies of dance through focusing on young people's embodied, emotional and social experiences of participation in dance activities. In doing so, the thesis draws literature in children's geographies and the geographies of dance into conversation, using insights from both bodies of literature in order to understand young people's experiences of participation in dance.

1.2 Dance in Educational Contexts

There is evidence to suggest that dance is a popular activity for children and young people in the UK. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Taking Part Survey 2016/17 found that in England 29.4% of children (48.6% of girls, 11.2% of boys) aged 5-10 had participated in dance activities outside of school within the last 12 months, and that 37.5% of young people (55.5% of girls, 20.3% of boys) aged 11-15 had participated in dance activities within the last 12 months (14.8% in school time only, 8.8% both in school and out of school time, 13.9% out of school time only) (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2017a, 2017b).[1] Many children and young people regularly participate in dance classes and other activities in a variety of styles, including Ballet, Tap, Modern, Irish, Street, Jazz, Contemporary, Hip-hop, Break, Latin American and Ballroom, Disco, South Asian and Bollywood, and in a range of contexts including dance schools, community dance groups, National Centres for Advanced Training[2], school dance clubs, university dance societies, dance outreach projects, dance competitions and dance festivals. Dance is a compulsory part of the Physical Education (PE) National curriculum in England in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (5-14 year olds) and is taught by many schools in Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) PE lessons (Department for Education, 2013). Dance is also taught in some schools as a separate subject, and can be studied as a GCSE and A Level; in June 2017, 9,401 students took GCSE Dance (AQA, 2017b) and 1,455 studied Dance at A Level (AQA, 2017a). Some children and young people also gain qualifications in dance by taking dance exams offered by one of a number of dance exam boards; for example, 42,824 students took a Royal Academy of Dance Ballet exam in the UK in 2015/2016 (Royal Academy of Dance, 2016).[3] Some young people choose to study dance at a vocational dance college[4], conservatoire or university[5], or go on to train and perform with a professional dance company. Taking into consideration the numbers of children and young people participating in dance in the UK, it is crucial that more should be known about their experiences.

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[1] 'Dance activities' includes the child having taken part in a dance club, taken part in a dance performance, created a new dance routine, attended a dance event, or taken part in a dance lesson. It also includes helping out or volunteering. It does not include dancing at a disco or party.
[2] There are 12 National Centres for Advanced Training (CATs) in the UK funded by the Government's Department for Education Music and Dance Scheme which offer dance training to children and young people with 'exceptional potential, regardless of their personal circumstances' aiming to 'enable them, if they choose to proceed towards self-sustaining careers in music and dance' (National Dance CATs, 2016: np)
[3] Although a specific breakdown of this figure is not available, it is likely that the majority of these students were children and young people.
[4] 22 dance colleges are accredited by the Council for Dance Education and Training (2017) as offering professional dance training courses.
[5] whatuni.com (2017) lists 49 UK universities offering 192 undergraduate degrees including Dance for 2017 entry.

1.3 Dance in Policy Contexts

Dance continues to receive public investment through Arts Council England; the 2018-2022 National Portfolio includes an increase in funding to dance from £39.4 to £42.2 million, with a particular focus on engaging children and young people (Arts Council England, 2017). In recent years, dance has also become increasingly prominent as part of the Government's agenda to improve children and young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing, increase physical activity levels and reduce the rise in obesity. Public Health England's (2014) 'Everybody Active Every Day: An Evidence Based Approach to Physical Activity' includes dance as a type of active recreation as part of its framework to increase physical activity levels, and the Department of Health's 'Change4Life' public health campaign, aimed at tackling the causes of obesity, promotes dance as a form of physical activity (see Department of Health, 2017). In addition, the Government's (2015) 'Sporting Future: A new strategy for an active nation', the national strategy for sport and physical activity, and associated Sport England's (2016) 'Towards an Active Nation: Strategy 2016-2021', define physical activity as sports, dance, walking and cycling, with the latter stating that it will fund investment in dance. Particular concern has been raised in the political arena regarding the gender gap between boys' and girls' participation in sport and physical activity; the 2016 Health Survey for England found that 18% of girls and 24% of boys aged 5 to 15 met guidelines of at least 60 minutes physical activity each day including activities during school lessons, and that '[t]he proportion of children meeting guidelines decreased with age for both sexes, but this decline was most marked for girls aged between 11 and 15' (Health and Social Care Information Centre, 2016: 11). A recent report published by Women in Sport (2016: 9) has suggested that increasing the choice of physical activities offered in PE and school sports to include provision of 'team sports, individual activities, competitive and non-competitive activities, as well as a mix between sport, dance and other creative physical activities' may be an effective way to increase girls' participation in physical activity (see also Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012).[6] Whilst this research explicitly does not seek to reduce dance purely to a form of physical activity, it seems timely that more should be known about the experiences of children and young people who already choose to participate in dance when dance is increasingly being discussed in political arena as a way to increase physical activity levels.[7]

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[6] However, I find this discourse where dance is named as an activity to engage girls problematic in the sense that it reinforces gender stereotypes (i.e. that dancing is a 'girly' activity) and excludes boys who do/could/want to participate in dance.
[7] As I discuss in the conclusion to Chapter 3, whilst a few young people who participated in this research did explain that exercise was a primary motivation for their participation in dance, most said it was a secondary reason or an 'added bonus'. These findings further indicate the need to be wary of reducing dance to a form of physical activity.

1.4 Personal Rationale

In addition, my own personal experiences of participation in dance have motivated me to pursue, and provided a further rationale for, this research.[8] I first started attending dance lessons when I was 4 years old and continued to regularly participate in dance classes, exams and shows throughout primary and secondary school. Whilst studying for my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at university I have continued to participate in, organise, teach, choreograph and perform in dance classes, shows and competitions with the university dance society. I have always loved to dance and it has been an incredibly important part of my life: dance classes have structured my evening and weekend routines for many years; I have formed close friendships with other students and lasting relationships with my dance teachers; and the experiences I have had during dance lessons, exams, performances and competitions have inevitably shaped me as a person. Considering the significance of dance in my own life and the richness of my experiences, I feel strongly that the experiences of many other children and young people for whom dance is similarly significant are worthy of geographical attention. Furthermore, I feel that a research project focused on young people's participation in dance could add insight to geographical understandings of young people's everyday lives, in terms of their experiences of education and learning, relationships with teachers, friendships, as well as their embodied and emotional lives.

1.5 Research Design, Aim and Questions

This research uses a qualitative case study design (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1). Three fieldsites were selected as the focus of the research: a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK (a brief overview of these fieldsites is provided below in Section 1.6, and a detailed description is given in Chapter 3, Section 3.3). These fieldsites were chosen because they involve young people's voluntary participation in non-elite dance over the long-term (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3 for a more detailed discussion of the rationale for selecting these fieldsites). Thus, the overall aim of this research is:

- To explore young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participating in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances at a dance school, secondary school and dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK.

The research explores why and how young people participate in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances (i.e. not just focusing on young people's embodied experiences of dancing, but

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[8] My own experiences of participation in dance have inevitably informed the research process (e.g., the fieldsites chosen, the analysis of data) as will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

also other aspects of the experience of participating in dance, for example making friends), and considers the significance of the three specific spatial contexts in informing this (e.g., the specific pedagogical techniques used by dance teachers at each fieldsite).

This overall aim provided a starting point guiding the initial process of data collection and analysis. As detailed in Chapter 3 (Sections 3.1 and 3.6), I adopted an iterative approach to the collection and analysis of data, based on the principles of 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Thus, as the research progressed I developed a more specific set of research questions to address this research aim:

1. What is the space of dance within young people's everyday lives and imagined futures?
2. How are young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies?
3. How significant are the relationships that young people form with each other and their dance teachers in motivating them to participate in dance, and how are these relationships formed?
4. How significant is the emotional embodied experience of dance in motivating young people to participate in dance, and how is it felt and narrated?

These research questions map directly onto the three empirical chapters of this thesis. The first and second research questions are addressed in Chapter 4: Spaces, which focuses on the space of dance within young people's everyday lives and the space of young people's dancing bodies. The third research question is addressed in Chapter 5: Relationships, which discusses the relationships that young people formed with each other and their dance teachers. The fourth research question is explored in Chapter 6: Emotions, which focuses on the emotional experiences involved with dancing. A discussion of these key terms can be found at the beginning of each empirical chapter.

1.6 Fieldwork Overview

To address the research aim and questions, I used a multi-sited, multi-methodological qualitative research design in order to develop an in-depth understanding of young people's everyday lived and embodied experiences of participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances. I conducted the research at three fieldsites in the UK: The Southern School of Dance, a dance school offering classes in Ballet, Tap, Modern and Jazz after school and at weekends to children and young people aged 2-18; Greenleaf Secondary School, a comprehensive school for 11-18 year olds where dance is taught as a compulsory subject for 1 hour per week in Years 7-9, can be studied as a GCSE in Years 10-11 and as an A Level in Years 12-13, and students can participate in an extensive range of extracurricular dance activities; and DS Dance, a dance group for children and young people with

Down's syndrome and their siblings aged 3-25, who meet for a weekly 1-hour dance class and regularly perform at a variety of events.[9] I focused the research on the experiences of young people aged 10-25. I used a qualitative research approach drawing on: participant observation and autoethnography conducted during dance lessons, rehearsals and performances; semi-structured interviews conducted with young people (as well as dance teachers and the dance group organiser, student helpers and parents at the dance group); and video reflection interviews, which involved videoing young people dancing during their lessons and then conducting an interview with them in which the video footage served as the focus of discussion. The research methodology is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

1.7 Thesis Structure

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. In Chapter 2, I review and situate my research within the literature on children's geographies and the geographies of dance. First, I argue that whilst children's geographies has explored a range of spaces in and through which children and young people experience their everyday lives, attention has not yet been given to the space of dance classes, rehearsals, performances or exams. I argue that my research extends the children's geographies literature in three key ways: spatially, by contributing to research focusing on spaces of education and learning, and extracurricular activities; conceptually, by contributing to thematic work on bodies and embodiment, emotion and affect, and friendship; and methodologically, by exploring the use of video reflection interviews to research young people's emotional, embodied experiences of dancing (see also Chapter 3). Second, I argue that although there has been a proliferation of work on the geographies of dance in recent years, there remains scope to explore young people's experiences of dance within the specific contexts of a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK, and to explore different methodological approaches for researching dance. I outline recent geographical debates in cultural geography that have focused on dance as a non-representational practice, arguing that in this research dance will be conceptualised as a 'more-than-representational' embodied practice.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research methodology. First, I describe the research design and approach, and discuss the flexible, responsive, context-sensitive and reflexive manner in which I conducted the research. Second, I consider some issues involved with doing research with young people. I explain how my understanding of young people (with disabilities) as competent social actors whose thoughts, ideas and experiences should be heard in research influenced my choice of research

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[9] I have given the fieldsites pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity and to protect the identity of research participants.

methods. Third, I justify and describe the fieldsites: The Southern School of Dance, Greenleaf Secondary School, and DS Dance. Fourth, I discuss the process of participant recruitment at each fieldsite. Fifth, I describe and critically reflect on the research methods used: participant observation and autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews. I provide an extensive reflection on the video method, including a consideration of some of the technical issues involved, young people's experiences of being filmed and watching back the footage, and the interview data generated. Finally, I discuss the grounded approach to data analysis, and the way in which data generated at different fieldsites and using different research methods are drawn together throughout the analysis chapters.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, I discuss the research findings. In Chapter 4, I address the first and second research questions. This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I focus on the space of dance within young people's current lives and imagined futures. I argue that dance had an important space in young people's present everyday lives (e.g., as part of their after-school routine) and within their lives more broadly (i.e. contributing to their sense of identity), and discuss young people's strategies for managing their participation in dance activities alongside other commitments (e.g., school homework, exam revision, other extracurricular clubs). I then argue that dance had an important space in young people's imagined futures; in the short-term, many young people planned to continue to participate in dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance group; and in the longer-term, many hoped to continue to dance as a recreational activity or to pursue dance as a career. Second, I focus on the space of young people's dancing bodies. I explore how young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies, drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school. I argue that many young people described their bodies as having experienced a gradual process of bodily change, in particular becoming stronger and more flexible, but that this process was marked by specific bodily achievements (e.g., doing 'the splits' for the first time). I then argue that boys understood strength to be a particularly important physical characteristic for male dancers to develop, and that they used strength to challenge the social stigma associated with being a young male dancer. Finally, I argue that whilst girls did not feel that it was necessary to be a particular body shape or size to be a dancer at the dance school or secondary school, nor experience any direct pressure from dance teachers or other students, some did indicate indirect pressures associated with the dance class environment (e.g., use of mirrors in the dance studio).

In Chapter 5, I focus on the third research question. I argue that the relationships that young people formed with each other and their dance teachers were an important reason for their participation in,

and enjoyment of dance, and that these relationships were often particularly close. The chapter is divided into two sections. First, I focus on the friendships that young people formed with each other. I argue that friendships were formed over a number of years, strengthened as young people talked, helped and supported each other, and developed through the body (e.g., through watching, copying and learning from each other's bodies, moving in synchronicity, becoming familiar with how each other's bodies moved, touching each other's (sweaty) bodies, and being exposed to each other's bodies). Second, I focus on the relationships that young people formed with their dance teachers. I argue that close relationships were formed through the body during the process of learning to dance (e.g., through watching, copying and learning from the dance teacher's body, the dance teacher watching young people's bodies, the dance teacher 'getting to know' young people's bodily capabilities and habits, and physical bodily contact and touch), strengthened as dance teachers talked informally to young people about their everyday lives (e.g., school, exams, family, holidays), and developed over many years.

In Chapter 6, I address the fourth research question. I argue that the emotional experiences involved with dancing were an important reason for young people's participation in, and enjoyment of, dance activities. The section is structured into three main parts. First, I argue that dance provided young people with an escape from everyday life (e.g., family life, school, homework, GCSE and A-level exams), functioning both as a physical space to which they could escape and an activity that absorbed and distracted them. I further argue that dancing provided an emotional release enabling young people to express their emotions through movement. Second, I focus on young people's experiences of achievement in relation to the process of learning to dance, choreographing dance, passing a dance exam and performing dance. I argue that the process of achieving was understood and experienced in a number of different ways, having various meanings, forms of recognition, spaces and times in which it happened, and involving a range of emotional embodied feelings (e.g., nervousness, frustration, excitement, pride). Third, I argue that participation in dance was intrinsically enjoyable. I focus on the sense of enjoyment associated with: the experience of dancing or physically moving (i.e. the sense of pleasure associated with the feeling of bodily liberation, freedom and empowerment); the experience of having fun with friends during dance lessons (e.g., being silly with each other, going wrong together); and the sense of excitement associated with rehearsing for and performing in the dance school show.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I conclude by summarising the key research findings in relation to the research aim and questions. I highlight the main contributions of the thesis to geographical literature and

consider the wider significance of the research. Finally, I make some suggestions for further research on the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I review and situate my research within the literature on children's geographies and the geographies of dance. In Section 2.1, I focus on the children's geographies literature. In Section 2.1.1, I begin by giving an overview of work in children's geographies, outlining some key concepts, themes and debates. I argue that this thesis makes an original contribution to this literature by exploring young people's experiences of participation in dance, a topic that has not yet received attention within children's geographies. In the following sections, I discuss five key areas of work in children's geography to which this thesis contributes: education and learning (Section 2.1.2); extracurricular activities (Section 2.1.3); bodies and embodiment (Section 2.1.4); emotion and affect (Section 2.1.5); and friendship (Section 2.1.6). In Section 2.2, I shift the focus of discussion to the geographies of dance literature. In Section 2.2.1, I start by providing an overview of the literature on the geographies of dance, highlighting some key topics, methods and approaches of research. I then discuss the key contributions of this thesis to the literature. In Section 2.2.2, I focus in particular on recent debates on dance and non-representational theory in cultural geography, arguing that in this thesis dance will be conceptualised as a 'more-than-representational' practice.

Therefore, this thesis is informed by, and contributes to, literature in both children's geographies and the geographies of dance. It seeks to bridge these two bodies of literature, drawing on insights from both areas of research in order to explore young people's embodied, emotional and social experiences of participation in dance. Furthermore, whilst I am situating this thesis within the geographical literature, throughout the analysis chapters I draw on insights from research on young people's experiences of participation in dance from outside the discipline of geography, including research in the field of dance education. Thus, I also develop the existing literature in children's geographies and the geographies of dance through an engagement with literature from outside the discipline of geography.

2.1 Children's and Young People's Geographies

In the first half of this chapter, I focus on the literature in children's geographies.

2.1.1 General Overview

Children's geographies is a sub-discipline of human geography that focuses on the importance of space and place to children and young people's lives 'from birth to age twenty-five' (Kraftl et al.,

2015: np).[10] Since the late 1990s, children's geographies has developed into a 'large and vibrant' sub-disciplinary area (Kraftl et al., 2015: np), reflected by the publication of a growing number of articles, review papers, journal special issues, books and edited collections; the establishment of the journal *Children's Geographies* in 2003; the formation of the RGS-IBG Geographies of Children, Youth and Families Research Group; and the organisation of an increasing number of specialised conferences, sessions and workshops (Evans, 2008; Katz, 2009; Skelton, 2009). The importance of geographical research on children and young people has been further enhanced by 'the changing social, economic and political landscapes in the [G]lobal North and South [which] have also elevated children's position on the agenda' (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011a: 14), for example through 'legislation such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 59).

The development of children's geographies as a sub-discipline has been influenced by the 'new social studies of childhood' (see James et al., 1998). Children's geographers have adopted two key principles of this approach. First, that childhood is *socially constructed* rather than 'reflecting any biologically essentialist reality' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 58). Children's geographers have rejected the idea of 'the universal child', instead 'highlight[ing] the plurality of childhoods, contextualised by social, historical, political, economic, and geographic processes' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 59). Children's geographers have shown that 'children's lives and experiences are diverse' exploring the ways that they are 'inextricably linked to other aspects of their social identity' including race (e.g., Thomas, 2009), class (e.g., Gough and Franch, 2005), gender (e.g., B Brown et al., 2008), sexuality (e.g., Downing, 2013) and (dis)ability (e.g., Holt, 2010), and are 'shaped by the places where they live, go to school, work, [and] play' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 58). Second, theoretically and methodologically, children should be understood as *social actors*. Rather than conceptualising

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[10] Valentine (2003: 38) suggests that the term 'children' is popularly used to describe those under 16 years old and 'young people' to those aged between 16-25; however, definitions of these terms are 'fluid' and 'contested' (Evans, 2008: 1661–1662) (see also Skelton, 2007). For example, geographical work has shown that terms such as 'children' and 'young people' are 'socially constructed [...] challenging the assumed homogeneity of essentialised definitions [...] through highlighting the importance of place and the spatio-temporal variations in use and meanings' (Evans, 2008: 1662). Terms such as 'children' and 'young people' are also not 'value-free' and their use is often associated with particular power relations (Evans, 2008: 1662). The sub-discipline of 'Children's Geography' subsumes work on both children and young people, with the terms 'children' and 'young people' often being used 'interchangeably' (Evans, 2008: 1661) (see Weller (2006) for a discussion of the implications of this conflation with regards to a tendency to prioritise research on 'children' over 'young people'). In this thesis, I have chosen to use the term 'young people' to refer collectively to all the participants in my research whose ages ranged from 10-25 years. This is because I felt that all participants would be happy for me to describe them as a 'young person'. Also, my research did not aim specifically to differentiate between young people's experiences of participating in dance according to age, although I acknowledge that aspects of their social identity (including age) inevitably shaped their experiences. As I discuss in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5.1), I was 24 years old when I conducted the research; as such, I used research methods that drew on my own experiences of participating in dance both as a researcher and a 'young person'.

children as 'becomings' who are 'less competent than adults, unable to make key decisions about their lives', children should be understood as 'beings' or 'competent social agents, exercising agency to transform their own social worlds', and whose current lifeworlds are 'worthy of investigation in their own right' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 58–59). However, it is important to recognise that children's agency continues to be 'shape[d] and constrain[ed]' by other social actors (e.g., parents, teachers, policy-makers) and wider structures and processes (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 59).[11] In this thesis, I take these ideas forward by highlighting that young people's experiences of participating in dance differed depending on the specific context (i.e. the dance school, secondary school or dance group) in which they danced, and acknowledging that they were also shaped by aspects of their own identity such as their gender, age and (dis)abilities. I understand children and young people as social agents capable of making their own decisions (e.g., about whether to participate in dance lessons, which dance classes to attend), although I recognise the influence of parents and teachers. I also view children as social actors who have 'a right to be heard and competence to engage with research' as reflected by the research methods that I used (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2) (van Blerk et al., 2009: 3).

Children's geographers have contributed to 'the new social studies of childhood' by highlighting the 'multifarious ways in which spatialities matter in/for children and young people's everyday lives' (Horton et al., 2008: 339) (see Holloway and Valentine, 2000b). Researchers have explored a range of everyday spaces and places in and through which children's and young people's lives are made in diverse contexts across the Global North and South, such as schools, the home, the street, neighbourhoods, playgrounds and online spaces. The thematic topics that children's geographers have focused on are also diverse, including research on play (e.g., Harker, 2005; Punch, 2000), work

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[11] However, Smith and Ansell (2009: 63) note that 'children's geographies [has been] challenged by recent critiques that call into question the utility of the [two] main precepts of the new social studies of childhood'. First, '[a]s children's geographers have become interested in emotions and embodiment [see Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5], [it has been argued that] the focus on childhood as a social construct limits the possibilities for research' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 63) (see also Woodyer, 2008). It has been suggested that childhood is better understood 'as 'both' a social 'and' a biological phenomenon' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 63). Ryan (2012: 439) describes a 'new wave' of childhood studies that attends to childhood as a 'biosocial' nexus, 'mov[ing] beyond the opposition of nature and culture [...] [to] a hybrid form [...] [in which] children's capacities are extended and supplemented by all kinds of material artefacts and technologies, which are also hybrids of nature and culture' (Prout, 2005: 3–4) (see also Panter-Brick, 1998; Prout, 2000). Kraftl's (2013a: 13) work exploring the 'potential implications for children's emotional geographies [...] of [...] 'more-than-social' emotional relations' is an example of how the hybrid model has been taken up in children's geographies (see also Kraftl, 2015a). Second, 'the emphasis on children as social actors, which tends to incorporate an understanding of children as individual human subjects, acting knowingly upon the world, is challenged by research that adopts a more relational view of children, and stresses the ways in which they are 'subjectified'' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 63). This does not suggest that children's geographers should 'return to a study of children as 'human becomings', as merely future adults, but to recognize that all human subjects are in a constant process of becoming, through their relationships with others and with the world' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 63) (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a, 2006b).

(e.g., Dyson, 2008; Robson, 2004), education and learning (e.g., Finn, 2016; Kraftl, 2015b), friendship (e.g., Blazek, 2011; Morris-Roberts, 2004), popular culture (e.g., Horton, 2010, 2012), mobilities and travel (e.g., Barker, 2009; Porter et al., 2010), migration (e.g., Bushin and White, 2010; van Blerk and Ansell, 2006), identity (e.g., Hemming, 2011; Hopkins, 2010), bodies and embodiment (e.g., Evans, 2006; Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010), emotions and affect (e.g., Murray and Mand, 2013; Windram-Geddes, 2013), fear, risk and crime (e.g., Nayak, 2003; Pain, 2006), and youth participation, politics, rights and activism (e.g., Percy-Smith, 2010; Staeheli et al., 2013). Children's geographers have treated children and young people as 'social agents whose voices should be heard in research' (Kraftl et al., 2015: np), using traditional research methods such as 'surveys, interviews, [and] participant observation' as well as innovative techniques, for example, asking children to 'make maps, engage in landscape modelling, enact 'geodramas', take photographs and make films, keep journals, write narratives, lead walks and – more recently – shape the research itself' (Katz, 2009: 81). To summarise, the children's geographies literature is a spatially, thematically and methodologically diverse body of work that continues to make 'important contributions to academic and policy debates within and beyond the discipline of geography' (Evans, 2008: 1659).

As the sub-discipline of children's geographies has grown and developed, there has been 'ongoing debate' about its' future (Evans, 2008: 1674). Some notable areas of debate have included: concerns about children's geography being 'too empirical' and not 'theoretical' enough (Beale, 2006; Horton and Kraftl, 2005); arguments about the need for 'policy relevant' research (Horton and Kraftl, 2005; McNeish and Gill, 2006; Spencer, 2005); suggestions that children's geographers 'could do *more* to speak (back) to' the wider discipline of human geography and the social sciences (Horton and Kraftl, 2006b: 70) (Aitken, 2004; Horton et al., 2008); critiques that children's geographers have focused on children's 'micro-geographies' at the expense of the 'macro' scale (Ansell, 2009); concerns that more attention could be given to researching and theorising the lives of children and young people in the Global South (Dyson, 2008; Kesby et al., 2006); and assertions that teenagers and older young people have been marginalised through a focus mainly on children (Weller, 2006). These critiques (and responses to them) have all sought to push children's geographies, borrowing Horton and Kraftl's (2006b) words, to 'do more'.

Despite the diversity of this growing body of literature, children's geographers have not yet attended to children and young people's participation in dance. Considering the number of children and young people who participate in dance activities in a range of different educational contexts in the UK (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2), it is crucial that this absence is addressed. Thus, in this research, I make an original contribution to the children's geographies literature, and respond to calls for children's

geographies to 'do more', in three key ways. First, I expand the spaces that children's geographers have attended to by exploring the space of the dance within children's and young people's everyday lives. This spatial contribution can be situated alongside recent work in children's geographies that has focused on spaces of education and learning (see Section 2.1.2) and extracurricular activities (see Section 2.1.3). Second, I contribute to research in children's geographies on the conceptual themes of bodies and embodiment (see Section 2.1.4), emotion and affect (see Section 2.1.5), and friendship (see Section 2.1.6). I discuss in more detail my specific contribution to these spatial and thematic areas of the children's geographies literature below. Third, my research makes a methodological contribution to children's geographies by exploring the potential of using video reflection interviews to research young people's experiences of dance. I discuss my methodological contribution in more detail in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5.3).

2.1.2 Education and Learning

Over the last 15 years, there has been a growing interest in geographies of education and learning within several sub-disciplines of human geography (Kraftl et al., 2015), with the publication of special issues (Butler and Hamnett, 2007; Cook and Hemming, 2011; Holloway and Jöns, 2012; Holloway et al., 2011; Kenway and Youdell, 2011; McCreary et al., 2013; Mills and Kraftl, 2016) and review papers (Collins and Coleman, 2008; Hanson Thiem, 2009; Holloway et al., 2010). Geographies of education and learning focus on the importance of spatiality in 'formal education systems from pre-school to tertiary education and of informal learning environments in homes, neighbourhoods, community organisations and workspaces', highlighting the 'political, economic, social and cultural processes shaping and being reshaped through [...] spaces of education across the globe, and the ways they are experienced, embraced and contested by educators and diverse subjects of education, including children, young people, parents and workers' (Holloway and Jöns, 2012: 482). Holloway et al. (2010: 583) note that the geographies of education literature is 'incredibly wide-ranging', including research on: inequalities in educational access and achievement (e.g., da Cunha et al., 2009; Hamnett and Butler, 2011); neoliberal educational restructuring (e.g., Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Witten et al., 2003); the (re)production of children and young people's social identities (including gender, ethnicity, class and (dis)ability) within schools (e.g., Ansell, 2002; Evans, 2006; Holt, 2007); adult surveillance and control of children's bodies in school spaces such as classrooms (e.g., Catling, 2005), playgrounds (e.g., Thomson, 2005) and dining rooms (e.g., Pike, 2008, 2010) and children's strategies for resistance; school (re)design (e.g., den Besten et al., 2008, 2011); transitions from school to work (e.g., Jeffrey et al., 2004; Punch, 2004) and higher education (e.g., Holdsworth, 2009; Hopkins, 2006); 'town-gown' relations and the impacts of 'studentification' (e.g., Hubbard, 2008; Smith, 2008); and

the international mobility of university students and academics (e.g., Findlay et al., 2012; Leung, 2013).

'[C]hildren's geographers have played a central role in the development of this important current research agenda, [particularly by] foregrounding the voices of children and adults involved in young people's education spaces' (Kraftl et al., 2015: np). In their review of the geographies of education literature, Holloway et al. (2010: 594) in fact argue 'that the inclusion of [...] research [on children, youth and families] changes the interpretation of past achievements and sets new agendas for research [in geographies of education] by moving the subjects of education – the children, young people and adults involved in learning and teaching – into the foreground'. Holloway et al. (2010: 594) explain that 'drawing on the literature on children, youth and families [not only] extends the list of topics that geographies of education might study', but also necessitates 'an important change in the way we think about those who are being educated':

> 'Rather than relying on adultist formulations which cast young people as the objects of education, geographies of education which draw on insights from socio-cultural work on children, youth and families will need to focus on the voices and subjectivities of young people. This will allow us to highlight the importance of young people's experiences of education in the here and now, as well as having concern for education's future impacts, encouraging us to engage with young people as knowledgeable actors whose *current* and *future* lifeworlds are worthy of investigation'.

My research contributes to the literature on geographies of education informed by research in children's geographies by exploring young people's experiences of learning to dance from their own perspective. My research aims to listen to and foreground young people's voices, as evidenced in the research methods that I used which enabled young people to describe their experiences of learning to dance in their own words (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). Whilst my research focused on young people's present (and past) experiences of participation in dance, the research also explored young people's views on their future participation in dance (see Chapter 4, Section 4.1.4). Thus, my research responds to Holloway et al.'s (2010: 594) assertion that young people's '*current* and *future*' educational experiences warrant geographical attention.

Holloway et al. (2010: 583) further argue that the geographical literature on children, young people and families might inspire 'a broadening of our spatial lens, in terms of what 'count' as educational spaces'. Holloway et al. (2010: 595) assert:

'[W]e need to expand our interpretation of what count as spaces of education. Traditional sites of education such as schools and universities [which have received most attention from geographers so far] remain important in our envisioning of the field of research, but we must also pay greater attention to the home, pre-school provision, neighbourhood spaces and after-school care, as well as thinking more deeply about the ways in which people learn in subsistence agriculture, family businesses, paid work and so on'.

Reponses to this include recent geographical research that has begun to explore 'alternative' spaces of education, defined by Kraftl (2014b: 128) as 'schools and other sites that offer children an explicit alternative to attending mainstream schooling in the UK', including Montessori, Steiner and Forest schools, homeschooling and care farms (Kraftl, 2006, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2016), spaces of 'informal' education and learning (Mills and Kraftl, 2014), and extracurricular enrichment activities (e.g., sports clubs, music lessons) (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 615) (see Section 2.1.3). In this research, I make an original contribution to the geographical literature on education by researching young people's experiences of learning in the educational space of the dance class, a setting not yet attended to by geographers. More specifically, whilst geographical research on 'formal' spaces of education has focused on school spaces such as classrooms, playgrounds and dining rooms, attention has not yet been paid to the dance studio. Therefore, my research at the secondary school conducted during GCSE and A-level Dance classes adds to geographical work on 'formal' spaces of education. My research at the dance school and dance group responds to calls for geographers to expand the repertoire of educational spaces studied (Holloway et al., 2010), contributing in particular to geographical work on 'extracurricular' education spaces (see further discussion in Section 2.1.3). Therefore, my research expands the range of spaces of education and learning to which geographers have attended.

My research also contributes to recent conceptual work in geographies of education and learning that has focused on embodiment (Cook and Hemming, 2011) and emotion (Kenway and Youdell, 2011). The research focuses on an educational context where young people's bodies are explicitly involved in the learning process. Whilst previous geographical research on education has tended not to focus directly on the embodied process and experience of learning, in this thesis I explicitly attend to young people's bodies as the 'tool' and 'object' of their learning. I do this in two key ways. First, I highlight the role of the body in the learning process in relation to the formation of relationships between students and teachers. This topic has received limited attention within the geographical literature so far. I argue that the process of learning to dance (e.g., watching, copying and learning from other students/the teachers' body, moving in synchronicity with other students' bodies,

physical bodily contact with other students/the teacher's body) resulted in a blurring of 'self/other' bodily boundaries, establishing a sense of bodily trust, unity, familiarity and intimacy that contributed to the development of close relationships between young people and their dance teachers (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.1.4 and 5.2.2). Second, I discuss the emotional embodied experiences actually involved in the process of learning in a more explicit way than previous literature in the geographies of education. I highlight the complex emotional experiences involved with learning to dance, focusing in particular on feelings of escape, emotional release, achievement and enjoyment (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, Kenway and Youdell (2011: 135) argue that '[t]here is room for much more discussion on methods' suitable for researching the emotional and the affective in spaces of education. My research contributes to methodological debates by exploring the utility of video reflection interviews in researching young people's embodied emotional experiences of learning to dance (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3).

2.1.3 Extracurricular Activities

Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2014: 613) note that a 'key strand' of work in children's geographies over the last 25 years focuses on 'children's play and traces, in the Global North, a decline in children's independent access to, and mobility through, public space'. Children's geographers have explored the 'impact that fears about traffic accidents and stranger danger, and concerns about the control of public space, have on children and young people's ability to play, hang out, and move through public space', highlighting 'variations among children (differentiated by age, class, ethnicity, gender, and location) in their experience of restrictions on, and in some cases freedom around, outdoor play and mobility in different types of public space' (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 614) (e.g., B Brown et al., 2008; Karsten, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2007; O'Brien et al., 2000; Porter et al., 2010; Schoeppe et al., 2016; Valentine and McKendrick, 1997; Valentine, 1997; Witten et al., 2013).

Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2014: 614) argue that whilst there is a wealth of research exploring 'what has been lost in terms of children's outdoor play and independent mobility', there is 'a paucity of research in children's geographies on what has been gained or, more appropriately, what has replaced' it, including young people's increased participation in supervised extracurricular activities. Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2014: 615) note that many children and young people regularly take part in organised clubs, activities and lessons, including sports clubs (e.g., football, cricket, netball, tennis, swimming, gymnastics, martial arts, horse-riding), youth organisations (e.g., Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Scouts, Girls'/Boys' Brigade), expressive arts activities (e.g., dance, drama, music lessons, orchestras, choirs, art clubs) and cultural activities (e.g., foreign language classes, chess clubs), that 'offer children the opportunity to learn new skills beyond the standard education

curriculum'. These activities may take place at school and in other spaces such as community centres, church halls and sports clubs, before and after school, at lunch times, at the weekend and during the school holidays (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014). 'Some school-based clubs are run free of charge by teachers, some on- and off-school-site activities involve the voluntary participation of other adults and are run on a not-for-profit basis, but many in- and out-of-school activities are part of fast developing industry of commercially provided enrichment activities' (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 615). The increasing importance of extracurricular activities in children and young people's everyday lives clearly warrants attention from children's geographers.

Whilst this topic has not yet received sustained attention from children's geographers, there has been some nascent work in this area. Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson's (2011b, 2012, 2014) research on children's, parents' and head teachers' views of primary school children's participation in enrichment activities in England is a key contribution in this area (see also Holloway, 2014).[12] Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2014) discuss parents' views of children's participation in enrichment activities, focusing on the results of a survey of 321 middle- and working-class parents of children aged 6-7 and 10-11 in 17 primary schools in a midlands county, as well as 26 follow-up semi-structured interviews. The results showed that 88% of children were involved in extracurricular activities each week; however, middle-class children had higher participation rates (98% participated in one or more activity per week, 79% in three or more, 42% in five or more) than working-class children (74% participated in two or less, 22% participated in none). The research found that parents 'value[d] enrichment activities in very similar ways across the class spectrum – seeing them as fun, healthy, and social opportunities', although the 'ability to pay for enrichment' meant that it was 'incorporated into, and transform[ed], middle-class family life in ways not open to working-class families' (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 613). The researchers also explored children's own perspectives on participation in enrichment activities. Whilst full results await publication, Holloway (2014: 381) notes that children 'articulated both the practical nature of the way these activities fitted into their lives, and what these activities meant to them', highlighting two key points regarding the importance of these activities to children:

> 'First, children argued that these activities kept them happily occupied: they were used to attending, enjoyed doing the activities with their friends, and thought they would be bored without them (the proviso being that the club/s in question suited the individual child). Second, children took pride in their achievements in these settings, achievements – whether

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[12] Karsten's (2015: 560) work on middle-class childhood and parenting cultures in Hong Kong also highlights the importance of parenting cultures in children's participation in extracurricular activities; however, this research does not include children's voices which she recognises as a 'serious shortcoming' of the study.

it is a win for their sports team, a play performed or a badge acquired in Brownies or Cubs – which made them feel successful'.

Thus, '[f]rom children's perspective[s], the growth of enrichment activities was not interpreted as a threat to their independent free play. For many working-class children, the occasional activities they attended provided a welcome change from playing out – they were envisaged as something fun, stimulating and different. Middle-class children's time was more thoroughly shaped by participation in enrichment activities, but they too valued them alongside free play and family life which also formed part of their everyday experience' (Holloway, 2014: 381). This thesis supports these findings by arguing that participation in extracurricular dance activities was an important part of young people's everyday lives (see Chapter 4), and that the sense of enjoyment and achievement associated with dancing were an important motivation for participation (see Chapter 6).

There have also been some geographical studies of individual extracurricular activities, in particular youth organisations, including historical and contemporary studies focusing on Boys' Brigade camps (Kyle, 2014), Scout and Guide camps (Bannister, 2014), the Woodcraft Folk (Mills, 2014, 2016) and the American Girl Scouts (Goerisch, 2014) as spaces of 'informal' education (Mills and Kraftl, 2014); the American Girls Scouts annual cookie sale and gendered practices of emotional labour (Goerisch and Swanson, 2015); and communist politics, gender, informal worship and citizenship training in the Scouting Association (Mills, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013). However, there is clearly scope for further research on children and young people's participation in a whole range of other extracurricular activities, including sports, the creative arts and cultural activities, as well as further 'cross-cutting analyses' (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 616). 'Addressing this lacuna will contribute to the development of a field [children's geographies] that has a long-standing interest in formal educational environments [e.g., schools] but where informal learning is starting to attract more attention' (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 616). My research makes an original contribution to this emerging literature by exploring young people's participation in extracurricular dance activities at a dance school, secondary school and dance group from their own perspectives, highlighting the ways in which dance is situated within young people's present and imagined future everyday lives, as well as the embodied, emotional and social experiences involved with participating in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances.

2.1.4 Bodies and Embodiment

There has been a 'turn' towards 'the body' in geography and the social sciences over the past 20 years (see Longhurst, 1997, 2001; Nast and Pile, 1998). Simonsen (2009: 50) states that this 'rapidly

growing field within geography deals with social and spatial conceptions of the human body'. Geographers have focused on the body *as* a space that: marks 'a *boundary* between self and other'; is 'a personal *space*' that provides 'our means for connecting with, and experiencing, other spaces'; is 'the primary *location* where our personal identities are constituted and social knowledges and meaning inscribed'; and, can be 'a *site* of struggle and contestation' (Valentine, 2001: 14, original emphasis). Furthermore, geographers have argued that 'bodies are also *in* space, providing the basis for our experience of the multiple dimensions, aspects, dynamics and properties of space' (Cook and Hemming, 2011: 3, original emphasis). Simonsen (2009: 51–52) notes that the 'first wave of body-literature within geography' favoured a discursive understanding of the body and was 'devoted to body-inscriptions, body regimes and discourses, while practices of material and fleshy bodies attracted less attention'. 'This gap, however, has started to be filled: Longhurst (2001) implements Grosz's [(1994)] theory of the volatile materiality of the body through ideas of body boundaries, body fluids, abjection and (im)pure spaces; studies on illness, impairment and disability explore 'body troubles' in everyday coping with the environment; and theories of practice and non-representational theory focus on moving bodies and the performative and material nature of embodiment' (Simonsen, 2009: 52).

Reflecting this wider 'turn', recent work in children's geographies has focused attention on children's and young people's bodies and embodiment (see Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009; Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010), challenging the 'absent presence' of children's bodies within the sub-discipline (Valentine, 2010).[13] Horton and Kraftl (2006b: 79), in their paper suggesting some potential future direction(s) for the sub-discipline, argue that 'a closer apprehension of the bodily details of children's lives – as well as wider conceptualisations of bodies and embodiments – might give *more* fresh insights into the Children's Geographies that concern us'. As Woodyer (2008: 358) explains: '[e]mbodiment is implicated in everything children see, say, feel, think and do'; therefore, 'we need to address and understand the role of the body and it's materiality in children's constructions of social relations, meanings and experiences'. Furthermore, Horton and Kraftl (2006b: 79) 'suggest that Children's Geographers' are well-placed to think about the importance and complexities of bodies per se', and '[a]s such, they could talk (back) to the various lines of thought around bodies

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[13] The phrase 'absent presence' refers to the claim that 'the body has been a fundamental, yet rarely explicitly acknowledged cornerstone of research on children's geographies' (Valentine, 2010: 32). Thus, Colls and Hörschelmann (2009: 2) argue that whilst there is a 'need for brand new research that places the body at the centre', there is also a need to 'reflect on how the body might matter to the work that we do or have done in the past'. For example, Valentine (2010: 32) highlights existing work in children's geographies 'that considers the ways that bodies have been imagined and constructed historically, how children are understood, regulated and controlled by adults, the importance of their relationships with their peers and their exclusion from public space in particular social and political contexts', in an attempt to 'make the absent presence of the child's body 'present''.

[within geography and the social sciences] *more* actively than has hitherto been the case'. Thus, children's geographers have been challenged not only to 'take 'the body' seriously in their work', but also to 'consider what they can bring to already established work 'on the body'' (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009: 2).

Children's geographers have demonstrated how children's and young people's gendered, sexed, raced, classed, (dis)abled and (un)healthy bodies are constructed, imagined, represented, disciplined and performed (Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010).[14] Colls and Hörschelmann (2010: 5) argue that '[r]elatively little attention has been paid to date [...] to questions of [children's and young people's] embodiment' as a result of 'the social constructionist bent of much research on childhood and youth [that] has led to a rather disembodied perspective, which in many ways reproduces the legacy of the Cartesian mind/body dualism by emphasising how the 'biological' body is inscribed by 'the social', without interrogating how both inter-relate and affect each other through a complex network of embodied, socio-material relations' (see Footnote 11). As Prout (2000: 1–2) explains, 'social constructionist accounts of childhood and the body tend to exclude (or at least to de-emphasize) the possibility that social life has a material as well as a discursive (or representational) component', in other words that children's bodies are 'both material and representational entities'. More recently, geographical research has begun to focus on children's and young people's embodied experiences and to 'bring into sharper relief affective and emotional characteristics of young people's embodiment, [and] their phenomenological 'being in the world' as corporeal beings, whilst highlighting their connections with human and nonhuman object-subjects, materials and structures' (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2010: 5).

This thesis brings to the forefront young people's material bodies and embodied experiences, drawing attention to how young people 'come to experience and understand what it means to be an embodied subject, beyond reading [their] bodies in and as spaces' (Colls, 2003: 4). It contributes to geographical research on children's and young people's bodies in a number of ways. First, in Chapter 4 I explore how young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies. The research considers how participation in dance resulted in physical (or material) changes to young people's bodies (e.g., increased strength and muscular flexibility) and involved the negotiation of perceptions about what a dancer's body 'should' look/be like (in terms of gender, body shape and body size). This discussion

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[14] In recent years, growing attention has been paid within children's geographies to children and young people with disabilities (see Pyer et al., 2010). Whilst the focus of this thesis is not on young people's experiences of disability, it does draw on research conducted with young people with Down's syndrome. Thus, my research could also be seen to contribute indirectly to geographical work on young people's experiences of disability.

engages with research in dance on gender stereotypes (e.g., Risner, 2002, 2009, 2014) and body image (e.g., Green, 2003; Oliver, 2008; Thomas et al., 2005). Second, the thesis explores young people's embodied experiences of participating in dance. In Chapter 5, I focus on the importance of the body in the process of learning to dance in the formation of friendships between young people and student-teacher relationships, through an engagement with theoretical work on embodiment as intercorporeality (Weiss, 1999) and the geographies of touch (Dixon and Straughan, 2010; Paterson and Dodge, 2012). In Chapter 6, I contribute to work on young people's embodied emotional experiences (see also Section 2.1.5) by highlighting the importance of feelings such as emotional release, escape, achievement and enjoyment, in young people's experiences of, and motivations for, participation in dance.

Colls and Hörschelmann (2010: 7) argue that researching children's and young people's embodiment 'requires careful thinking about the methodologies which we use to research young lives', as '[e]motional and embodied responses are, for instance, difficult to capture and convey verbally and are often 'lost in translation''. They argue that researchers should 'think about the potential of different methods such as drawing, filming/photographing, dancing, [and] theatre [...] to convey different aspects of young people's embodied lives' and that 'there is scope for much greater variety, not just in research methods but also in the formats that we use for publishing' (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2010: 7). Horton and Kraftl (2006b: 78) also argue that 'an attention to bodies ought to make us reflect more on our own embodied experiences (of being 'Children's Geographers', for instance)' as 'the embodied acts and experiences of doing research are, too-often-hushed up'. 'This calls for a consideration of the place of our own body/ies in the research process and the multiple contingencies that co-produce bodies 'through' the research process rather than simply engaging with a body/bodies as 'a research object'' (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009: 2). My research responds to calls for geographers to expand the range of research methods they use to 'get at' children's and young people's embodied experiences by exploring the potential for video reflection interviews to research young people's embodied dance experiences, and for researchers to pay more attention to their own bodies in the research process by providing an autoethnographic account of my embodied experience of dancing (see Chapter 3).

2.1.5 Emotion and Affect

The past 20 years has also witnessed a 'turn' to emotion and affect within geography and the social sciences (see Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bondi, 2005; Davidson and Bondi, 2004; Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Davidson et al., 2005; Pile, 2010; Smith et al., 2009; Thien, 2005; Tolia-Kelly, 2006). Following Anderson and Smith's (2001: 7) call for geographers to attend to the ways in which 'the

human world is constructed and lived through the emotions', there has been a proliferation of research exploring the emotional and affective aspects of social life. Anderson (2009a: 188–189) usefully summarises this work as follows:

> '[W]ork on emotional geographies elicits the multiple ways in which different emotions emerge from, and re-produce, specific socio-spatial orders and engages with how emotions become part of the different relations that make up the lived geographies of place' [...]. Consequently, the term 'emotional geography' does not designate a sub-discipline limited to the study of a set of emotions (such as fear, boredom or anxiety). Rather, it is composed of ways of considering how emotions, along with linked modalities such as feeling, mood or affect, are constitutive elements within the ongoing composition of space-time'.

Pile (2010: 7) argues that whilst work on emotional geographies tends to emphasise 'the significance of expressed emotions' (e.g., excitement, sadness, happiness, fear), work on affective geographies focuses on 'inexpressible affects' drawing inspiration from non-representational theory. Whilst 'emotions tend to be located within/the cognitive processes of an individual agent', affects 'begin in the interstitial spaces *between* agents – agents who may, incidentally, be human or non-human – and, therefore, are constitutive of the very lively but evasive forces that characterise non-representational notions of spatiality' (Kraftl, 2015b: 49–50, original emphasis). However, both approaches share 'a commitment to the relationality of emotions and thus an assumption that emotions are not contained by, or properties of, an individual mind' (Anderson, 2009a: 189).

Mirroring this wider shift, children's geographers have explored the emotional/affective geographies of children's and young people's everyday lives (Blazek and Kraftl, 2015; Brown, 2011; Dickens and Lonie, 2013; Hackett et al., 2015; Harker, 2005; Hemming, 2007; Holt et al., 2013; Murray and Mand, 2013; Pain et al., 2010; Windram-Geddes, 2013) and highlighted the importance of emotion/affect in the research process (e.g., Gaskell, 2008; Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2014; Jupp Kina, 2012; Procter, 2013; Robson, 2001). However, in their special issue editorial, Blazek and Windram-Geddes (2013: 1) note that 'dialogue' between children's and emotional geographies 'remains limited' and 'there needs to be greater and more focused mutual engagement on such questions as how emotions matter in the spatialities of children's lives [...] and what is at stake in researching them'. Blazek and Windram-Geddes (2013: 1) further argue that it is 'important to question if and how children's geographies can and should speak towards the broader field of emotional geographies and to debates in cognate disciplines and practice' (see also Horton and Kraftl, 2006b; Horton et al., 2008).

In this research, I make an original contribution to work in children's geographies on emotion/affect by investigating young people's embodied emotional experiences of participation in dance. More specifically, in Chapter 6 I contribute to recent work on the emotional geographies of education by exploring the emotions involved in learning to dance (as discussed previously in Section 2.1.2). I argue that young people's embodied emotional experiences were a key reason for their participation in dance, focusing in particular on the importance of feelings of escape and emotional release, achievement and enjoyment. Whilst I do not seek to 'reduce' dance to purely physical exercise, it is worth noting recent work in children's geographies that has focused on children's and young people's emotional geographies of physical activity, sport and exercise in school settings, specifically in relation to political discourses about healthy bodies and childhood obesity (Hemming, 2007; Windram-Geddes, 2013). Windram-Geddes (2013: 47) focuses on girls' emotional embodied experiences of physical activity (including Physical Education) at five Scottish primary and secondary schools, demonstrating how teachers drew 'on the obesity epidemic [...] using the threat of fat as a tool to incite or motivate participation [in physical activity] and praising girls and boys for weight loss', and highlighting 'girls' personal motivations for doing physical activity in relation to fears and feelings about fatness'. However, Hemming's (2007: 355) research at a primary school in England found that 'school and government attempts to construct 'healthy bodies' [were] at odds with the way that children perceive[d] sport, exercise and active play in terms of their emotional experiences of pleasure and enjoyment (or lack of them)'. Many children reported that emotional experiences such as fun and enjoyment were 'much more [important] than health when giving reasons for why they had chosen to participate in particular 'healthy' activities' (Hemming, 2007: 359). Similar to Hemming (2007), I found that for many young people exercise was a secondary reason for their participation in dance, and that emotional experiences associated with dancing such as escape, release, achievement, fun and enjoyment (amongst other factors) were far more important. In focusing on the importance of fun, enjoyment and excitement in young people's experiences of dance, my research also responds to recent calls for 'a 'youthful' geography that engages with young people's experiences around issues of 'fun', exuberance, and the excitement of new opportunities and possibilities' (Evans, 2008: 1675).

Windram-Geddes' (2013) and Hemming's (2007) work highlights the importance of emotions in motivating children and young people to participate in sport, exercise and physical activity; however, their research leaves a gap in that it fails to attend to children's and young people's embodied emotional, affective, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences of actually moving. My research aims to extend existing geographical work on children's and young people's emotional geographies of physical activity by investigating young people's emotional experiences of movement; for example,

the feeling of bodily pleasure associated with getting a dance movement 'under control' (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1), the sense of bodily liberation involved in throwing yourself into a dance (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1), or the feeling of collective joy experienced when the dance 'goes wrong' and everyone falls about laughing (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2). In doing so, my research also seeks to contribute methodologically to research on children and young people's emotional/affective geographies by exploring the potential for video reflection interviews and autoethnography to 'get at' the embodied emotional, affective, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences involved with dancing (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.3). Whilst children's geographers have been good at reflecting on the emotions involved in the research process (Horton et al., 2008), I argue that there is scope for more explicit attention to be given to the utility of particular research techniques for 'getting at' children's and young people's emotional/affective geographies.

2.1.6 Friendship

Friendship can be defined as a particular kind of relationship between two people who have 'a bond of mutual affection, typically exclusive of sexual or family relations' (Oxford University Press, 2017a: np). Bunnell et al. (2012: 500) argue that '[f]riendship is experienced, articulated and presumed to be an extremely important element in children's and young people's lives'; yet, '[d]espite such significance, there is relatively little research that links young people's geographies with friendship, particularly its formation, significance and spatiality'. This is unsurprising given that, until recently, friendship has received relatively little academic attention within geography and the social sciences more broadly (Bunnell et al., 2012). Children's geographers have recently begun to extend the limited existing literature on children's and young people's friendships; for instance Holt et al. (2017) have researched the friendships of young people with Special Educational Needs in mainstream and special schools in England (see also Bowlby et al., 2014; Holt et al., 2013) and Kraftl (2015b) has focused on friendships in spaces of alternative education in the UK. However, the geographies of children's and young people's friendships 'demand further academic study' (Bunnell et al., 2012: 502).

My research contributes to recent research on friendship in children's geographies by examining the formation and significance of young people's friendships for their participation in and experiences of dance. In particular, I contribute to literature in children's geographies that has emphasised the role of support and trust in children and young people's peer relations (e.g., Dyson, 2010; van Blerk, 2005) by drawing attention to the importance of practices such as helping and supporting in strengthening trust and care between friends in the context of dance (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.3). I

also develop the existing literature by emphasising the importance of the body in the formation of friendships between young people (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.4). Some geographical research has already considered the significance of children's and young people's bodies in friendship formation. For example, Dyson (2010: 494) researched friendships between girls working to collect leaves in the Indian Himalayas and found that the girls communicated their friendships through a 'bodily commitment to assisting each other in burdensome work'. Although the girls 'often said rather little while conducting forest chores', their 'commitment to each other and desire to work collaboratively was communicated more often and more immediately through the manner in which they threw their bodies into specific tasks' (Dyson, 2010: 494). In this research, I explore how the embodied experiences and the bodily processes involved with dancing (e.g., watching, copying and learning from each other's bodies, moving in synchronicity, becoming familiar with how each other's bodies moved, touching each other's (sweaty) bodies, and being exposed to each other's bodies) contributed to the formation and maintenance of friendships.

2.2 Geographies of Dance

In the second half of this chapter, I focus on the literature on the geographies of dance.

2.2.1 General Overview

Over the last 15 years, there has been a proliferation of geographical research on dance. This increased geographical interest in dance is reflected in the recent publication of the edited collection *Geographies of Dance: Body, Movement, and Corporeal Negotiations* (Pine and Kuhlke, 2014) and subsequent second volume *Global Movements, Dance, Place and Hybridity* (Kuhlke and Pine, 2015). This growing body of literature is incredibly diverse. First, it includes research exploring a range of dance styles in a variety of contexts, settings and geographical locations around the world, from rumba dancing on the streets of Havana, Cuba (Hensley, 2010, 2011) to rave dancing on the beaches of Goa, India (Saldanha, 2005, 2007). Second, it incorporates research conducted using a variety of research methods, including interviews (e.g., Dickinson, 2014), autoethnography (e.g., Somdahl-Sands, 2011), participant observation (e.g., Atkinson and Scott, 2015), historical research (e.g., Merriman, 2010) and 'a choreographic notebook' (Veal, 2016). Third, it encompasses research conducted across a range of sub-disciplines and engaging with a number of geographical themes; for example, Hae's (2011, 2012) work on the regulation of social dancing in New York, USA in relation to debates in urban geography about the right to the city, Aoyama's (2007, 2009, 2015) research on Flamenco dancing in Spain in relation to discussions on globalisation and the cultural tourism industry, and Johnson's (2011) work on salsa dancing in nightclubs in North Carolina, USA in relation to work on racial identity politics. Fourth, it includes research that engages with a number of

different theoretical literatures; for example, Cant's (2012) research on 'touch' in Argentine Tango dancing in social dance clubs in the UK in which she engages in feminist theory, and Somdahl-Sands' (2011) work on the BodyCartography Project in Minneapolis, USA in which she engages with non-representational theory.

Underpinning this literature are two different approaches to dance. Much of the geographical research on dance has been 'deeply committed to the representational aspects of dance', focusing on 'decoding and deconstructing the various meanings of dance' through an analysis of 'the ideological underpinnings of bodily movement' and the 'representations and contestations of identity represented by it' (Pine and Kuhlke, 2014: ix). Geographers have shown that '[d]ance is raced, sexed, [and] gendered in a variety of ways' (Kuhlke and Pine, 2015: viii). For instance, in her ethnographic research on rumba dance in Cuba, Hensley (2011: 198) shows 'how the embodiment of rhythm contributes to ideas about bodily difference' (between male/female, Cuban/foreign bodies) and 'how bodily responses to rhythm also become expressions of embodied gendered racial identities' (see also Hensley, 2010). However, other geographers have argued for a different approach that emphasises the 'nonrepresentational aspects of dance – the spontaneous, unintentional, emotional, and deeply meaningful placing of movements that are non-intentional and pre-textual' (Kuhlke and Pine, 2015: viii). For example, in McCormack's (2002: 469) work on 'The 5 Rhythms' dance form, '[r]ather than seeking to excavate representational meaning from an encounter with the practice or using it to critically diagnose the corporeal politics of contemporary society', he 'apprehends the creative movement emerging from an encounter with/in the non-representational, performative potential of the 5 Rhythms'. I discuss these two different approaches further in Section 2.2.2 below.

This thesis makes an original contribution to this growing literature on the geographies of dance in several ways. First, the thesis explores young people's experiences of participation in dance, which have not yet been the focus of explicit attention within the geographies of dance literature (with the exception of Atkinson and Scott's (2015) research on a dance programme for 7-8 year olds at a primary school in the UK). In doing so, the thesis brings geographical work on dance into dialogue with work in the sub-discipline of children's geographies on education and learning, extracurricular activities, bodies, emotions and friendship (see Section 2.1). Second, this thesis focuses on young people's experiences of dance in three specific settings not yet explored by geographers: a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. These settings are characterised by formal and structured dance lessons led by a dance teacher, rather than informal and social dance practices that have received most attention in

the geographies of dance literature so far (e.g., Malbon, 1999; Misgav and Johnston, 2014; Saldanha, 2005, 2007; Tan, 2013, 2014). They also involve learning to dance from an exam syllabus (i.e. the Royal Academy of Dance and Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing exam syllabi at the dance school, AQA GCSE and A-level Dance exam syllabi at the secondary school), a method of learning to dance that has not yet been investigated by geographers. Third, this thesis develops a research approach that focuses on young people's embodied, emotional and social experiences of dancing, rather than attempting to 'read off' meanings. In doing so, it attends to both the representational and non-representational aspects of young people's participation in dance (see Section 2.2.2). Fourth, my research responds to Veal's (2016: 222) suggestion that 'there is scope for geographers to pay closer attention to the pragmatics, promise and problems of specific methodological approaches for doing dance research', through an exploration of the utility of video reflection interviews in 'getting at' young people's embodied dance experiences (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3).

2.2.2 Non-Representational Theory and Dance

Dance has played a notable role in the 'emergence and contestation' of non-representational theory in geography (McCormack, 2008: 1824). Non-representational theory, or the theory of practices, has developed since the mid-1990s through the writings of Nigel Thrift (e.g., 1996, 1997, 2000, 2008) and others (e.g., Dewsbury, 2011, 2015; McCormack, 2003, 2005) from 'a caution and concern about the overvaluation of the 'representational-referential' dimensions of life following the discipline's cultural turn' (Anderson, 2009b: 503). Whilst non-representational theory is 'irredeemably plural' (Anderson, 2009b: 503) and has been taken up by geographers 'in multiple, at times potentially conflicting, directions' (Simpson, 2015: np), McCormack (2005: 122) suggests that 'the style and substance of thinking and working towards which this theory pushes has at least two interrelated characteristics': first, 'it valorises those processes that operate before [...] conscious, reflective thought'; and second, 'it insists on the necessity of not prioritising representations as the primary epistemological vehicles through which knowledge is extracted from the world'. Thus, non-representational styles of thinking and writing place 'a significant emphasis on questions of action, practice and, especially, performance [...] as both an object of inquiry and a particular style of research' (Popke, 2009: 82).

In his early work, Thrift (1997, 2000) used dance to exemplify his ideas about non-representational theory, arguing that 'dance, as an embodied practice, has a certain expressive quality that exceeds efforts to incorporate it within an epistemology and politics of representation' (McCormack, 2016: 105). Thrift (1997: 125) describes dance 'as a 'concentrated' example of the expressive nature of embodiment', focusing on dance as a performative body-practice that 'uses the physicality of the

body to articulate complex thought and feelings that cannot be easily put into words (represented)' (Somdahl-Sands, 2011: 512). This idea is captured by the famous words of Modern dance pioneer, Isadora Duncan: 'If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it' (quoted in Thrift, 1997: 139). Thus, Thrift (1997: 149) asserts that whilst dance 'can be described by words' it 'ultimately cannot be written or spoken'. McCormack (2008: 1825) summarises Thrift (1997) as follows:

> 'Crucially, dance [...] complicates questions of representation, because it is so difficult to document: the very act of dancing always seems to evade attempts to set it down on paper. Dance can therefore be understood as a non-representational practice defined by the ongoing inventive enactment of its own impermanence and disappearance. This, in turn, complicates the political spaces of dance. For Thrift (1997), the inventiveness of dance [can] not be explained (or explained away) via theories of representational politics'.

Thrift (1997: 148) argues that the inventive playfulness of dance is the cause of its potential to 'elude power'. As Nash (2000: 656) explains, for Thrift (1997) '[p]layful dance eludes rather than simply confronts or subverts power through its 'capacity to hint at different experiential frames', different ways of being that cannot be written or spoken'.

Thrift's (1997, 2000) conceptualisation of dance as a non-representational body-practice has been explored and developed by other geographers including McCormack (2002, 2003, 2013), Dewsbury (2011), Somdahl-Sands (2011, 2013, 2014), Kurtz (2014) and Fenster (2014). Whilst these authors differ in detail, all tend toward a focus on the 'pre-reflective 'doing'' (Popke, 2009: 82) of dance, and an approach to corporeality that sees the dancing body 'as an entity that is expressive, spontaneous and either consciously or unconsciously evading discursive positioning' (Pine and Kuhlke, 2014: xi). For example, Dewsbury (2011: 52) focuses on the '*show* of dance', discussing dance 'as a spectacle, as a performance event experienced by an audience'. Dewsbury (2011: 60) acknowledges 'that there is a pastness to the presence of performance that excludes the audience'. He explains, '[d]ance has an occluded background: it intensively depends on rehearsal offstage for the preparedness of choreographic codification, and it extensively depends on rigorous training to produce the precisely intelligent body of the dancer' (Dewsbury, 2011: 60). However, Dewsbury (2011: 60) asserts that 'the show of dance is all that most of the audience see' thus it is 'valid to push for an appreciation of the event of dance on show'. According to Dewsbury (2011), such an 'interrogation of the showing of dance can enable geographers to explore the ontological dimensions of moving bodies' (Cresswell and Merriman, 2011: 6). Dewsbury (2011: 52) asserts:

'Dance is that which becomes coded but is not itself code in its point of incessant emergence. Dancers are coded, genres are coded, dance choreography is coded, but the *dance itself*, like all art forms when considered in their pure state, manifests the power of the present to disrupt, disclose, and expose these codifications. Herein, whilst the body may be the marker and the container of these codes of representation with all their politics the body is not itself representational. It is because of the body's presentational status that dance is so difficult, perhaps precisely impossible, to textually represent and interpret. This is also why dance attracts public and academic alike in its atmosphere of vital seduction: that which is seemingly available to know and to interpret always has further enticements eluding knowing. Such elusory movement is another form of, and space for, politics'.

Following Thrift (1997), Dewsbury (2011) argues that 'the representational contexts of dances – their complex social-cultural-political histories – have been given precedence over the movement of the body itself and that such movement holds the possibility for disrupting such a context' (Simpson, 2015: np).

Thrift's (1997) initial arguments about dance as a non-representational practice 'moved against the conceptual and political grain of much cultural geography in the 1990s' (McCormack, 2008: 1825) and, as such, were met with some critical response from geographers who argued that his approach to dance seemed to 'affirm a kind of precultural view of embodiment that too easily elided the social and cultural politics of the discursive formations within which bodies move' (McCormack, 2016: 106). Nash (2000) made a notable intervention[15], drawing on work in critical dance theory to argue that not only did Thrift's (1997) view of dance as a non-cognitive practice risk 'inverting the division of mind and body'[16], but also 'downplay[ed] the continuing power of discursive regimes' (Crang, 2003: 499). Nash (2000: 658) asserts:

'Only by considering dance outside any social realm, by imagining dance as a free-floating realm of the experiential above the social and cultural world and by ignoring the relational nature of dancing can dance be thought of as a prelinguistic and presocial bodily experience [...]. Not only is dance always mediated by words as it is taught, scripted, performed and

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[15] See also critical engagements from geographers including Jacobs and Nash (2003), Thien (2005) and Tolia-Kelly (2006), as well as Colls' (2012) response to feminist critiques of non-representational theory.

[16] Bondi (2005: 437–438) points out that '[p]artially countering' Nash's (2000) assertion that a focus on the non-representational aspects of dance risks 'reinforcing rather than deconstructing a binary opposition between the sensual and the intellectual, thereby downplaying the thoughtfulness of non-verbal practices', Thrift (2004: 60) argues that 'affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world'. Yet, Bondi (2005: 438) explains, 'he also emphasises the "otherness" of this affective intelligence, describing affect as non-reflective and indirect'.

watched but dance is also often highly formalized and stylized; even untrained dance is culturally learnt and culturally located'.

Nash (2000: 658) cites Savigliano's (1995) work on Tango dance as exemplary in illustrating the importance of attending to 'the social and cultural contexts in which gendered and racialized bodily practices are learnt, performed and subverted'.[17] Savigliano's (1995) research charts the 'hybridized origins [of Tango] in the underworld of late nineteenth-century Buenos Aires, to Paris and London in the 1910s, back to Argentina to become a national symbol in the 1940s and from Paris, London, New York and Argentina to post second world war Japan', showing that the politics of 'who could tango where, with whom, for what audience and how, tell of contests over culture, masculinity, class and nationhood, the legitimate, the civilized, the respectable, the primitive, the authentic and the exotic – in Argentina, Paris and Japan' (Nash, 2000: 658). Thus, Nash (2000: 658) argues that:

> '[Savigliano's (1995)] decolonizing project is not to celebrate tango as beyond the reach of power but to make dancing the tango a resistant recognition of the 'scandalous' and power-laden histories of its travels and styles. Dance then can be resistant by being more located, by being more thought through rather than transcendent and thoughtless'.

In short, Nash (2000) claimed that by 'foregrounding the non-representational dimensions of dance', Thrift (1997) risked 'paying insufficient attention to the social, cultural and spatial contexts within which specific dance practices were practiced: he therefore abdicated a thorough engagement with the politics of dancing bodies' (McCormack, 2008: 1825).[18]

Nash's (2000) concerns were 'echoed and amplified' by a number of other geographers, including Cresswell (2006), Revill (2004) and Saldanha (2005), who questioned 'the ability of non-representational theories to grasp the politics of moving [dancing] bodies' (McCormack, 2008: 1825). For instance, Cresswell (2006) explored the regulation and standardisation of Ballroom dancing in England in the early twentieth century. He shows how certain dance styles and moves considered to

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[17] Anderson (2009b: 504–505) notes that '[r]ecent work has moved to address early criticisms that such a focus on the non-representational reproduces or even celebrates a figure of the undifferentiated human (Nash, 2000) by exploring how social differences such as race or sexuality are enacted through and disrupted by the workings of a range of non-representational modalities (e.g., Lim, 2007)'.

[18] Thus, some critics have argued that non-representational theory 'cleaves the non-representational from the representational and installs a dualism between the two by attending to the former and ignoring the varied effects of the later' (Anderson, 2009b: 504). However, Dewsbury et al. (2002: 438, original emphasis) argue that: '[n]on-representational theory takes representation seriously; representation not as a code to be broken or as illusion to be dispelled rather representations are apprehended as performative in themselves; as doings', 'redirect[ing] attention from the *posited meaning* towards the *material compositions and conduct* of representations'. Thus, non-representational theory is not 'anti-representation'; '[r]ather, what pass for representations are apprehended as performative presentations, not reflections of some *a priori* order waiting to be unveiled, decoded, or revealed' (Anderson and Harrison, 2010: 19).

be 'American', such as 'the Boston, the cakewalk, the turkey trot, the jitterbug, [and] the shimmy' (Cresswell, 2006: 70) were 'labelled as degenerate and threatening' by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) who 'sought to produce a thoroughly regulated and encoded 'English' style of ballroom dancing' (Cresswell, 2006: 55). Cresswell (2006: 55) describes 'the various strategies of representation and standardization that were used to enact this regulation of corporeal mobility', including the production of 'dance charts' showing 'correct and appropriate' movements and 'strict-tempo' music, leading to the establishment of a Ballroom dance syllabus to be taught by ISTD certified dance teachers and the awarding of bronze, silver and gold awards to students. Cresswell (2006: 59) positions his work in 'sympathetic contrast' to non-representational approaches to dance, insisting 'on the continuing importance of seeing bodily mobility within larger social, cultural and geographical worlds that continue to ascribe meaning to mobility and to prescribe practice in particular ways'. Cresswell (2006: 73) further argues that non-representational ways of thinking should be considered 'in tandem with, rather than in opposition to, ideas about representation'. He states:

> 'It is the interface between the representational and the non-representational that concerns me here – the representational strategies that seek to colonise the world beyond cognition that Thrift, McCormack and others discuss. How, in other words, representation is used to hijack the process of *becoming*' (Cresswell, 2006: 73).

For Cresswell (2006), then, there is no such thing as the '*dance itself*' (Dewsbury, 2011: 52) because all dance is always and already 'coded'. Cresswell (2006: 76) therefore argues that 'human mobility' should be thought of as 'simultaneously representational and practical – representation as practice and practice as representation' and it is 'the process and mechanisms that link practice to representation' that he aims to outline in relation to the regulation of Ballroom dancing in England in the early twentieth century. As Lorimer (2008: 554) summarises, Cresswell (2006) claims that we should 'conceive of representation (context) and non-representation (practice) held together – albeit sometimes in tension – rather than effecting a complete reversal of the earlier disciplinary tradition when signifying (con)texts were privileged over social actions'.

Revill (2004: 206) similarly found 'that making categorical distinctions between the representational and the nonrepresentational and regarding them as discrete ways of constituting meaning was ultimately unhelpful [...] in understanding the practice of French folk dancing'. Drawing on his 'own experience of learning French folk dance', as part of 'the UK French folk music scene', Revill (2004: 199) considers the 'usefulness of 'nonrepresentational theory' for the study of dance'. He explains that when conducting his research he found that:

'Whilst performed 'in a French style', much of the music and many of the dances were newly composed by particular performers and dance teachers [...]. Evidence of active and conscious creativity is certainly highlighted by many participants as indication of a thriving, vibrant and inventive 'scene'. At one level contemporary French folk music clearly existed in the realm of the representational and the reflective. [...] In another sense, participants in the French folk scene are clearly buying into a particular notion of the non-representational as a form of authenticity. Both French folk dancers and Baroque flautists are practising for the moment at which their activities are miraculously transformed into unreflected habit. [...] That moment is charged as an originary and foundational moment from which a more truthful cultural practice emerges' (Revill, 2004: 205).

However, Revill (2004: 206) claims that there is a 'potential problem' in conceptualising as non-representational the moment when dancing or playing an instrument becomes unreflected habit, in that it risks 'taking for granted the 'taken for granted' itself'. Revill (2004: 206) explains that achieving 'the condition of nonrepresentation suggested by habituation', instead of 'representing some state of 'nature'', is 'in fact the product of years of conscious practice'. Thus, Revill (2004: 208) argues that 'rather than conceiving of the representational as a distinctive sphere of experience we should see it as intricately connected into and supported by semiotic systems and spatial practices operating simultaneously at a multiplicity of levels and scales'. As such, 'it is in our interest to interrogate the taken-for-granted nature of the nonrepresentational' (Revill, 2004: 208).

My own understanding of dance in this research takes inspiration from conceptualisations of dance as *both* a representational and non-representational practice. My research builds upon geographical work focusing on the representational aspects of dance in that it views the social, cultural, political and geographical contexts within which young people participate in dance as central to understanding their experiences. Thus, I agree with Nash's (2000: 658) argument that rather than 'imagining dance as a free-floating realm of the experiential above the social and cultural world', it is necessary to attend to the specific contexts within which dance practices are situated. In choosing three different fieldsites (a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings) to conduct my research, from the outset I contend that it matters *where* dance takes place. The different fieldsites involve particular social (e.g., age, gender and ability of dancers) and spatial (e.g., pedagogies used by teachers, temporalities of dance lessons, rehearsals, exams and shows) contexts (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3) which I argue have implications for understanding young people's experiences of dance in each setting. As such, as discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (Section 3.1), I used a qualitative research design in an attempt to develop a

contextualised understanding of young people's experiences of participation in dance at each fieldsite. My use of participant observation conducted during dance lessons, rehearsals and performances, and semi-structured interviews with young people, parents and dance teachers, were particularly important in this task. Throughout the analysis chapters, I highlight the importance of context for understanding young people's experiences of participating in dance, drawing attention to both similarities and differences between each location.

Whilst non-representational theory does not provide 'the' theoretical framework for my thesis, this research does attempt to attend to some of the non-representational aspects of dance. The research seeks to draw attention to young people's embodied, emotional, affective, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences of dancing, aspects of bodily practice that are prioritised in non-representational approaches to doing research.[19] This is evidenced by my decision to use autoethnography and video reflection interviews as research methods (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.3). Furthermore, the thesis draws on an understanding of dance as a non-representational practice at various points throughout the analysis chapters in order to understand young people's experiences of participation in dance. For example, in Chapter 6 (Section 6.1), Thrift's (1997) conceptualisation of dance as an expressive bodily practice that 'uses the physicality of the body to articulate complex thought and feelings' (Somdahl-Sands, 2011: 512) is useful in thinking about secondary school student Lily's (15) account of using dance, rather than words, to express her feelings of sadness and anger about her parents splitting up. The emphasis of non-representational theory on the non-verbal aspects of bodily practice is also helpful in considering the relationships that I formed with participants (especially young people at the dance group with Down's syndrome who had speech and language difficulties) through movement, rather than words (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2). In addition, Thrift's (1997: 148) arguments about the potential for dance to 'elude power' through disrupting the social

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[19] Vannini (2015: 13) notes that '[o]ver the last ten years a number of explicitly methodological reflections on the potential of non-representational work have appeared in the literature'. This work has emerged following a questioning of the ability of existing research methods to apprehend the embodied, sensory, affective, emotional, expressive, non-verbal and pre-cognitive aspects of social practice that non-representational theory seeks to explore. In the early stages of his work, Thrift (2000: 244) critiqued cultural geography's reliance on 'a remarkably limited number of methodologies – ethnography, focus groups, and the like' which, he argued, were 'nearly always cognitive in origin and effect' and, as such, failed to attend to the non-representational aspects of social practice (see also Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Latham (2003: 1998) also argued that whilst there was no need to abandon 'traditional research methodologies' entirely, there was no reason why they could not be imbued with 'a sense of the creative, the practical, and being with practice-ness' and made 'to dance a little'. Following these calls for geographers to 'reconsider and rework' the ways in which they undertook research (Latham, 2003: 1993), non-representational researchers have experimented with a range of 'research methods, as well as diagrammatic and narrative forms of presentation, that take as their task to learn to witness the ongoing taking-place of life as a composite of embodied practices' (Anderson, 2009b: 505). The emphasis on embodied practice in non-representational theory has resulted in efforts from non-representational geographers to 'take the body seriously' in their research (Dewsbury, 2010: 326) and to value embodied knowledge as 'legitimate data for dissemination and analysis' (Dewsbury, 2010: 337).

and cultural contexts within which it is produced seems apt when thinking about the experiences of young people at the dance school and secondary school who talked about the possibility that dance gave them to escape from their everyday lives (e.g., from the pressures of revising for GCSE and A-level exams) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.1).

Therefore, in this research, I seek to attend to both the representational and non-representational aspects of bodily practice in order to develop an in-depth account of young people's experiences of participation in dance. As such, my research can be thought of as contributing to geographical work located under the 'alternative moniker' of 'more-than-representational theory', a term used by some to indicate 'a "softer" approach to the confrontational edge of the "non" and to suggest that the ideas proposed by non-representational theories can act as an animating supplement to existing approaches to geographic knowledge production' (Simpson, 2015: np). More specifically, my research can be situated alongside 'a growing range of work by geographers and others in which dance figures prominently in ways that overlap with some elements of nonrepresentational theories, without necessarily being reducible to it', including 'work in anthropology and cultural studies that seeks to temper an emphasis on representation with an investigation of the structures of kinaesthetic experience that shape participation in particular styles and genres of dance (for examples, see Sanchez Gonzalez, 1999; Sklar, 2001; Downey, 2005)' (McCormack, 2016: 106).

2.3 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter I have reviewed and situated this thesis within the literature on children's geographies and the geographies of dance. In Section 2.1, I argued that whilst children's geographies has explored a range of spaces in and through which children and young people experience their everyday lives, attention has not yet been given to the space of dance classes, rehearsals, performances or exams. Thus, this thesis makes an original contribution to the children's geographies literature in three key ways: first, I expand the spaces that children's geographers have attended to by exploring the space of dance within young people's everyday lives, contributing to research on spaces of education and learning (see Section 2.1.2) and extracurricular activities (see Section 2.1.3); second, I contribute to research in children's geographies on the conceptual themes of bodies and embodiment (see Section 2.1.4), emotion and affect (see Section 2.1.5), and friendship (see Section 2.1.6); and third, I make a methodological contribution to children's geographies by exploring the use of video reflection interviews to research young people's emotional, embodied experiences of dancing (see also Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3).

In Section 2.2, I argued that although there has been a proliferation of work on the geographies of dance in recent years, there remains scope to explore young people's experiences of dance within the specific contexts of a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. I outlined recent geographical debates in cultural geography in relation to dance and non-representational theory, arguing that in this research dance will be conceptualised as a 'more-than-representational' practice (see Section 2.2.2).

Thus, this thesis is informed by, and contributes to, both children's geographies and the geographies of dance. It seeks to draw these two bodies of literature into conversation, using insights from both areas of research in order to explore young people's embodied, emotional and social experiences of participation in dance.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology. In Section 3.1, I describe the research design and approach. I explain that the research used a multi-sited case study design and was conducted using a multi-methodological qualitative approach that aimed to generate an in-depth and contextualised understanding of young people's everyday experiences of participation in dance and to 'get at' young people's embodied, emotional, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences of dancing (see also Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2). I further argue that the research was conducted in a flexible, responsive, context-sensitive and reflexive manner. Following this, in Section 3.2, I reflect on some of the issues involved in doing research with young people. I argue that my understanding of young people as competent social actors influenced my decision to use research methods that allowed their voices to be heard. In Section 3.3, I justify and describe the fieldsites: The Southern School of Dance, Greenleaf Secondary School, and DS Dance. I argue that these three fieldsites were selected because they represent different 'modes' of young people's participation in dance in non-elite contexts. In Section 3.4, I discuss the process of participant recruitment at each fieldsite and provide some information about the research participants. Then, in Section 3.5, I discuss and reflect on the research methods used: participant observation and autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews. I provide an extensive reflection on the video method, including a consideration of some of the technical issues involved, young people's experiences of being filmed and watching back the footage, and the interview data generated. Finally, in Section 3.6, I discuss the grounded approach to data analysis, and the ways in which data generated at different fieldsites and using different research methods are drawn together throughout the analysis chapters.

3.1 Research Design and Approach

Bryman (2016: 695) defines 'research design' as the 'framework or structure within which the collection and analysis of data takes place'. The research used a multi-sited case study design, drawing on fieldwork conducted at a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK from September 2014 to July 2015 (see Section 3.3). A multi-methodological qualitative research approach was used, combining participant observation and autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews (see Section 3.5). This research design and approach were chosen in order to generate an in-depth understanding of young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances. The choice of research methods was influenced by both

representational and non-representational approaches to researching dance (see also Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2). Whilst participant observation and semi-structured interviews were used to develop a contextualised understanding of young people's everyday experiences of participation in dance at each fieldsite (aspects emphasised in representational approaches to research), autoethnography and video reflection interviews were used to explore young people's embodied, emotional, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences of dancing (aspects of bodily experience emphasised in non-representational approaches to research).[20]

Mason (2002: 24) argues that 'decisions about [research] design and strategy are ongoing and grounded in the practice, process and context of the research itself'. I took a flexible, responsive and context-sensitive approach to conducting the research, making decisions about the research design 'contextually, as the research progresse[d]' (Mason, 2002: 25). For example, this involved being flexible in relation to the research methods used at each fieldsite (e.g., in Section 3.5.3 I discuss my decision to conduct video reflection interviews at the dance school and secondary school only) and being sensitive to the needs and abilities of research participants (e.g., in Section 3.5.2 I discuss how I adjusted the format of semi-structured interviews that I conducted for young people at the dance group). I adopted an 'iterative' approach to 'the collection and analysis of data', allowing each to inform the other (Bryman, 2016: 570) (see Section 3.6). Furthermore, I aimed to think critically and reflexively about how my positionality as a researcher and dancer affected the research process. Feminist geographers have argued for the importance of reflexivity in research (England, 1994; Rose, 1997), critiquing the 'god-trick' of disembodied, objective scientific neutrality and instead arguing that all knowledge is 'situated' (Haraway, 1988: 581). England (1994: 82) defines reflexivity as 'self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as a researcher'. Whilst designing, conducting, analysing and writing-up the research, I thought reflexively about how my positionality (as a young, female, able-bodied student) and biography (a researcher with dance training and experience) influenced the research process (although I appreciate that this is something I can never fully 'know'). For example, in Section 3.5.2 I discuss how my previous experience and knowledge of dance affected the topics that I selected for discussion and the questions that I asked during semi-structured interviews. In addition, I aimed to be 'open and honest' about the research process and the 'limitations and partial nature of the research'

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[20] It is important to note that I am not claiming that these research methods were able to 'fully capture' young people's embodied experiences of participation in dance, but to 'get closer' to them. As Dowler (2013: np) explains: 'Dance as an ephemeral art form transforms moment by moment, often communicating something beyond words, a sense, a feeling [...]. [I am] not sure any form of writing, photography or film, however beautifully crafted, can fully do justice to the lived experience of participation in dance'.

(England, 1994: 90). In summary, I conducted the research in a 'thoughtful, informed and reflexive' manner, reflecting a broader commitment to ethical research practice (Hay, 2010: 35).

3.2 Doing Research with Young People

This research aims to explore young people's everyday lived experiences of participation in dance from their *own* perspectives. As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.1.1), rather than seeing young people as 'becomings' who are 'not yet mature enough to have an opinion', in this research young people are viewed as 'competent 'beings' whose views, actions and choices are of value' and who are '*capable* of providing expert testimony about their experience, associations and lifestyles' (Thomson, 2008: 1, original emphasis). In short, young people are seen as having 'a right to be heard and competence to engage with research' (van Blerk et al., 2009: 3). Therefore, I used research methods that aimed to provide young people with an opportunity to express their thoughts, ideas and experiences in their own words, and which could enable me to develop an understanding of young people's experiences of dance from their point of view.

In recent years, there has been much debate about whether doing research with children and young people 'is similar to or different from research with adults' and whether special 'child-friendly' research methods should be used (Punch, 2002: 321) (e.g., Christensen and James, 2000; Thomson, 2009). Punch (2002: 321) explains that: '[i]t is somewhat paradoxical that [...] many of those who call for the use of innovative or adapted research techniques with children, are also those who emphasise the competence of children. If children are competent social actors, why are special 'child-friendly' methods needed to communicate with them?'. Therefore, it has been argued that 'research with children should not take for-granted a child-adult distinction' (Kirk, 2007: 1252). Rather, as with all research, the focus should be on choosing methods that are 'appropriate for the people involved, their social and cultural context and the research question[s]' (Kirk, 2007: 1252). In this research, I used methods that aimed to be 'participant-friendly', that is, appropriate, engaging and sensitive to the needs and abilities of all participants (Fraser, 2005: 24).

There has also been debate about how research with people with disabilities or learning difficulties should be conducted and the principles underlying research practice (e.g., Kitchin, 2000; Rodgers, 1999). In this research, young people with Down's syndrome are viewed as 'active participants' (Walmsley, 2004: 64) and 'reliable informants who hold valid opinions and have a right to express them' and are 'the best authority on their own lives, experiences, feelings and views' (Stalker, 1998: 5). Therefore, I used research methods that aimed to give young people with Down's syndrome an opportunity to communicate their ideas and experiences in their own words. However, as discussed

in Section 3.5.2, my experience of conducting interviews with young people with Down's syndrome raised some questions about the possibilities and limitations of verbally based research methods, and about the practicalities of this approach.

3.3 Fieldsites: The Southern School of Dance, Greenleaf Secondary School and DS Dance

I conducted the research at three fieldsites or 'dance settings' in the UK: The Southern School of Dance, a dance school offering classes in Ballet, Tap, Modern and Jazz after school and at weekends to children and young people aged 2-18; Greenleaf Secondary School, a comprehensive school for 11-18 year olds where dance is taught as a compulsory subject for 1 hour per week in Years 7-9, can be studied as a GCSE in Years 10-11 and as an A Level in Years 12-13, and where students can participate in an extensive range of extracurricular dance activities; and DS Dance, a dance group for children and young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings aged 3-25, who meet for a weekly 1-hour dance class and regularly perform at a variety of events. I have given these fieldsites pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. A more detailed description of each fieldsite is given below.

There were three key reasons for selecting these fieldsites. First, the three dance settings represent different 'modes' of dance participation: different ways of participating in dance that involve particular spatialities, temporalities, pedagogies and socialities. By conducting research at these different dance settings, I was able to explore a diverse range of motivations, experiences and meanings that young people associate with dance. Second, by conducting research at three different fieldsites, I have been able to emphasise that the research findings are not specific to a single 'mode' of dance. The three dance settings involve young people from different socio-economic backgrounds and require varying degrees of parental involvement and financial commitment. By conducting research at these different fieldsites I have been able to highlight commonalities between young people's experiences of dancing in different contexts. Third, the three fieldsites were chosen because they involve young people's voluntary[21] participation (i.e. young people who opted to take GCSE or A-level Dance, or chose to attend dance classes after school) in non-elite[22] dance (i.e. for

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[21] I accept that whilst a young person may appear to have 'chosen' to participate in dance, there are circumstances where this might not be true (e.g., a young person having to choose GCSE dance because of restrictions about what subjects are available or logistically possible on a school's timetable, or parents pushing a young person to attend dance lessons after school).

[22] I am taking 'non-elite' dance to refer to dance for recreational (e.g., attending a school dance club or dance class at a local dance school) or educational (e.g., studying GCSE or A-level Dance at school) purposes, as opposed to elite dance training (i.e. a professional or vocational dance training programme, for instance the full time Classical Ballet training offered to 11-16 year olds at the Royal Ballet School). However, non-elite dance can involve some elements of vocational training (e.g., preparing for and taking vocational graded dance exams) and eventually lead to elite dance training (e.g., studying dance at a vocational college).

recreational or educational purposes) over the long-term (i.e. a number of years). This allowed me to address the research aim by exploring young people's motivations for their continued participation in dance (where this was voluntary rather than compulsory). Furthermore, considering the number of children and young people who participate in dance in the UK in non-elite settings such as these (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2) and the recent emphasis in UK Government policy contexts on increasing children and young people's participation in dance activities in such settings (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3) it seems timely that research should be conducted to explore the motivations and experiences of young people who are already choosing to participate in dance in this way. The three fieldsites where the research was conducted are:

1. The Southern School of Dance

The Southern School of Dance offers classes in Ballet, Tap, Modern and Jazz to approximately 400 students aged 2-18. Classes are taught by seven dance teachers and are held after school on weekdays and all day on Saturdays during term time in two church halls and a school dance studio. Classes are competitively priced. During lessons students learn and practise set exercises from the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) and the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) graded examination syllabi. Exams are held at the end of term and take place at the dance school or at the exam board headquarters. Every other year, the school puts on a show at a local theatre in the summer term. In a show year, students begin learning their dances in class as early as September and continue to practice them until July, when they attend rehearsals at the theatre and perform on stage. The school also holds an annual prize giving ceremony, featuring performances from students and the presentation of awards. Most students attend dance lessons for fun; however, the school aims to teach students to a high level so that they have the qualifications to progress to vocational training and make dance their career if they choose. Past students have gained places at dance institutions including the Royal Ballet School, English National Ballet School, the Urdang Academy and London Studio Centre (sources not referenced to maintain anonymity).

I chose The Southern School of Dance as a fieldsite for my research because I attended dance lessons there from 4 to 18 years of age. I took exams in Ballet, Tap, Modern and Jazz, and performed in seven school dance shows. I have a good relationship with the dance school principals, so was in a strong position to negotiate permission to conduct the research with the 'gatekeepers' (Cook, 2005: 174). I also conducted my MA dissertation research at The Southern School of Dance in 2013. This research allowed me to gain useful insight into several issues including: the importance of friendships between students; the relationships between students and their dance teachers; the pedagogies and techniques involved with learning to dance; the process of participating in exams

and shows; and the significance of dance within the context of young people's everyday lives. By conducting further research at this fieldsite, I aimed to investigate these themes in more depth and to explore new issues. After completing my MA dissertation research, I stayed in contact with the dance school principals and arranged a meeting with them in June 2014 to discuss my PhD research project. I conducted my PhD research at The Southern School of Dance from September 2014 to July 2015, which enabled me to research young people's experiences of preparing for and taking exams, and rehearsing and performing in the school dance show in the summer term. I focused on the experiences of 15 young people aged 10-18.

The Southern School of Dance provided an interesting fieldsite for the research because it enabled me to explore young people's experiences of dance in a setting where dance is: an extracurricular out-of-school activity which requires parental involvement and financial support; an activity that young people can (and often do) participate in from the ages of 2-18; an activity that mostly girls take part in (there were only 5 boys attending lessons at the time of the research); a skill that is learnt by practising exercises and routines from a set syllabus in preparation for graded examinations; an activity that is performed on stage at a professional theatre; and a skill that can lead to vocational training and a professional career in dance.

2. Greenleaf Secondary School

Greenleaf Secondary School is a co-educational, non-selective school for 11-18 year olds. The school is known locally for its excellence in the Performing Arts. The school has a large Dance department with four Dance teachers and lessons are taught in two purpose built dance studios with mirrors. Dance is taught as a subject for 1 hour per week in Years 7-9 (Key Stage 3) and is a popular option for GCSE in Years 10-11 (Key Stage 4) and A Level in Years 12-13 (Key Stage 5).[23] The Dance department results are above both school and national averages. The school offers an extensive range of extracurricular lunchtime and after-school dance clubs, delivered by Dance teachers and outside providers. The school has a Boys Dance group with over 30 members from Years 7-13, combining athletic movements with Street dance steps, which performs within school, at local theatres and at national events. The Dance department stages two annual shows in which more than 150 dancers participate. The school has a strong relationship with several partner primary schools (delivering taster classes in dance), as well as local dance groups for adults and young people with learning disabilities (including DS Dance) who are invited to participate in the school shows. The school also runs regular theatre trips for students to see professional dance and musical theatre productions.

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[23] The school followed the AQA GCSE and A-level Dance syllabi (see AQA (2013a, 2013b) for information about course content and structure).

Many students go on to pursue a career in dance and the performing arts, with past pupils studying at university and at vocational colleges including the Urdang Academy and Bird College of Dance (sources not referenced to maintain anonymity).

I selected Greenleaf Secondary School as a fieldsite for the research after conducting online research for secondary schools within a 1-hour commute of my accommodation that were: co-educational, non-selective, and offered GCSE and A-level Dance provision. I identified two possible schools that met these criteria. I then conducted further research into dance provision (e.g., size of the Dance department, range of extracurricular activities offered) to inform my final decision. I contacted Greenleaf Secondary School in February 2014. The school was interested in taking part and after providing further information about the research via email, I arranged a meeting with the Head of Dance in March 2014 to discuss the project. I met again with the Head of Dance in November 2015 to confirm the final arrangements. I conducted research at Greenleaf Secondary School from January to April 2015, focusing on the experiences of 10 young people aged 11-18.

Greenleaf Secondary School provided an interesting fieldsite for the research because it enabled me to explore young people's experiences of dance in a setting where dance is: part of the school curriculum and a subject that can be taken at GCSE and A Level; a subject learnt through practical (e.g., set exercises and individual/group choreography) and written (e.g., critical appreciation of professional choreography/dance works) elements; an activity which requires minimal involvement from parents; an activity that boys and girls participate in; and a subject that can lead to vocational training or study at university.

3. DS Dance

DS Dance is a dance group for children and young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings.[24] The group has approximately 45 members aged 3-25 (split into a junior and senior group) and meet

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[24] Down's syndrome can also be referred to as Down syndrome or trisomy 21 (NHS, 2017b). It is 'a genetic disorder caused when abnormal cell division results in an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21. This extra genetic material causes the developmental changes and physical features of Down syndrome. Down syndrome varies in severity among individuals, causing lifelong intellectual disability and developmental delays. [It is] the most common genetic chromosomal disorder and cause of learning disabilities in children. It also commonly causes other medical abnormalities, including heart and gastrointestinal disorders' (Mayo Clinic, 2017: np). Common physical characteristics of a person with Down's syndrome include 'floppiness (hypotonia)', a 'small nose and flat nasal bridge', a 'small mouth with a tongue that may stick out', 'eyes that slant upwards and outwards', 'a flat back of the head', 'broad hands with short fingers', 'their palm may have only one crease across it', and 'below-average weight and length at birth' (NHS, 2017a: np). The Down's Syndrome Association (2017: np) states that approximately 'one in every 1,000 babies born in the UK will have Down's syndrome', '750 babies with Down's syndrome are born in the UK each year', and there are '40,000 people with Down's syndrome living in the UK'. 'Today the average life expectancy for a person with Down's syndrome is between 50 and 60 with a small number of people living into their seventies' (Down's Syndrome

on one evening each week during term time for an hour, in a primary school hall or a church hall. Dancers have a range of speech and language skills, and movement abilities. During classes, the dancers practise exercises and routines led by the dance teacher, who is assisted by student and parent helpers. The group mainly focus on Modern and Jazz dance styles, but sometimes venture into other genres such as Musical Theatre, Bollywood, Chinese, Ballet, Contemporary, Tap and Lindy-Hop. The group has a parent committee which is run on a voluntary basis. Parents pay £15 per month for lessons and the group also supports its work through fundraising events which allow the purchase of costumes and the provision of other opportunities for dancers (e.g., theatre trips). DS Dance usually complete 20-30 performances each year at a variety of events and venues, and in the past have performed at local theatres, schools, the town hall and church fêtes, as well as at national theatres and on a TV dance competition series. In the summer term, dancers can take a United Kingdom Alliance (UKA) Dance exam if they want to, with certificates, trophies and medals presented by the teacher in an awards ceremony later in the year (sources not referenced to maintain anonymity).

I selected DS Dance as a fieldsite for the research because the Head of Dance at Greenleaf Secondary School (who knew I was looking for a community-based dance group to take part in the research) suggested that DS Dance (who have a link with the secondary school) might be interested in participating. I contacted the DS Dance teacher via email in March 2014 and arranged a phone call to discuss the research project. The teacher (and group organiser) confirmed that the group would be happy to take part in the research, and invited me to come and watch a dance class in May 2014. I confirmed the final research details via email in September 2014. I conducted research at DS Dance from September to December 2014. I carried out research with the senior dance group (as suggested by the dance teacher) focusing on the experiences of eight young people aged 18-25.

DS Dance provided an interesting fieldsite for the research because it allowed me to explore young people's experiences of dance in a setting where dance is: an activity that children with Down's syndrome and their siblings can participate in together; an activity that involves moving to music for enjoyment; a way for young people to develop a range of skills; a way of building community; an extracurricular out-of-school activity which requires parental involvement; and an activity that boys and girls participate in.

Association, 2017: np). 'Despite the cognitive and motor delays that accompany this chromosomal mutation, people with Down syndrome are often able to make their own decisions, attend school, hold a job, participate in their communities, and lead a fulfilling life' (Reinders, Bryden, et al., 2015: 293) (see National Down Syndrome Society, 2012).

3.4 Participant Recruitment

I recruited research participants at The Southern School of Dance by asking the principals to choose 15 students, aged 10-18, to invite to participate in the research. I asked the principals to choose students (rather than asking for volunteers) because this made the recruitment process quicker, enabling me to start the research promptly. I focused on the experiences of 10-18 year olds as most students in this age group have already participated in dance classes for several years and attend a number of different dance lessons each week. I asked the principals to give students a letter inviting them to take part in the research and an information sheet providing details about what participation in the research would involve. It also explained that all data collected would remain confidential and anonymous, and that participants would have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. Students were also given a consent form, which they were asked to sign and return if they wanted to take part.[25] Parental consent was also obtained for all students under 16 years old.[26] In total, 14 girls and one boy participated in the research.

At Greenleaf Secondary School, I recruited participants by asking the Head of Dance to select 10 students, aged 14-18, to take part in the research. I asked the Head of Dance to choose students who had opted to take GCSE or A-level Dance (meaning they had participated in dance for several years) and who regularly took part in extracurricular dance activities. Students were given an invitation letter, information sheet and consent form by their Dance teacher in December 2014, to be signed and returned before Christmas. This meant that I could carry out research with students straight away in January. Parental consent was also obtained for all students (including over 16s). In total, six girls and four boys took part in the research.

I recruited participants at DS Dance by asking the dance teacher and group organiser to choose eight dancers to take part in the research. The dancers in the group have a range of speech and language abilities, so I asked the dance teacher and group organiser to suggest participants who they thought would be able to complete a short interview. I created an 'easy read' information sheet and consent form that was appropriate for the abilities of participants, which I handed out at the end of a dance lesson. I also gave participants (and their parent/guardian) a brief verbal explanation of the research (where possible). Although all participants were aged 18-25, I also provided their parent/guardian with an information sheet and asked them to sign a consent form, as they were responsible for the

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[25] Across all three fieldsites, only one young person who was invited to take part in the research (at the dance school) opted not to, so another dancer was asked to participate instead. One student at the secondary school was withdrawn from the project by the Dance teacher (and replaced by another student) because they were absent on several occasions when I was observing lessons and missed their scheduled interview.

[26] The dance school principals felt it was unnecessary to obtain parental consent for over 16s.

young persons' attendance at dance classes. In total, four girls and four boys participated in the research.

Appendix A includes examples of the invitation letters, information sheets and consent forms used at each fieldsite. Table 1 provides a summary of the young people who participated in the research.

Table 1: Summary of the Research Participants

Fieldsite	Pseudonym	Gender	Age (if known)
The Southern School of Dance	Abigail	Female	10
	Becky	Female	17
	Charlotte	Female	16
	Chloe	Female	15
	Emily	Female	16
	Isabel	Female	14
	Jasmine	Female	15
	Josh	Male	12
	Katie	Female	14
	Lizzie	Female	14
	Lucy	Female	12
	Matilda	Female	13
	Megan	Female	14
	Freya	Female	17
	Rosie	Female	17
Greenleaf Secondary School	Brooke	Female	15
	Camilla	Female	18
	Joe	Male	18
	Leah	Female	17
	Lewis	Male	15
	Lily	Female	14
	Lydia	Female	14
	Nathan	Male	15
	Ruth	Female	16
	Tom	Male	17
DS Dance	Annabel	Female	
	Claire	Female	
	Daniel	Male	23
	Henry	Male	24
	Liam	Male	22
	Maddie	Female	
	Matthew	Male	20
	Ruby	Female	25

3.5 Research Methods

In this section, I describe and reflect on the research methods used: participant observation and autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews. Table 2 provides a summary of the different research methods used at each fieldsite.

Table 2: Summary of Research Methods Used

Fieldsite	Dates research conducted	Number and age of participants	Research methods used		
			Participant observation and autoethnography	Semi-structured interviews	Video reflection interviews
The Southern School of Dance	September 2014 – July 2015	15 participants (14 girls, 1 boy), 10-18 years old	• Observed 22 hours of dance lessons • Participated in 175 hours of dance classes and rehearsals • Helped backstage and performed in dance school show at theatre (46 hours) • Observed prize giving ceremony (1 hour)	• 15 initial interviews with young people (30-50 minutes) • 15 follow-up interviews with young people (4 included some video reflection) (5-30 minutes) • 3 interviews with teachers (30-35 minutes)	• 18 video interviews (3 participants were interviewed twice) with young people (10-40 minutes)
Greenleaf Secondary School	January 2015 – April 2015	10 participants (6 girls, 4 boys), 14-18 years old	• Observed dance lessons every Tuesday from 9.00am-3.05pm for 11 weeks (46 hours) • Observed 'Community Dance Show' rehearsal and performance (8 hours)	• 10 interviews with young people (10-30 minutes) • 2 interviews with teachers (15-50 minutes)	• 9 video interviews with young people (10-40 minutes)
DS Dance	September 2014 – December 2014	8 participants (4 girls, 4 boys), 18-25 years old	• Helped during 11 one-hour dance lessons • Helped backstage at 'Community Dance Show' (4 hours) • Observed performance at Christmas fête (2 hours) • Helped at Christmas party (1 hour)	• 8 interviews with dancers (5-10 minutes) • 4 interviews with parents (20-30 minutes) • 2 interviews with student helpers (10 minutes) • 1 interview with dance teacher (40 minutes) • 1 interview with group organiser (40 minutes)	

3.5.1 Participant Observation and Autoethnography

Described by Geertz (1998: 69) as a form of 'deep-hanging out', participant observation involves the researcher 'immers[ing] him or herself in a social setting for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworker, and asking questions (Bryman, 2016: 694). During this time, the researcher 'unobtrusively and systematically' collects data in the form of field notes (Bogdan, 1972: 3). I carried out participant observation during dance classes, rehearsals and performances at all three fieldsites in order to develop an understanding of young people's everyday lived experiences of participation in dance. In total, I carried out 316 hours of participant observation: 244 hours at The Southern School of Dance (197 hours observing and participating in dance classes, 46 hours helping backstage and performing in a dance show, and 1 hour watching a prize giving ceremony); 54 hours at Greenleaf Secondary School (46 hours observing dance lessons, and 8 hours watching a dance show rehearsal and performance); and 18 hours at DS Dance (11 hours helping during dance lessons including some time teaching Ballet, 4 hours helping backstage at a dance show, 2 hours watching a performance at a Christmas fête, and 1 hour helping at the Christmas party).

Bryman (2016: 433) notes that when conducting participant observation the researcher may adopt different roles depending on their 'degree of involvement' in the social world they are researching. Adler and Adler (1987) distinguish between 'peripheral membership' (just observing), 'active membership' (participating in some activities) and 'full membership' (full participation). As discussed below, my position shifted from 'peripheral membership' to 'full membership', depending on the research context: at the secondary school, I mainly observed dance lessons and rehearsals; at the dance group, I observed some dance activities and participated in others; and at the dance school, I participated fully in many dance lessons, rehearsals and performances. As a researcher with dance training and experience, I had sufficient knowledge of dance steps, as well as the technical skills, strength and flexibility to be able to participate fully as a dancer at The Southern School of Dance.[27]

I wrote brief 'scratch notes' (Sanjek, 2005: 95) or 'jottings' (Russell Bernard, 1994: 389) in a notebook, either whilst I was researching (e.g., when I was sitting at the front of the dance studio 'observing' a lesson) or as soon as possible afterwards (e.g., in the changing rooms after I had 'participated' in a dance class). These initial jottings then acted as a memory trigger when writing up 'full field notes' (Bryman, 2016: 444). My field notes included my observations about: the physical layout and features of the dance studio, rehearsal or performance space; the dance clothes and

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[27] My age (24 at the time of the research) and gender also meant that I was in a unique position to participate in dance lessons. It might have been considered inappropriate, for example, for an older, male researcher to participate in a dance class with teenage girls.

shoes that young people wore; the activities that took place in waiting areas, changing rooms and dressing rooms; the structure and content of dance lessons, rehearsals and performances; the particular movements, exercises and dances that students learnt, practised and rehearsed; the music that young people danced to; the role of the dance teacher and the pedagogical techniques used (including my own experience of teaching Ballet to the dance group, see below); the interactions between the dance teacher and the students; and the behaviours, actions and interactions of young people. I also recorded conversations I had with young people, teachers and parents, and described my own experience as an observer/participant in lessons, rehearsals and performances.

At the dance school, when I had fully participated in a dance class, rehearsal or performance I produced an autoethnographic recording of my own embodied experience of dancing. Ellis et al. (2011: 273) describe autoethnography as 'an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)' (see also Butz and Besio, 2009; Holman Jones, 2005). I drew on my own personal experiences of learning, rehearsing and performing dance exercises and routines in order to further develop my understanding of the embodied, emotional and social experiences involved with dancing at the dance school. I used my own body as an 'instrument of research' and as a 'tool' through which to gain access to the embodied, kinaesthetic, sensory and emotional aspects of dancing (Longhurst et al., 2008: 208). For example, I described physical experiences (e.g., exhaustion, tiredness, feeling out of breath, muscles feeling heavy, sweat trickling), sensations registered in my muscles, tendons and ligaments (e.g., stretching, clenching, gripping, pulling, aching), emotional highs and lows (e.g., frustration, nervousness, excitement, thrill, achievement, empowerment), and the embodied experience of dancing and interacting with other bodies (e.g., dancing in synchronisation, touching a dance partner's 'sweaty' body, the dance teacher 'touching' my body). In recent years, researchers from a range of disciplines have used their own body 'directly in the field as a recording machine itself' (Dewsbury, 2010: 327) to investigate a variety of different sports and physical activities, including cycling (e.g., Larsen, 2014; Spinney, 2006), running (e.g., Hockey, 2004, 2006), boxing (e.g., Wacquant, 2004), swimming (e.g., Throsby, 2013a, 2013b) and dancing (e.g., Potter, 2008).[28] Following these authors, I drew on my own embodied and sensory experiences to explore the 'lived corporeality' of dancing (Throsby, 2013a: 9).

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[28] Whilst 'the body' has become an established topic of geographical and wider social scientific research, it is only recently that researchers have begun to consider the body as a tool through which to *do* research (see Hawkins, 2014; Longhurst et al., 2008). It is worth noting, however, that within the discipline of dance studies, the use of 'first-hand narratives that employ [the researcher's] own body as a tool to document and investigate dance' is well established (Buckland, 2010: 339). In fact, it is common practice in dance ethnography for researchers not only to observe the dancing, but to participate in it (see Sklar, 2000).

In the next sections, I provide specific details and reflections about my experience of conducting participant observation and autoethnography at each fieldsite.

<u>The Southern School of Dance</u>

At The Southern School of Dance, I participated in weekly Ballet, Tap and Modern dance lessons from September 2014 to July 2015. At the start of the research, I discussed with the school principal which dance classes to attend. She recommended one Ballet class (1 hour 45 minutes), two Tap classes (1 hour each) and one Modern class (1 hour 15 minutes) that would be a suitable standard for me and where the students would be closest to me in age. Later in the year, the principals invited me to perform in the school dance show in July, and so I also attended some extra classes in preparation for the show. From September to December 2014, most lessons involved practising exercises and routines from the ISTD or RAD examination syllabi, and then from January to July 2015 classes mainly involved learning and rehearsing choreography for the school dance show (and some costume fittings). I wore a leotard, tights and dance shoes for class, and tied my hair back in a ponytail or bun. In total, I participated in 175 hours of dance lessons. In addition, I observed a further 22 hours of Ballet, Tap, Modern and Jazz classes, during which I sat at the front of the studio, watched the lesson and made notes. These were lessons where students were rehearsing a show dance that I was not going to perform in, or where the students in the class were too young for me to join in. In June 2015, I also watched the dance school's annual prize giving ceremony. In July 2015, I helped backstage and performed in the school dance show at the theatre. My role as a 'backstage assistant' involved undertaking tasks such as preparing dressing rooms, hanging and labelling costumes, putting props in the wings, and registering students when they arrived at the theatre. My role as a 'performer' involved participating in a technical and dress rehearsal at the theatre, and then performing in four shows (three evening performances and one matinee). During each show, I performed in the 'Opening' and 'Finale' numbers, and in a Tap and Modern dance. I also helped at 'side of stage', carrying scenery and props on and off the stage.

Whilst conducting research at the dance school, I found that my position as a former student helped me to build rapport with the young people with whom I attended dance classes. I also found that my status as a university student acted as a point of connection with young people who were studying for their A Levels at Sixth Form College and (considering) applying for university. Over the course of the research, I had several discussions with young people who were interested in finding out about my experiences of the process of applying to university and attending open days; where I went to university; what undergraduate course I did; and what a Masters degree and PhD are. During dance lessons, I also built rapport with young people through the process of learning and rehearsing

exercises and routines, for example by asking a class member to go over a particular sequence with me or through the experience of 'dancing together' (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1.4).

<u>Greenleaf Secondary School</u>

At Greenleaf Secondary School, I observed lessons every Tuesday from 9.00am to 3.05pm for 11 weeks (46 hours in total) from January to April 2015. The Head of Dance suggested that I conducted research on Tuesdays as this would allow me to observe GCSE and A-level Dance lessons. The timetable for the day was as follows:

9.00-10.00am: GCSE Dance, Year 10
10.00-11.00am: Free period or other performing arts lesson
11.00-11.20am: Break
11.20am-12.20pm: AS Dance, Year 12
12.20-1.05pm: Lunch
1.05-2.05pm: GCSE Dance, Year 11
2.05-3.05pm: A2 Dance, Year 13

I observed practical lessons (during which, for example, students choreographed an individual or group dance, or practised their set study) and theory classes (which involved, for example, students learning about different choreographic devices, or analysing a professional dance work). In addition, I observed a 'Community Dance Show' rehearsal and then watched the performance as a member of the audience in the evening.

During most lessons, my role was as an 'observer' and I sat on a chair at the side of the dance studio, watched and made notes. However, I was sometimes more involved in lessons; for example, by chatting informally to students about their choreography, or by helping the teacher by playing the music for each student's performance during their 'mock exam' lesson. There were also a few occasions when my position as a 'dancer' led me to make a contribution to the lesson. For example:

> Mr Brown explains to the class that they are going to spend this lesson polishing their routine [...]. Mr Brown: "I think the thing you *really* need to work on, is your projection. If I was teaching a class and I was talking like this (Mr Brown looks down), then would everyone in the class think I was talking to them? No. But if I just lift the eye line (Mr Brown demonstrates) then it makes such a difference. You've really got to think about opening up, broadening, presenting". I nod in agreement. Mr Brown looks towards me: "Miss is agreeing with me". I reply: "Yeah. I think that's one of the main things, projection. I think you need to think, rather than just looking to the corner of the room, for example, you need to see

beyond it, into the sky". Mr Brown: "Yes, exactly. Into the Gods! It's like when you're in a massive theatre and you have to project to the very back of the audience". (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

Whilst conducting participant observation, I also found that my position as an 'insider' in the dance world acted as a point of connection with students and helped build rapport. For example, I had several informal discussions with students about the process of auditioning for dance colleges, and conversations about going to see musicals in London.

DS Dance

At DS Dance, I conducted participant observation during 11 one-hour weekly dance lessons between September and December 2014. During dance lessons, I took on a similar role to the student and parent helpers, talking to young people and answering their questions, joining in with the warm-up, exercises and routines, and assisting the dance teacher (e.g., by correcting positions and spacing, helping dancers to line up). During some lessons, the class practised a dance that they had learnt previously (that I did not know), so I sat on the bench at the front and watched. In addition, after 4 weeks of helping out during dance classes, the dance teacher asked me if I would like to teach the group some Ballet exercises for 10 minutes during the lesson the following week. The class seemed to enjoy this experience, and I taught them some more Ballet during four more lessons. I also helped backstage at a 'Community Dance Show' that the group performed in (e.g., helping the group to rehearse their dance, accompanying dancers from the dressing room to the wings), watched the group perform at a school Christmas fête, and helped at the Christmas party.

Over the course of the research, I developed a good relationship with the dance teacher, partly due to our common interest in dance. For example, the dance teacher invited me to attend a weekly 'House' dance class with her, and later in the term asked if I would like to watch a live screening of *Manon* by the Royal Ballet at a local cinema. As the research progressed, I also felt that I developed a closer relationship with the some of the young people in the group. I was initially quite apprehensive about talking to young people with Down's syndrome, as I had no previous experience of working with people with disabilities or learning difficulties. However, as I spent more time with the group I became more confident and I found that informal conversations at the start of lessons provided an important opportunity to build rapport (see also Chapter 5, Section 5.1.3). Furthermore, I found that teaching Ballet to the group helped me to build relationships with some of the young people who had limited speech and language abilities (see discussion in Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2 about the particular connection I formed with Adam, a dancer who rarely used verbal communication).

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews involve 'an interviewer and an interviewee discussing specific topics in depth' (Hennick et al., 2011: 109). Semi-structured interviews are an effective way for researchers to find out about participants' experiences, views, values, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, relationships and behaviours (Bryman, 2016) as they describe and explain their everyday lives and activities 'in their own words' (Valentine, 2005: 111). By conducting interviews, I aimed to develop an understanding of young people's experiences of participating in dance lessons, exams and performances, capturing their 'individual *voices* and *stories*' (Hennick et al., 2011: 110). In total, I carried out 61 semi-structured interviews, ranging from 5-50 minutes in length. I conducted 50 interviews with young people: 30 at the dance school (participants were interviewed twice), 10 at the secondary school and eight at the dance group. I also interviewed four parents of young people in the dance group, two student helpers at the dance group, the dance group organiser and six dance teachers (three at the dance school, two at the secondary school and one at the dance group) to provide further context.

At the beginning of each semi-structured interview, I explained to participants what the interview would be about and how long it would last for. I informed participants that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to. I explained that that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to any of the questions I asked and that I was interested in their experiences, opinions and ideas. I confirmed that they were happy for the interview to be audio recorded and reminded them that they could stop the interview at any time without giving a reason. I created an 'interview guide' for each interview (see Appendix B for example) listing questions and topics to discuss (Bryman, 2016: 468). In general, I began interviews with 'warm-up' questions (e.g., "When did you first start dancing?") (Mason, 2002: 73) and as the conversation developed, I asked participants to discuss 'more difficult, sensitive or thought-provoking' ideas (e.g., "Could you describe your relationship with your dance teacher?") (Longhurst, 2010: 107). I let the discussion unfold in a 'conversational manner' allowing participants to explore and raise issues that they felt were important (Longhurst, 2010: 107). I also asked participants about activities or events that I had observed during classes and rehearsals. I adapted the interview format for young people with Down's syndrome (see discussion below). All interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and fully transcribed (see Section 3.6).

When designing and conducting interviews, my own experiences as a 'dancer' influenced the topics I selected for discussion and the questions that I asked. I also found that my knowledge of dance (e.g., the names of dance steps) was useful because it often helped the flow of conversation. For example, in my interview with Miss Rachel at the dance school, my knowledge of the ISTD Tap syllabus meant that the conversation could continue without interruption:

[W]hen my students get to, to Grade 4 [Emma: Yeah] erm I, I, I let all my students wear t-shirts in class if they want to over their leotards. The reason *I* do that [...] is because I'm trying to get a much more relaxed.. Years ago Tap was very.. ahh, I'm not sure how anyone who doesn't understand dance would understand [Emma: *Laughs*], but 'ISTD'. I know *you* understand. And now they want a much more relaxed, American style of Tap [...]. Weight further forwards, down into the ground. And I don't think wearing a leotard for that does it any justice.

Miss Rachel recognised that my position as a former student at the dance school meant that I would 'understand' the changes to the ISTD Tap syllabus, enabling the conversation to continue without interruption. At the secondary school and dance group, however, I found that this could also be problematic as sometimes participants wrongly assumed that I would have a certain knowledge or understanding, and I then had to interrupt the conversation to ask the participant to explain. On a few occasions, I found myself drawing on my own knowledge and experience to 'give advice' to participants. For example:

Isabel: I've thought about it [a career in dance], but I don't know how [Emma: Umhum], and I don't think. The only way I thought it would be possible, if you like went to the Royal Ballet School and that's not gonna happen! Cos you have to be like, I can dance, but I haven't got the exact figure [Emma: Umhum] and flexibleness, strength.

Emma: Umhum. There's, I suppose there's other dance schools like, erm like have you heard of Urdang? [Isabel: Umm no]. I think there's, there's some other ones that girls from [this dance school] have gone on to [Isabel: Yeah] that are like not just Ballet, they're other types of dancing as well.

In this exchange, our 'interviewer-interviewee' roles seemed to reverse as I informed Isabel about my knowledge of vocational dance schools. In general, I found that my position as a 'dancer' acted as a point of connection with interviewees and helped me to establish rapport. Several participants commented that they enjoyed having the opportunity to talk about their experiences of dance to someone who understood and was genuinely interested. Stinson et al. (1990: 21) interviewed young women about their experiences of dance and similarly found that many participants expressed 'delight in having someone listen to them with clear interest as they spoke of dance and of themselves' noting that 'they had never had an opportunity to speak in this way with someone who understood and that all dancers should have a chance to do this'. As an interviewer with a personal interest in dance, I found the interview process particularly interesting and enjoyable, especially

when participants described thoughts and feelings that I had considered or experienced myself as a dancer.

In the next section, I provide specific details and reflections about the semi-structured interviews that I carried out at each fieldsite.

The Southern School of Dance

At the dance school, I carried out 15 initial interviews (30-50 minutes long) with young people in the autumn term, during which I asked them about when they first started dancing, why they enjoyed dancing, their reasons for attending dance lessons, their experiences of participating in dance exams and shows, any difficulties or challenges involved with dancing and their thoughts about their future participation in dance. I then conducted 15 follow-up interviews (5-30 minutes long) with these young people in the summer term, during which we further discussed and explored in more detail topics from their initial interview, and talked about their experiences of rehearsing for the upcoming school dance show in July. I also asked students taking GCSEs and A Levels about their experiences of attending dance lessons whilst preparing for school exams. Four of these follow-up interviews also included some video reflection (see Section 3.5.3). I felt that participants were generally more relaxed and confident during their follow-up interview as they were familiar with the interview format and knew what to expect. Furthermore, I had built a relationship with participants over the year (e.g., through participating in dance classes together, chatting in the changing rooms) which, I felt, meant that they were more comfortable discussing their experiences and ideas with me. All interviews were arranged at a convenient time for participants (e.g., after a dance class) and were conducted in the dance school studio foyer areas, which provided a quiet and convenient place to talk.

I also interviewed three teachers at the dance school: Miss Mary (School Principal and Teacher), Miss Sally (School Principal and Teacher), and Miss Rachel (Teacher). The interviews were conducted in the summer term in the dance studio or foyer area and were 30-35 minutes in length. During the interviews, I asked teachers for information about the dance school (e.g., number of students attending classes) and about their role and responsibilities. The interviews also provided an opportunity to give teachers preliminary feedback about the research findings and to get their perspective on issues raised by young people during their interviews (e.g., dance teachers being like 'second mums', see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3). As previously discussed in Section 3.2, this research aims to listen to young people's voices and to explore young people's experiences of dance from their *own* perspectives. Therefore, the opinions and ideas articulated by teachers have not been

privileged or treated as 'more valuable' than those expressed by young people, but instead used in an informative and supportive capacity.

Greenleaf Secondary School

At the secondary school, I carried out 10 interviews (10-30 minutes long) with young people during which we discussed how they were involved in dance at school (and outside of school), why they chose GCSE/A-level Dance and their experiences of both the practical and theory elements of the course, their experiences of participation in extracurricular dance clubs and shows, their views on Boys Dance, why they enjoyed dancing and their thoughts about their future involvement in dance. All interviews took place at lunch time, after school or during a free period, and were carried out in a teacher's office, the school library or staff room, which provided a quiet and convenient place to talk. In addition, I interviewed Mr Brown (Head of Dance) and Miss Wood (Dance teacher). These interviews were 15-50 minutes in length. The interviews provided an opportunity to ask the teachers for information about the Dance department (e.g., details about the GCSE and A-level Dance Courses offered, extracurricular clubs and activities) and their roles and responsibilities within it, to get their responses on issues raised by students (e.g., students feeling 'closer' to their Dance teachers than other subject teachers, see Chapter 5, Section 5.2) and things that I had observed, and to provide some initial feedback on the research findings.

DS Dance

At the dance group, I conducted eight interviews with young people with Down's syndrome. I was initially unsure about whether interviews would be an appropriate method to use with young people in the dance group because many of them have difficulties with speech and language. However, I also wanted the young people to be 'active participants' in the research and to have the opportunity to express their ideas and experiences (Walmsley, 2004: 64). Therefore, I decided to ask the dance teacher and group organiser for their guidance. They encouraged me to carry out the interviews and made suggestions about which young people I should ask to take part. In order to meet the needs and abilities of participants, they advised me to keep the interviews short (no longer than 10 minutes) so as not to be overwhelming, and to give participants the option of having a student helper or parent who they had known for a long time with them during the interview to reassure them. During interviews, I asked participants to tell me about whether they enjoyed dancing and why, how they felt when they were dancing, whether they liked doing performances, what their favourite dance and/or dance move was and whether they disliked anything about dancing. I kept questions short, simple and clear. All interviews lasted 5-10 minutes and were carried out whilst

lessons were happening in the corridor outside the school hall, which provided a familiar and convenient setting. Two dancers opted to have a student helper or parent present.

I found that the interviews generated valuable insights into young peoples' experiences of dance; for example, the importance of friendships made through dance classes and the relationships between young people and their dance teachers (see Chapter 5). However, when carrying out the interviews I sometimes found it difficult to understand participants as their speech was not always clear, especially to my inexperienced and untrained ear. This interrupted the flow of the conversation and could be frustrating for both participants and myself. In interviews where a student helper or parent was present, they were able to assist with interpretation which eased this problem. I also found that participants' speech and language skills meant that they gave very short answers (often only a few words or a part of a sentence) to the questions that I had asked. Thus, whilst the interviews did provide an opportunity for participants to articulate their ideas and experiences, the interview data generated was different (in terms of depth and length of discussion) to that produced during interviews with young people at the dance school and secondary school. Furthermore, as previously discussed, I asked the dance group teacher and organiser to suggest participants to be interviewed who they felt would manage well in an interview situation. Inevitably, this meant that the 'voices' of those dancers whose speech and language skills were less strong were not heard. Therefore, my experience of conducting interviews with young people at DS Dance raises questions about the possibilities and limitations of verbally based research methods.

At DS Dance, I also conducted four interviews with parents (face-to-face or on the telephone) that were 20-30 minutes long, during which I asked them to provide details about when their son/daughter became involved in DS Dance and their reasons for participation. In addition, I carried out two 10-minute interviews with student helpers and a 40-minute interview with the dance teacher, during which we discussed their experiences of teaching and helping during dance lessons and performances, and their thoughts about the reasons why young people come to DS Dance. I also carried out a 40-minute interview with the group organiser, during which we discussed the history of DS Dance, what it aims to achieve, how it is run (class fees, funding, the parent committee, classes and performances) and her thoughts about the reasons why young people participate in dance classes. These interviews were conducted in order to provide additional context and background information.[29]

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[29] I obtained informed consent from all teachers, group organisers, student helpers and parents interviewed.

Garrett (2011: 521) argues that the discipline of geography 'has yet to realize the full potential of video as a research methodology' and that it would 'benefit greatly from expanding the researcher's toolkit to include the consistent use of digital video'. It is perhaps unsurprising that video as a form of 'vision' has been underutilised as a research method, given assertions that geography is a 'visual discipline' that has depended on 'visualities and visual images to construct its knowledges' (G Rose, 2003: 212) and associated arguments about 'the problematic elements of visual knowledge' (Crang, 2010: 208) (see Rose, 1993). Garrett (2011: 522) also suggests that reticence towards the use of video technologies by geographers may in part be due to 'perceived technical barriers' (e.g., the cost of specialist video equipment, lack of training in video editing and production techniques). Recently, however, Jacobs (2015) notes that there has been a growth of long overdue interest in the use of video as a research tool and form of dissemination including, for example, documentary filmmaking (e.g., Gandy, 2007), research reports (Baptiste, 2016), visual vignettes (Naylor et al., 2014) and participatory video (e.g., Kindon et al., 2007; Parr, 2007). A number of geographers have used video as a method for researching embodied practices (e.g., Brown et al., 2008; Simpson, 2011; Spinney, 2011). Importantly, in this research, video is not simply used as a method for capturing 'the visual', but as part of a research approach that aims to attend to the embodied, multi-sensorial, emotional and affective, and can be situated alongside recent calls for geographers to attend to the non-representational aspects of embodied practice.

For example, Spinney (2011) used video to research the embodied practices of cyclists. Spinney (2011) filmed participants whilst they were cycling and then used the footage as the basis for an in-depth interview. Participants were filmed on three journeys, each from a different camera angle: on the first journey, the participant had the camera 'mounted on their helmet or head' to record their view of the bike ride; on the second journey, the researcher 'followed the participant with the camera and filmed them' to get a view of their body; and on the third journey, the camera was 'mounted on handlebars pointing back at the participant' to film their facial expressions (Spinney, 2011: 167). Spinney (2011: 167) asserts that the video footage retained much of the 'context and detail' of participants' cycling, prompting them to give in-depth accounts of their mobile, embodied experiences. Spinney (2011: 168) found that by stopping, pausing and slowing down the video footage, fleeting moments were 'stretched out', enabling participants to, for example, reflect on the 'kinaesthetic sensations of jumping, kicking, pulling, bending, stretching, feeling, [and] balancing'. Brown et al. (2008) used a similar video method to research the embodied practices of mountain bikers and walkers, attaching headcams to participants and then replaying the footage during an

interview. The researchers found that watching the footage prompted participants to articulate 'embodied, emotional, sensory and kinaesthetic knowledges and experiences', including emotional highs and lows, the aches and soreness of injuries, and feelings of boredom and contentment. Brown et al. (2008: 5.9) suggest that these knowledges and experiences are often difficult to verbalise as 'they are not necessarily conscious and reflective but are instead embodied in the flesh'. In short, Brown and Spinney (2010: 131) argue that watching video footage enabled participants to provide more 'nuanced, situated and richer linguistic accounts' of their embodied, emotional and sensory experiences than they otherwise may have done.

Outside the discipline of geography, video-stimulated/assisted recall interviews have been used by researchers in a number of fields including sports science and psychology (see Lyle, 2003), education (e.g., Schepens et al., 2007) and occupational therapy (e.g., Unsworth, 2001). Brown et al. (2008: 2.2) argue that these studies aim to produce 'valid' and 'reliable' footage that captures cognitive processes such as decision-making and reasoning. This footage is then used to query participants about their decisions and to test competing psychological decision-making theories. Such research therefore adopts a positivist, realist approach in which video footage is treated as 'objective data' (Pink, 2011: 98). In my research, rather than viewing video footage as 'objective reality', it is recognised that 'images are never transparent windows onto the world. They interpret the world; they display it in very particular ways; they represent it' (Rose, 2012: 2). Following Brown et al. (2008: 2.4), in this research I treat video footage 'less in terms of being an objective or factual record of what people do, and more as a constructed audio-visual representation that may be used to *evoke* a sense of subjective positions and experiences'. Video reflection interviews have also been used in the disciplines of dance science and education (e.g., Leijen et al., 2009; Wyon et al., 2011); however, to my knowledge, this research uses video as a way of analysing dance performance, technique and choreography, rather than accessing embodied, emotional or sensory experiences.

The video reflection interview method that I used in this research was inspired by the work of Spinney (2011) and Brown et al. (2008). I filmed participants whilst they were dancing during their lessons, and then conducted a video reflection interview with them in which the video footage of them dancing served as the focus of discussion. During the interview, I asked participants to reflect on what they were doing, thinking and feeling whilst they were dancing. The rationale was that watching the video footage would help participants to evoke and articulate their embodied, emotional and sensory experiences of dancing.

I carried out video reflection interviews at two fieldsites: The Southern School of Dance and Greenleaf Secondary School. I felt that it would not be suitable to conduct video reflection

interviews at DS Dance based on my experience of carrying out semi-structured interviews with young people at this fieldsite (see Section 3.5.2). I filmed 15 young people at the dance school and nine young people at the secondary school. I videoed participants during their dance lessons whilst they were practising set exercises, performing their own choreography and/or rehearsing show dances. Some participants were filmed during a number of classes in order to record them performing different dance styles (e.g., Ballet, Tap and Modern). In total, I recorded 249 video clips summing to 8 hours, 8 minutes and 20 seconds of film. I conducted 27 video reflection interviews: 18 at the dance school (three participants were interviewed twice) and nine at the secondary school. All interviews were 10-40 minutes in length. At the dance school interviews were carried out in the studio foyer areas, and at the secondary school they took place in a teacher's office, the school library or staff room, which provided quiet and convenient venues.

I used two different types of video camera to film participants. Firstly, I used a hand-held camcorder to film participants from the front of the dance studio from the 'audience perspective' (this camera was held still). Secondly, I used two GoPro action cameras which participants wore whilst they were dancing using a head strap (see Figure 1) to film the view from 'their perspective' and/or a chest harness (see Figure 2) to film their lower body, legs and feet. By filming from 'a variety of perspectives' (Spinney, 2011: 167), I aimed to capture different aspects of participants' experiences of dancing (e.g., different parts of their body, their proximity to other dancers, what the dance 'looked like' to the audience) and to prompt a detailed interview discussion. GoPro action cameras are small, lightweight, robust and wearable video cameras suitable for capturing professional quality footage of extreme sports (e.g., snowboarding, skydiving, jet skiing). GoPros are predominantly marketed for use by amateur sporting enthusiasts. However, recently they have started to be used in a diverse range of academic research contexts, for example, men's experience's of surfing (Evers, 2014), a surgeon's view during surgery (Bizzotto et al., 2013; Graves et al., 2015) and to measure 3D topography of the sea-floor (Schmidt and Rzhanov, 2012) (see also Chalfen, 2014). The use of GoPro action cameras to research young people's experiences of dance offers another potential application for this video technology. All video equipment was provided by Durham University Geography Department.[30]

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[30] Durham University Geography Department already had a Sony Handycam Camcorder DCR-SX44 Red available for me to borrow. The Department purchased two GoPro Hero3+ BLACK edition cameras plus accessories (two head straps, two chest harnesses, one junior chest harness) especially for this research, which I was asked to return after completion for other researchers to use. The GoPro equipment cost £745 in June 2014 (plus the additional cost of two SD cards).

Figure 1: GoPro Hero3+ BLACK edition with head strap

(Image source: Author's own photograph)

Figure 2: GoPro Hero3+ BLACK edition with chest strap

(Image source: Author's own photograph)

Before conducting the research, I gave young people (and their parents/guardians) an information sheet about the research which included details about the video method (see Section 3.4), and asked them to sign a consent form giving their permission to be filmed.[31] At the beginning of the lesson, I spent several minutes with each participant explaining to them how to adjust the GoPro head and/or chest straps so that they were comfortable, and then showing them how to use the GoPro cameras (e.g., how to switch the cameras on/off, how to check whether the cameras were recording). I asked participants to switch the GoPros on whenever they wanted to film themselves dancing and to switch them off when they were talking or waiting around. I used different combinations of cameras to film participants at any one time, depending on the participants' preference and what I felt was appropriate in the context of the dance lesson (e.g., GoPros felt more appropriate if the class was practising individual set exercises, whereas the hand-held camera seemed appropriate if the class was rehearsing a group routine). Combinations included filming participants using: one GoPro (head or chest); one GoPro (head or chest) plus the hand-held camera; two GoPros (head and chest); two GoPros (head and chest) plus the hand-held camera; and the hand-held camera only. Whilst participants were using the GoPro cameras, I either sat at the side/front of the room to watch or participated in the class myself. Therefore, I was able to help with any technical problems or issues that arose. Although I tested the GoPro cameras at home, I decided not to wear them during dance classes myself because of time constraints; I needed to record and edit footage, then interview participants within just a few weeks. However, if logistics permitted, it would have been interesting to film myself and build this footage into my own autoethnographic account (e.g., Evers, 2014).

I uploaded all the video footage to my laptop. I then edited the video footage using 'Cyberlink Power Director 13' video editing software.[32] Initially, it took me some time to learn how to use the software as I had no previous training or experience of using it. However, once I had got to grips with the software, I found the process of editing video footage fairly quick and straightforward. I began by sorting through the video footage, labelling clips and deleting 'test' or 'accidental' footage. For each participant, I then cropped and pasted together clips of them dancing to create one long video to play in their interview. Where multiple videos of the same dance had been recorded from different camera angles, I synchronised the clips and created a split-screen effect so that they could be

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[31] It is worth noting that the use of film and photography is not unusual at either fieldsite: at the dance school, all shows are filmed and photographed; and at the secondary school, students frequently film/photograph themselves and other class members, and are shown footage of other students' GCSE/A-level compositions.

[32] At first, I tried editing the footage using the 'GoPro Studio' which is free to download from the GoPro website, but I found that it did not enable me to do everything that I needed (e.g., import video footage from the Sony Handycam in a different file format). Therefore, I decided to purchase 'Cyberlink Power Director 13' for £99.99 using my ESRC Research Training and Support Grant.

watched simultaneously. This process of editing was important because it meant that video interviews flowed more smoothly than if I had repeatedly stopped the interview to search for video clips. Thus, I undertook the editing process for practical purposes (i.e. to improve the efficiency of interviews), rather than because I wanted to play a role in selecting which material to show participants during interviews.

At the start of each video reflection interview, I reminded participants that any information they told me would remain confidential and anonymous. I then asked participants to watch the video footage and to talk about what they were thinking, doing and feeling whilst they were dancing. I provided participants with a 'prompt sheet' which included questions such as, 'How did you feel when you were dancing?', 'What is your favourite part of the dance and why?, 'What muscles could you feel working or stretching?' and 'Were you out of breath or dizzy?' (see Appendix C). I suggested to participants that they referred to this during the interview if they needed to, but that they could talk freely without using the 'prompt sheet' if they wanted to. During the interview, video footage was played, paused and repeated so that participants could talk in detail about their experiences. In some interviews, I took an active role, pausing video footage for participants and prompting them with questions; in other interviews, participants took this role on for themselves, pausing the video footage when they wanted to reflect and needing little prompting. Some participants also chose to talk over the footage (i.e. whilst it was playing) providing a 'live narration'.[33]

Hadfield-Hill and Horton (2014: 138) claim that it is 'remarkable that children and young people's perspectives and emotions whilst participating in research have gone relatively unrecorded' and that this tendency is 'particularly problematic in disciplinary contexts where there have otherwise been concerted efforts to explore children and young people's emotions and opinions about research topics, and to grant them voice and participatory agency'. Hadfield-Hill and Horton (2014: 151) argue that it is 'important to talk with research participants about their feelings and experiences in/of research' and 'to value their ways of articulating and thinking through these experiences'. In response to this, at the end of each video reflection interview I asked participants some questions about their experiences and feelings about using the GoPro cameras and watching back/talking about the video footage (e.g., if they enjoyed using the GoPros, what they thought of the video footage) as will be explored in the following sections. All interviews were recorded using a dictaphone and transcribed in detail (see Section 3.6).

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[33] I do not have permission to include the video clips with this thesis. However, it is possible to read and make sense of the thesis without watching the video footage. Furthermore, it is the verbal accounts that young people gave to describe the video footage that is the focus of analysis.

In the following sections, I critically reflect on the experience of using this research method. I organise this discussion around four key topics: technical issues involved with using the GoPros; excitement, laughter and pressure in relation to the experience of using the GoPros; intrigue, disorientation and learning in relation to watching the GoPro video footage; and the value of the video reflection interviews in terms of accessing embodied, emotional and sensory experiences.

Using the GoPros: Technical Issues

The GoPro cameras proved to be extremely reliable, with a long battery life and ample memory space, and generated high-quality video footage. However, a number of technical problems arose. First, the GoPro cameras did not have a display screen, meaning that participants were unable to view the footage as it was being filmed. Instead, participants had to wait until the video footage had been uploaded from the GoPro camera onto my laptop in order to watch it. As a result, there were several occasions where the angle that the participant had worn the GoPro chest camera at was too high and 'missed' filming the participants' own body, legs and feet completely. There was no simple solution to this problem as it would have been too time-consuming and disruptive to check the video footage part-way through the lesson; however, as the research continued I got better at judging by eye a suitable angle for the GoPro chest camera and the problem occurred less often.[34] In some respects the lack of display screen was advantageous, as it meant that after the initial 'fuss' of putting the camera on, adjusting the straps and learning how to use it, participants and other class members were not distracted by trying to look at the footage during the lesson.

Second, it was sometimes difficult for participants to dance 'flat out' whilst wearing the GoPro cameras. Some participants were worried that they might knock the camera out of position, hitting or damaging the GoPro, if they danced 'full out'. For example, Brooke (15) explained:

> I was scared [that if I did] a move full out then it [the GoPro] might have like shook or [Emma: Yeah] been out of place but, yeah. You couldn't do moves full out because you didn't wanna like knock them [the GoPros] [Emma: Yeah] or anything.

Several participants also found that the GoPro chest camera got in the way of them dancing so had to adapt or miss out certain movements. Many participants felt that the GoPro head camera was at risk of 'fly[ing] off' (Tom, 17) and potentially hitting another class member, especially when performing acrobatics (e.g., back flips, somersaults), lifts, jumps, turns and floor work, so opted to

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[34] I later discovered that it may have been possible to use a 'Live Preview' tool available using the 'GoPro App' to frame the shot before filming (see GoPro Inc., 2015). This would be important to investigate in future research.

leave out particular movements whilst wearing the camera, or to take the camera off completely when dancing certain exercises. Furthermore, I was concerned that participants might hurt themselves, for example, by landing badly from a jump and falling onto the camera, so suggested that they leave out 'risky' movements. This meant that video footage often did not capture the most energetic moves, which, perhaps unsurprisingly, participants wanted to talk about during their interviews because they found them particularly exciting or enjoyable to perform.

Third, whilst many participants found that the GoPros were 'comfortable' to wear and that they 'didn't really notice [having] them [on]' (Chloe 15), others reported that they were itchy and awkward. Some female participants wore the GoPro chest camera over their dance leotard, meaning that the straps touched and rubbed against their bare skin. Charlotte (16) commented: '[T]he back on the erm [chest harness], I think it's cos my, like my leotard's really low-back, it was quite itchy'. In addition, the GoPro chest camera harness had a bulky front panel (see Figure 2), which did not always sit comfortably over female participants' chests. Charlotte (16) further explained: '[A]fter a while, the front bit started rubbing on my chest, like underneath my rib-cage'. The GoPro head camera was also 'awkward' (Lizzie, 14) to wear if the participant had a pony tail or bun in their hair because the central strap got in the way.[35] The GoPro head camera was also 'itchy' (Isabel, 14) and often left participants with a 'red mark' (Charlotte, 16) across their forehead when they took it off. Therefore, throughout the research process, I reminded participants that they could take the GoPros off whenever they wanted to, especially if they were uncomfortable. However, most participants saw these problems as minor and opted to keep the GoPros on.

Using the GoPros: Excitement, Laughter and Pressure

Many participants reported feeling excited about the prospect of using the GoPros. None of the participants who I interviewed had ever used a GoPro before; however, most were familiar with the technology (although not necessarily by name) from watching videos on YouTube, Instagram or Facebook, or through friends or family members who had used a GoPro camera for recreational purposes. Chloe (15) commented:

> I was really excited about using them! [Emma: *Laughs*] Cos you see them on like Instagram of people when they do like amazing things, like jump[ing] off [a] cliff and you're like, "Ahh! I wanna do that!". And then you brought in GoPros and I was like, "Ahh! [Emma: *Laughs*] I'm gonna get to use them!".

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[35] These technical issues raise questions about the suitability of the design of the GoPro chest and head straps for women (and deserve attention from researchers working in the field of gender and technology).

Chloe had already watched GoPro footage online and was excited about having the opportunity to use this technology herself. Similarly, Charlotte (16) explained that whilst she had previously watched GoPro videos on the internet, she had never seen GoPro footage of dancing: '[U]sually like, you get links on Facebook, to like skiing people with GoPros, like under water, but you never see dancing with a GoPro!'. Tom (17) was also excited about the prospect of using the GoPros: 'I've always wanted to use one of them GoPros. I think it will be really cool!'. Tom's suggestion that using the GoPros would be a 'cool' thing to do was an idea repeated by many participants. These comments indicate the value of using research methods that involve providing participants with an opportunity to use new (and expensive) technology that they might not usually have access to, in getting them engaged and excited about taking part in research.

Participants also had 'fun' (Isabel, 14) using the GoPros during lessons, sometimes finding unusual and ingenious ways of using the cameras that resulted in much hilarity:

> Katie and Lizzie are both wearing GoPros on their chests [...]. Miss Mary has asked the girls to practice at the back of the room, while she concentrates on helping Josh with his allegro exercise [...]. The girls have stopped practising and have started messing around with the GoPros. Katie and Lizzie are moving the GoPros so as to try to catch each other's faces in the video footage. Lizzie, Katie and the other girls are in fits of giggles. Miss Mary has spotted the girls and laughs: "What on earth are you doing?!". The girls are literally in hysterics now and Miss Mary's comment has not helped! I laugh and say: "I'm going to have fun watching this footage back aren't I?!". Everyone is laughing! (Fieldwork notes, Ballet class)

Using the GoPros created unexpected opportunities for participants, other class members, teachers and me (the researcher) to share moments of laughter (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2 for discussion of student-teacher relationships). I found that these moments were important in establishing rapport with participants and in building a relationship with them that was formed not just during (relatively) 'formal' interviews, but also through 'fun' shared experiences.

Some participants commented that when they were using the GoPro cameras, they felt under pressure to perform the steps correctly: '[I]t made me think about, "Oh gosh, ok this is going on camera", and I had to definitely think more about, "How am I doing this and what is it going to look like?"' (Megan, 14). Katie (14) similarly explained: '[I]t made me actually work harder! Cos I knew that [Emma: Yeah] someone was gonna watch [Emma: Yeah] what I was doing'. Joe (18) explained that the physical experience of wearing the GoPros improved his performance:

[I]t [the GoPro] also makes you kind of project more [...]. [W]hen it [the GoPro] was there on my chest, I almost thought I'd direct it more, and when I had it on my head I'd know I've [Emma: Ok] [got to] make sure of [where I was] looking [Emma: Yeah] and making my focus points better.

Joe felt that wearing the GoPro cameras had improved his posture and made his 'focus points' more direct, by increasing his self-awareness of his own body.

Watching the GoPro Video Footage: Intrigue, Disorientation and Learning

Participants, dance teachers and I were excited and intrigued to watch the video footage, particularly from the GoPro cameras:

Lily takes the GoPro head camera off and Mr Brown tells the class that they now need to work on their choreography [...]. I upload Lily's video to the computer at the front of the dance studio. I'm really excited – this is the first time I've seen any GoPro footage! It looks really cool! Mr Brown notices the video playing and comes over to have a look – he seems very intrigued! A couple of the students also notice the video playing, stop what they're doing and come to have a look. Before we know it, most of the class has stopped working and is trying to catch a glimpse. Mr Brown asks me to stop the video and announces to the class: "If you work hard, then we can watch it together at the end of the lesson!". There's lots of grumbling as the class resign themselves to their work [...]. Mr Brown connects the computer to the large TV screen. I press play. Mr Brown, Lily, the rest of the class and me are all captivated. None of us have ever seen anything quite like it before! (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

Whilst we were all familiar with watching video footage filmed from the 'audience perspective', the GoPro head camera footage offered a completely different perspective, capturing Lily's view looking towards the audience and reversing the directionality of the filmer/filmed relationship. Complicating this further, the video footage sometimes captured Lily's own reflection of herself in 'the mirrors', providing brief glimpses of the 'audience perspective'. The GoPro camera also filmed parts of Lily's own body (e.g., her arms, hands and hair) and Lily's view of other dancers in the class. Thus, the GoPro footage captured a new and different view from the dancer's perspective that we found mesmerising to watch.

Some participants found that watching the GoPro video footage was initially quite 'disorientating' (Leah, 17) and made them feel 'dizzy' (Charlotte, 16). Chloe (15) explained that she found the GoPro footage quite difficult to watch to begin with, but she adjusted to it after a while: 'I think at the start

of watching the footage, I found it quite hard to watch it, but by the end it was [...] alright [Emma: Yeah], quite normal'. Brown et al. (2008: 6.4) similarly found that 'the sensation of motion when watching the footage' made some participants feel 'uneasy, although they became used to it after a few minutes'.[36] Chloe explained that one of the strangest things about watching the GoPro footage was seeing herself turn: 'The room seems to spin, but you seem to be staying exactly still'. Chloe also commented that the GoPro video footage was 'distorted', changing the proportions of different parts of her body: 'It [the GoPro video footage] was kind of like a fish-eye view [...]. It's quite rounded. And it [chest camera footage] makes my feet look really tiny [Emma: Yeah] and then like my legs look really big!'. Freya (17) similarly explained: 'I thought it was so weird seeing my feet at that angle [from the chest camera]. I don't really know why, but I just think because you don't see the rest of the body'. Therefore, whilst aiming to get closer to participants' embodied experiences, some participants felt that the GoPro footage created a sense of *dis*embodiment by distorting and disturbing their ideas about what their own body looked like and by making certain parts of their body (e.g., their feet) seem disconnected from the rest.

Once they had overcome the initial 'weirdness' of the GoPro video footage, most participants seemed to enjoy watching it. Isabel (14) commented: 'It was really cool [...] seeing a different perspective [Emma: Yeah] and, and just... I don't know, experiencing something new'. Emily (16), referring to the GoPro headcam footage, reported: 'It was good seeing it because [...] rather than [...] just watching yourself dance, you see the other girls around you and like what happens around you'. However, some participants found watching themselves on film 'embarrassing'. Just before watching her footage, Megan (14) commented:

> This is going to be so embarrassing! [Emma: *Laughs*] The pressure is so bad! It's like with a camera [Emma: *Laughs*], I just, you probably thought I was dreadful at dancing! [Emma: Oh no I didn't! Not at all!] [...] *So* embarrassing.

Megan was nervous about watching her own body on video. This was heightened by my position as an 'audience' with specialist dance knowledge, which Megan felt put me in a position to 'judge' her dancing. Becky (17) similarly explained:

> [N]ormally I wouldn't, I don't know, like watch, want to watch myself [Emma: *Laughs*] erm cos it's kind of embarrassing, but it's quite, I think it's good to watch back, because it obviously only makes you a better dancer like watching [Emma: Yeah] erm yourself...

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[36] I did consider giving participants a copy of the video footage before they watched it during the interview. This would have provided them with an opportunity to get used to watching the video footage. However, I decided that it would have logistically been too difficult to organise.

[Emma: Yeah] so that you can improve, so you can see what the teacher's saying to you [Emma: Yeah] erm so you can see for yourself like what you need to do. Because [Emma: Yeah, I guess so, yeah] [I think that's the only way that] it gets into your brain really, cos a teacher can say to you, 'Oh you're not doing that right', but to fully understand it, I think it's good to watch it.

Although Becky felt embarrassed about watching herself on film, she also appreciated that this process could help her to improve her work. This idea was repeated by Freya (17):

I think it's really helpful to see your, like to see myself dance in that way because erm, then you can talk about it, and you can see like the, the mistakes you do. Like in the Ballet, for half of it I was so turned in [Emma: *Laughs*] and I never realised how turned in I was! I was in one arabesque and I was like actually parallel, Miss Mary would kill me if she watched that back [Emma: *Laughs*]. So that, that's like an improvement that I can work on. And with Tap, you see like, if you make your steps bigger, it looks better in certain ways [Emma: Yeah]. And with improvisation I realise that I, I 'step' quite a lot [Emma: *Laughs*] and maybe I need to start making up some other movements!

For Freya, the video footage facilitated a process of self-realisation and self-correction, which she thought would enable her to make improvements to her dancing. Thus, for Becky and Freya, watching the video footage during the video reflection interview had the unexpected benefit (not aligned to the research aims) of acting as a tool for self-correction, indicating the potential for GoPro footage not just to 'get at' embodied experiences but also to act as a learning mechanism for dance technique (see research in dance education on video reflection by, for example, Leijen et al., 2009).

Video Reflection Interviews: Articulating Embodied, Emotional and Sensory Experiences

I found that watching the video footage prompted participants to talk about their embodied, emotional, sensory and kinaesthetic dance experiences, for example: the (anticipated) sense of achievement associated with learning and perfecting a dance movement or sequence (e.g., Becky's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1) or choreographing a routine (e.g., Joe's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2); the feeling of enjoyment associated with physical movement, bodily liberation and freedom (e.g., Rosie's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1); the (embodied) difficulties and challenges involved with learning particular exercises and routines (e.g., Becky's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1); the sense of fun associated with learning and 'going wrong' together (e.g., Lucy's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2); the feeling of bodily pleasure associated with being 'on balance' and getting a movement 'under control' (e.g., Becky's comments in Chapter 6, Section

6.2.1); and the kinaesthetic sensations involved with dancing such as muscles aching and feeling dizzy (e.g., Becky's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1). The videos also prompted participants to talk about the process and experience of learning to dance, including the different elements that required thought and concentration whilst dancing such as technique, timing, rhythm and spacing (e.g., Brooke's and Emily's description of dancing in synchronisation in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.4) and interactions with the dance teacher (e.g., Lucy's comments in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2) and other students for instance the experience of dancing with a partner (e.g., Chloe's comments in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.4). Such detailed descriptions would have been impossible to achieve by talking to participants whilst they were actually dancing. I also found that they were difficult to 'get at' during semi-structured interviews when participants tended to talk more generally about their participation in dance (e.g., the significance of dance in their everyday lives, their memories of taking part in dance exams and shows) rather than talking about their actual experiences of dancing.

The GoPro video footage itself was also illuminating in some instances, conveying a sense of the 'sheer physicality and visceral experience' of dancing such as heavy breathing or the heart beating (KM Brown et al., 2008: 5.11). The GoPro video footage also captured 'sounds and vocalisations [which] powerfully conveyed the affective highs and lows of particular practices' (KM Brown et al., 2008: 5.16), including laughter (see examples discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2), squeals of exhilaration, and grunts of exertion and strain. As Brown et al. (2008: 5.11) argue, although 'a far cry from the actual sensations of lungs burning and heart beating' the video footage prompted 'greater or at least more immediate empathy for the experience than language could alone'. These aspects of the video recordings were also helpful in interviews because they encouraged participants to elaborate on these elements of their embodied experiences.

In terms of talking about the footage, I found that there were sometimes slight differences in the conversation generated by watching different types of video recordings. For example, GoPro chest camera footage often focused attention on the participants' own body, whereas hand-held camera footage tended to encourage discussion about what the dance 'looked like' to the audience. I found that some participants 'got the hang' of talking about the video straight away, whereas others found it more difficult and needed prompting.[37] This was partially dependent on the type of dancing that the footage captured. Megan (14) explained: '[I]t was sometimes quite hard talking about an exercise [Emma: *Laughs*] which is just quite boring!'. Other participants commented that dances that they were more familiar with were easier to talk about. For example, Lucy (12) said:

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[37] Before carrying out the video interviews, I thought that older participants might find it easier to talk about the video footage; however, I found that there was no obvious correlation between age and ability to talk about the video.

[It] was quite easy answering the questions, because I'm [...] doing my exam for both Modern and Tap after the show, so I know all my work by heart, so [...] it's just easy to talk about.

Isabel (14) similarly explained: '[B]ecause I've done them [the exercises] so many times, like I know which ones I like and which ones I don't [Emma: Yeah] and [...] which bits hurt and [Emma: Yeah] [which] don't'. Joe (18) commented:

Erm.. I dunno erm.. it's [talking about the video is] alright, just some things, I dunno, it's just like, you usually don't have to think about, you just have to just know you have to do [Emma: You just have to do, yeah]. Yeah. So and a lot of these things I kind of know anyway [...] before watching it [Emma: Yeah]. But it just highlights it by watching back on it.

Joe's comments suggest that watching the video footage prompted his consciousness of 'skills, competencies and tacit knowledges' that are 'embodied to such a degree that' he usually 'just does' them (KM Brown et al., 2008: 5.12). Joe's remarks also highlight an important methodological issue: that the video reflection interview method relies on memory recall and the retrospective articulation of the dance experience.

3.6 Data Analysis

Bailey (2008: 129) argues that transcription is 'an important first step in data analysis' as it involves 'close observation of data through repeated and careful listening'. I transcribed semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews as soon as possible after recording. I listened to each recording multiple times in order to transcribe the conversation as accurately as possible, including details such as tone of voice, emphasis, hesitations, repetitions, interruptions, reassuring sounds (e.g., 'umm', 'uhhuh'), audible breaths in and out, coughs and laughs.[38] When transcribing video reflection interviews, I noted down when video footage was played, paused and replayed, as well as whether participants spoke during or after video footage was played. Importantly, Bailey (2008: 130–131) argues that '[i]t is impossible to represent the full complexity of human interaction on a transcript'. Inaccuracies, misinterpretations and loss of nuance are inevitable during the transcription process. Therefore, rather than simply being a straightforward 'technical procedure', transcription is an 'interpretive process' which involves making decisions about how to best represent speech in written form (Bailey, 2008: 130).

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[38] In the interview quotations that appear in this thesis '[...]' is used to indicate an omission of speech, and '...' is used to indicate a pause (with each full stop indicating a 1 second pause).

The next stage of data analysis involved the 'coding' of semi-structured interview transcripts, video reflection interview transcripts, and my own participant observation/autoethnographic fieldwork notes.[39] This involved labelling passages of text (phrases, sentences and paragraphs) with 'codes' (recurrent or significant themes). As Charmaz (1983: 186, original emphasis) explains, '[c]odes [...] serve as shorthand devices to *label*, *separate*, *compile*, and *organize* data'. Drawing on the principles of 'grounded theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), codes were developed using an 'inductive' approach; rather than requiring data 'to fit into *preconceived* standardized codes', codes emerged from the data as it was analysed (Charmaz, 2000: 515). There were two key stages in this coding process. First, approximately 3 months into the fieldwork process, I coded the initial data that I had generated (printing out transcripts and fieldwork notes, and coding the data by hand) and created a 'spider diagram' on A2 paper highlighting emerging themes. The implications of this analysis then informed the next stage of data collection. Second, at the end of the fieldwork process I undertook a systematic (re)coding of all the data I had generated on the computer. I opted to use a system of Microsoft Word documents to organise the data into different codes. These two stages of coding involved a to-ing and fro-ing 'from the material to ideas, back to the material' (Crang, 2005: 225) as I refined and reviewed the codes I had identified.

During the coding process, I attempted to 'listen' to the data and to allow themes to emerge from it; however, my own ideas were inevitably drawn into the identification of codes. As a dancer, I came to the research with my own experiences of participation in dance classes, shows and exams which will have (sub)consciously informed my interpretation and analysis of the data (and prior to this, research design and data collection). Furthermore, Sandelowski (1998: 376) explains that during write-up, the researcher selects and ignores certain sentences, paragraphs and themes, disciplining and assembling the data to tell a particular 'story'. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that whilst attempting to stay true to the data, in the write-up of this thesis 'I have unavoidably selected and framed in particular ways participants' experiences and words' (McNiven, 2014: 18). Due to word limitations and time restrictions, I have also not been able to write about 'everything' that I found, instead highlighting the themes that I felt were most important. I found that during the writing up process this sometimes left me feeling like I was doing an 'injustice' to the young people whose lives I was investigating and whose story I was attempting to tell.

Throughout the analysis chapters, I decided to integrate the data from the three different fieldsites (rather than providing three separate 'case studies') because when analysing the data I found that many themes cut across all three fieldsites and I wanted to emphasise the similarities between the

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[39] This research is interested in exploring participants' *own accounts* of their embodied experiences; therefore, I analysed the transcripts from the video reflection interviews, but *not* the video footage itself.

experiences of young people in different contexts (see also Section 3.3). However, within the analysis chapters certain sections sometimes draw on research data from one or two of the fieldsites only. In these instances, I felt that a particular aspect of young people's participation in dance that was specific to one fieldsite warranted greater attention (e.g., in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3 I focus on young people's experiences of participation in the dance school show which formed a significant part of my fieldwork), or because during the process of conducting fieldwork I did not generate data about a particular topic at a particular fieldsite (e.g., in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3 I focus on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only because I explored issues surrounding body shape and size during interviews at these fieldsites but not at the dance group) (see Section 3.1 where I discuss the 'context-sensitive' approach to conducting the research). In addition, I did spend significantly more time at the dance school than at the secondary school and dance group (see Table 2), so I inevitably draw more heavily on data from this fieldsite.

Throughout the analysis chapters, I also integrate data generated using different research methods (i.e. quotations from semi-structured interviews, quotations from video reflection interviews and extracts from my fieldwork diary) drawing on different kinds of data to support each other. Thus, throughout the analysis chapters I use my own experiences of participating in dance to support data from the young people who participated in the research. However, because of the nature of the different types of data and the themes explored, some data was more useful in some analysis chapters than in others; for example, in Chapter 4 I draw predominantly on semi-structured interview data to explore the space of dance within young people's everyday lives, whereas in Chapter 6, I integrate data from semi-structured interviews, video reflection interviews and my own fieldwork notes to explore the emotional experiences involved with dancing.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the research methodology. In Section 3.1, I described the research design and approach. The research used a multi-sited case study design and was conducted using a multi-methodological qualitative approach that aimed to develop a contextualised understanding of young people's everyday experiences of participation in dance and to 'get at' young people's embodied, emotional, sensory and kinaesthetic experiences of dancing (see also Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2). The research was conducted in a flexible, responsive, context-sensitive and reflexive manner. In Section 3.2, I considered some issues involved with doing research with young people, arguing that my understanding of young people as competent social actors influenced my decision to use research methods that allowed young people's voices to be heard. In Section 3.3, I described the three fieldsites (The Southern School of Dance, Greenleaf Secondary School and DS Dance) and provided a

justification for their selection. I argued that the fieldsites involved different 'modes' of participation in dance, allowing me to explore a diverse range of motivations, experiences and meanings that young people associated with dance, and to highlight commonalities between young people's experiences of dancing in different contexts. They also involved young people's voluntary participation in dance in non-elite settings over the long-term. In Section 3.4, I discussed the process of participant recruitment at each fieldsite and provided some information about the research participants. In Section 3.5, I described and reflected on the research methods used at each fieldsite: participant observation and autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews. I gave an extensive reflection on the video method, including a consideration of some of the technical issues involved, young people's experiences of being filmed and watching back the footage, and the interview data generated. In Section 3.6, I discussed the grounded approach to data analysis, and reflected on how the data is drawn together throughout the analysis chapters.

In the following three analysis chapters, I discuss the research findings. The overall aim of the research was to explore young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participating in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances at the dance school, secondary school and dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. I address this aim through an engagement with four key research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5). These research questions map directly onto the three empirical chapters which focus on three different themes that emerged through the process of data analysis (see Section 3.6 above). In Chapter 4: Spaces, I address the first and second research questions by exploring the space of dance within young people's everyday lives and the space of young people's dancing bodies. In Chapter 5: Relationships, I address the third research question by focusing on the relationships that young people formed with each other and their dance teachers. In Chapter 6: Emotions, I address the fourth research question by discussing the emotional experiences involved with dancing. Through these empirical chapters, I seek to highlight the multiple and complex ways in which dance is understood, experienced and situated within young people's everyday lives.

Before beginning the empirical chapters, I want to make one preliminary point in relation to young people's motivations for participating in dance: although a few participants did explain that physical exercise was a primary motivation for their participation in dance, most said that exercise was a secondary reason or an 'added bonus'. In fact, during interviews many young people did not mention physical exercise or fitness until I introduced it as a topic for discussion; instead, they explained their motivations for participation in dance in relation to the importance of dance within their everyday lives, the relationships that they had made with friends and teachers, and the

emotional experiences involved with dancing (including escape, emotional release, achievement and enjoyment). These themes provide the focus of the three empirical chapters. It also indicates the need to be wary of 'reducing' dance to a form of physical activity, which has been a tendency in recent policy contexts (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3).

Chapter 4: Spaces

4.0 Introduction

Smith and Ansell (2009: 60) argue that '[o]ne of the most important ways in which human geography can enhance our understanding of childhood is to highlight the importance of space and place to children's lives'. This focus presents a challenge to work in the new social studies of childhood which has 'frequently lack[ed] an explicit attention to spatiality' (Horton et al., 2008: 339). In their seminal review paper, Holloway and Valentine (2000b: 763) suggest 'three inter-related ways of thinking about spatiality [that] might contribute to the new social studies of childhood' (see also Holloway and Valentine, 2000a). These are summarised by Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011a: 15–16) as follows:

> '(1) emphasizing the importance of place (avoiding the danger of ethnocentrism at the same time as we draw lines of connection between different global/local places); (2) exploring the nature of the everyday spaces in and through which young people's lives are made (including spaces for playing, living and learning); and (3) tracing the importance of ideas about childhood in spatial discourses which inform socio-spatial practices in different sites (practices which then reinforce, or occasionally challenge, our ideas about childhood)'.

Whilst Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011a: 16) 'stand by the basics of this argument', they 'note that the volume of research now available dwarfs that which informed Holloway and Valentine's original reviews, and that some of this challenges us to nuance that argument in new ways'. For example, Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2011a) draw attention to recent research on children and young people's bodies and embodiment (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009; Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010) that can be positioned within a wider 'turn' towards 'the body' in geography over the past 20 years (see Longhurst, 1997, 2001; Nast and Pile, 1998) and that has highlighted the significance of the body as 'both an entity within space and a social space in itself' (Cook and Hemming, 2011: 3) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.4).

In this first empirical chapter, I highlight the importance of space to young people's experiences of participation in dance in two key ways. In Section 4.1, I address the first research question by focusing on the space of dance within young people's present and imagined future lives. In Section 4.1.1, I describe young people's participation in dance at each fieldsite in order to provide a general overview of the extent to which dance classes, rehearsals, performances and exams were part of young people's everyday lives. I argue that many young people had participated in dance for a number of years and now took part in several hours of dance each week. In Section 4.1.2, I argue

that dance had an important space within many young people's everyday lives (e.g., as part of their after-school routine), but also within their lives more broadly (i.e. becoming part of their sense of identity). In Section 4.1.3, I discuss the space of dance within the wider context of young people's everyday lives, highlighting some of the challenges that young people faced in terms of managing their participation in dance alongside other parts of their everyday lives (e.g., school homework, GCSE or A-level revision, other extracurricular clubs) and some ways in which young people made space for dance in their everyday lives (e.g., by using dance classes as a 'break' from GCSE exam revision). Finally, in Section 4.1.4, I argue that dance had a space in young people's imagined futures; in the short-term, young people planned to continue to participate in dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance group, and in the longer-term, many hoped to continue to dance as a recreational activity or to pursue a career in dance. In doing so, my research provides further evidence to support recent work in children's geography that has demonstrated the increasing significance of extracurricular activities (e.g., sports clubs, performing arts lessons) in the everyday lives of many children and young people in the Global North (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.3), extending the existing literature by focusing on how extracurricular activities (in this case, dance) can become part of young people's everyday lives and also their imagined futures.

In Section 4.2, I shift the focus of discussion to the space of young people's dancing bodies and address the second research question. I explore how young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies. I focus in particular on young people's experiences, knowledges and understandings of their physical embodiment, drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only.[40] In Section 4.2.1, I argue that many young people indicated that being a dancer meant developing two key physical bodily characteristics: increased muscular strength and improved flexibility. I argue that this process of bodily change was gradual, but that it was marked by specific bodily achievements (e.g., doing 'the splits' for the first time). In the following sections I argue that being a dancer involved the negotiation of perceptions about what a dancer's body 'should' look/be like in terms of gender, body shape and body size. In Section 4.2.2, I argue that many boys felt that strength was a particularly important physical characteristic for male dancers to develop. I assert that developing strength was used by some boys to challenge the social stigma associated with being a young male dancer, and that at the secondary school a focus on strength was used to encourage

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[40] As I discuss in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6), I decided to structure this thesis thematically (rather than writing up the findings as three separate case studies) as many of the research findings resonated across all three fieldsites. However, in Section 4.2 I focus on data from the dance school and secondary school only as the issues discussed in this section relate particularly to these fieldsites.

boys to participate in dance. Finally, in Section 4.2.3, I argue that girls did not feel that it was necessary to be a particular body shape or size to be a dancer at the dance school and secondary school. Girls did not feel any direct pressure to be a particular body shape or size from their dance teachers or other students; however, some did indicate indirect pressures associated with the dance class environment (e.g., use of mirrors in the dance studio). In doing so, I respond to calls for children's geographers to attend to the 'bodily details of children's lives' (Horton and Kraftl, 2006b: 79) and 'to address and understand the role of the body and it's materiality in children's constructions of social relations, meanings and experiences' (Woodyer, 2008: 358) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.4).

4.1 The Space of Dance in Young People's Everyday Lives and Imagined Futures

In the first half of this chapter, I discuss the space of dance within young people's current lives and imagined futures.

4.1.1 An Overview of Young People's Participation in Dance

In this section, I begin by providing a descriptive overview of young people's participation in dance at the dance school, secondary school and dance group, in order to give a broad sense of the extent to which dance classes, rehearsals and performances were part of young people's everyday lives. I show that many young people in my research had participated in dance for a number of years and now took part in several hours of dance each week. Furthermore, whilst acknowledging the influence of parents and teachers, I argue that young people felt that it was their own decision to participate in dance.

At The Southern School of Dance, many young people had first started attending a weekly 'Toddler's Ballet and Tap' class when they were 2 years old, starting RAD Ballet and ISTD Tap lessons when they were 4 years old and ISTD Modern classes when they were 6 years old. Some students were invited to attend extra RAD Ballet lessons (to train for vocational graded exams) when they were 10 years old,[41] and many opted to start Free Jazz lessons when they were 12 years old.[42] As students moved through the grades, the length of the dance classes they attended increased. Students also attended

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[41] Some students attended vocational exam courses held at the exam board headquarters in the weeks leading up to their exam.

[42] It is common practice in many dance schools in the UK for students to start by learning Ballet and Tap, and to take up classes in Modern or Jazz when they are older. Whilst most young people had danced at The Southern School of Dance since they were aged 4 or younger, a few had started lessons when they were older usually having already attended dance classes at another dance school. Some also opted not to take up Modern and/or Jazz, had started Modern and/or Jazz classes when they were older, or had stopped attending Tap or Ballet classes (although the dance school strongly encouraged students to pursue Ballet to improve their core strength, flexibility etc. which would help their progress in other disciplines).

additional weekly exam preparation classes if they were taking a dance exam at the end of the term, and when preparing for the school dance show senior students (aged 16 or above) attended extra show rehearsals (up to 2.5 hours each week) for the 'Opening' and 'Finale' numbers. At the time of their third interview, the 15 young people I interviewed attended on average 6 hours (minimum 2 hours, maximum 10 hours and 15 minutes) of dance classes and rehearsals at the dance school each week after school and on Saturdays, with some also assisting dance teachers in classes with younger students. The dance school held classes during 30 weeks of the academic year. Additional occasional commitments included dance exams (held at the dance school or RAD/ISTD studios), as well as rehearsals and performances at the theatre for the biennial school dance show. In addition to their participation in dance at The Southern School of Dance, some young people also studied Dance as a (GCSE or A Level) subject at their secondary school and attended secondary school dance clubs. Others (had) also attended dance lessons at other dance schools in different styles (e.g., Ballroom and Latin).

At Greenleaf Secondary School, all students participated in 1 hour of compulsory dance classes each week in Years 7, 8 and 9 as part of the school curriculum. The students I interviewed had also opted to study GCSE Dance in Years 10 and 11 (3 hours per week) and/or A-level Dance in Years 12 and 13 (5 hours per week). As part of the GCSE and A-level Dance courses, students were expected to attend additional rehearsals for group and solo compositions outside of scheduled lesson times (e.g., at lunchtime) especially in the run up to practical dance exams and moderations. GCSE and A-level Dance students also had to complete homework and revise for GCSE/A-level Dance theory exams. Many students also participated in weekly extracurricular lunchtime and after-school dance clubs (e.g., Boys Dance Club). Additional rehearsals (including an all-day run through and dress rehearsal) were scheduled in the lead up to the school's two annual dance shows. Students also occasionally participated in one-off dance workshops (e.g., a West End Musical Theatre Dance workshop) and rehearsals for other performances (e.g., at local theatres). Most young people who I interviewed also danced outside of school (e.g., at a local dance school) and had done since they were young (as young as 2 years old), although a few participants (particularly boys) had first got involved in dance when they started secondary school. Some students had previously taken part in the primary school outreach programme delivered by Dance teachers at Greenleaf Secondary School. The total number of hours of dance each young person that I interviewed participated in varied week by week, however on average most participated in between 4 and 8 hours of compulsory and extracurricular dance classes and rehearsals at school each week (for 39 weeks of the school year).

At DS Dance, many young people had been part of the dance group for several years, some since the group first formed over 15 years ago. Young people attended a weekly hour-long dance class during term time (39 weeks per year), with some parents driving their children for up to an hour to get to the class, which the dance teacher explained was because of the limited number of dance classes available specifically for children and young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings. Young people performed regularly with the dance group at 20 to 30 different events each year (e.g., at local theatres, schools, church fêtes, West End Theatres, TV dance show competition auditions), attending additional rehearsals before some performances. Many young people also took dance exams held at the end of every summer term, and took part in one-off dance workshops with specialist teachers. Some young people also attended other dance clubs for young people with disabilities run by other dance schools in the local area.

Importantly, at all three fieldsites all the young people that I asked said that it was their own decision to participate in dance classes, rehearsals and performances.[43] Although many participants explained that their parents had been responsible for their initial participation in dance classes[44], and at times had encouraged them to continue attending lessons, they felt that now it was ultimately their own decision to continue to participate in dance (although at the dance school and dance group parents did continue to play a significant role by paying for and providing transport to lessons). For example, at the dance school, Emily (16) explained:

> No [my parents don't pressure me to come to dancing], not at all. Like I think when I was younger I was obviously like, "I don't wanna do this, I don't wanna do that", and I think my mum said, "Oh stick with it for the next term", and I'm so glad that I did. Like cos there's

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[43] Whilst I acknowledge that it is possible that GCSE and A-level Dance students may have been limited in their choice to study Dance as a subject (e.g., due to 'option block' restrictions), all spoke positively about studying GCSE and/or A-level Dance and gave reasons why they chose it. At DS Dance, all the parents who I interviewed were clear that it was their child's decision to participate; for example, Barbara, Matthew's mum, commented: 'If he didn't enjoy it, he wouldn't go! He, he would say he doesn't want to go'.

[44] For example, at the dance school several young people explained that their mum had enjoyed going to dance lessons as a child so took them to dance classes because they wanted them to 'try it out' too (Jasmine, 15). Freya (17) said that her parents had bought her a 'ballerina outfit' for her third birthday that she 'wouldn't take off' so decided to send her to dance lessons, and Emily (16) commented that when she was little she used to 'dance around the house' so her mum thought she would enjoy dance classes. Other young people said that their parents took them to dance classes because they thought it would be 'fun' (Megan, 14), they wanted them to do some 'physical activity' (Chloe, 15), they thought dance would be good for their 'posture' (Freya, 17), they wanted them to 'learn a skill' (Rosie, 17), or they thought dance would provide an opportunity for them to 'socialise' with other children (Megan, 14). These findings support existing research showing that parents value extracurricular activities as 'fun, healthy and socially beneficial' for their children (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 621), with middle-class parents often deliberately involving their children in enrichment activities in order to help them to develop their talents and a range of skills (Karsten, 2015; Lareau, 2000, 2002; Vincent and Ball, 2007). Other reasons young people gave for their initial involvement included being taken to dance lessons because they had older siblings who danced (and wanted to dance like them), and being encouraged to start dance lessons by school friends who already attended.

never a class that I don't want to go to anymore [Emma: Yeah]. [...] I always want to come, it's never forced or anything [Emily: *Laughs*].

Many participants said that they were grateful that their parents had got them involved in dance and had continued to encourage or support their attendance, but firmly expressed the view that it was now their own decision to participate. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the influence of parents (and teachers, for example in encouraging students to attend extracurricular dance clubs), it was clear that the young people in my research were competent social actors capable of making 'key decisions about their lives' and 'exercising agency to transform their own social worlds' (Smith and Ansell, 2009: 58–59).

4.1.2 The Central Space of Dance in Young People's Lives

In this section, I argue that dance had a central space in young people's lives in two key ways: first, dance was part of young people's everyday routines; and, second dance had a wider significance in young people's lives as part of their sense of identity.

First, it was clear that for many young people in my research, dance had a central space in their everyday lives and daily routines. For example, at the dance school, Emily (16) explained:

I think, well [dancing is] something I've always done and I've just always loved it [...]. I just, it's kind of in my routine – get home from school, do a bit of [home]work, go to dancing [...]. [I go to dancing every] [Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday], so four times a week [...]. I can't imagine just going home after school and doing nothing!

Dance classes were a key part of Emily's after-school routine and had been for many years, to the extent that she now found it difficult to imagine what she would do after school if she did not have a dance class to attend. Charlotte (16), also a student at the dance school, similarly explained:

I don't know what else I'd do in my evenings! Whenever we have half-term [...] I'm like, "Ahh it's such a nice break from dancing". But then it gets to the Christmas holidays [...] and the summer holidays [which are so long] and about 1 month in I'm like, "Right I'm ready to go to dancing again, come on!". I get really restless at home! It sounds really weird but I'm like, jumping in my sleep, like moving about, fidgeting all the time, I can't, I can't sit still!

Like Emily, Charlotte also felt that she would not know what to do in the evening if she did not have a dance class to attend. For Charlotte, the centrality of dance to her everyday life was particularly evident during the dance school Christmas and summer holidays, when she stopped going to dance classes, which was made manifest through a feeling of physical restlessness.

Second, I argue that dance had an important space in young people's lives in a much broader sense. Several participants at the dance school and secondary school indicated that dance had a wider significance in their lives, for example:

> It's just part of my life now really [Emma: Yeah]. It's just the way it is. [...] I'd be lost, like, if I didn't have a dance class to come to. (Rosie, 17)

> It's like what I do. Like it's kind of, this is gonna sound really cheesy, but it's like my life, like [Emma: Yeah]. It's what I do. (Katie, 14)

> Dance is just a big thing, it's a big part of my life [Emma: Yeah] and I would never wanna give it up. I never would. [...] Like I really enjoy dance, and if someone took that away from me, I'd be distraught. (Lily, 14)

> I don't think I could ever quit dancing. It's just too much a part of my life [Emma: Yeah]. It's just, yeah, I couldn't stop it. (Matilda, 13)

> [T]his sounds really weird, but I would feel like a part of me had gone if I stopped dancing. (Charlotte, 16)

For these participants, dance had become an integral part of their life that they could not imagine being without. Stinson et al. (1990) conducted research with a group of 16-18 year old female dancers in the USA. Several students described the significance of dance in their lives in a similar way; for example, one student said, 'It is who I am... If I couldn't dance I think I would feel like there was a part of me that was just totally dead', and another explained, 'I just can't imagine life without it' (Stinson et al., 1990: 16). Stinson et al. (1990: 16) argue that for these young women 'the meaning of dance' in their lives had become 'intertwined' with their 'identity'. This idea is also reflected in the comments of the young people in my research, and particularly in Charlotte's statement that '[she] would feel like a part of [her] had gone if [she] stopped dancing'.

The notion that the importance of dance in young people's lives was interwoven with their identity was also apparent in the comments of Helen, Ruby's mum, at the dance group:

> Ruby doesn't enjoy [dancing], she lives for it [...]. [S]he absolutely adores it. It's a central part of her life and has been for over 12 years now [...]. [W]hen she meets anyone, she describes herself first in terms of her dance [Emma: Does she?] and then she'll talk about her [other activities that she enjoys] [Emma: Ok]. So that's her own identity [...]. "I'm a dancer, and I'm a [other activity] and [other activity] [...]. That's who I am". [...] [A]nd [that] completely takes away from the idea of just seeing herself as some poor victim [...]. You've only got to look at

disabled groups when they haven't got that "I can" sense about them, they're much more prone to erm being vulnerable [Emma: Yeah] to depression [Emma: Yeah], which is a serious risk for adults with Down's syndrome [Emma: Yeah]. So as far as we're concerned it's the, you know, it's a tonic for all time, and what a lovely way to have your morale picked up.

Helen's comments indicate that dance was not only a central part of Ruby's life, but central to how she identified herself. Helen believed that it was important for Ruby to be able to identify herself as a 'dancer' and not just as 'some poor victim', in order to help her to maintain a positive view of herself. In their evaluation of a dance programme in Canada for children and young adults with additional needs (including young people with Down's syndrome), Reinders et al. (2015: 105) similarly reported that the dance teacher felt a particular benefit of the programme had been to improve the self-confidence of students through instilling a 'sense of identity' as 'a dancer'; the dance teacher explained, 'I think it's that sense of achievement, you know, coming to a dance studio, taking a dance class sort of changes your self-identity. Like you can now identify yourself as a dancer so you have something to be proud of [...]. It just sort of gives you a sense of confidence, I think. You know I am no longer somebody with a disability; I am a dancer and that's what comes first'. Thus, both these findings suggest some potential benefits of participation in dance for young people with disabilities such as Down's syndrome, through developing a sense of identity other than as a 'disabled' person.

4.1.3 The Space of Dance within the Wider Context of Young People's Everyday Lives

In this section, I focus on the space of dance within the wider context of young people's everyday lives, drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school. I highlight some of the challenges that young people faced in terms of managing their participation in dance classes, rehearsals and performances alongside other parts of their everyday life (e.g., school homework, GCSE or A-level revision, other extracurricular clubs), and some ways in which young people made space for dance in their everyday lives.

At the secondary school and the dance school, many young people talked about managing their participation in dance alongside their school work. Several participants (especially GCSE and A-level students) said that dance classes and rehearsals were sometimes time-consuming, which could be 'difficult' when they also had school homework to do. As Ruth (16), a Year 11 secondary school student studying for her GCSEs, explained:

I [do] find that [dance] does erm [clash with homework sometimes]. Yesterday I was [in school] in the morning [...] to do dance and then I had [a rehearsal for] someone else's

[dance] after school. And then I [had] quite a lot of homework to do when I [got] back. So it can be quite erm difficult when you know that you've got a lot to, when you know you've got someone's dance to do after school [Emma: Yeah] and then you know that you've got a load of homework to do when you get home.

However, many students explained that they were used to managing their homework alongside their dance commitments, and had strategies for making sure they completed their homework on time. For example, at the dance school, Isabel (14), who was in Year 10 and studying for her GCSEs, said:

I normally do it [my homework] on a Sunday cos I have nothing on then [Emma: Ok]. And I try and do stuff after school and throughout the week. But it's difficult because most days I go straight from school to dancing [Emma: Ok]. And then I go home and have my dinner [Emma: Yeah]. And then it's late and I get tired [Emma: Yeah]. So erm, I can't really do things on a week day [Emma: Umhum]. But I normally get it all done on Sunday.

Several participants also talked about juggling their participation in dance classes and rehearsals with revision for GCSE and A-level exams. At the dance school, GCSE and A-level exams took place in the summer term at the same time as rehearsals for the school dance show, which several young people said was particularly stressful. Many participants talked about time management strategies that they employed to help them 'fit it all in' (Chloe, 15). For example, Jasmine (15), a Year 11 GCSE student at the dance school, explained:

I tried to like incorporate [dancing] into my revision, so that [dancing] would be my break [...]. I'd do like a few hours [of revision] before, then have an hour off for like dancing, and then come back and do another hour [...]. I think [...] especially on a Saturday when you're doing a lot of hours [at dancing], it's really hard to fit all your revision in on top of it [Emma: Yeah]. So sometimes I did miss dancing [during my GCSE exams], cos I just felt I need[ed] to revise. But I think that generally like, on a Saturday, you're not always in every single dance [Emma: Umhum], so you do have breaks where I bring revision here [to dancing] and do it there. And like if I tell like a dance teacher that I've got to like revise, I can't be at dancing, like they do understand, they understand they're important. So yeah, I think, it is, it's hard to balance it, but I think everyone needs a break, you can't revise constantly. So it's a good way to break up like the evening, your revision [...]. It's something that you can work towards, like, I like coming to dancing anyway but, now when I come to dancing it's like, oh yeah, ok, I

get to have a break from all this revision [Emma: *Laughs*]. And when you're at dancing you just forget about it all as well, so it's quite nice to just not have to worry about it constantly.

Although Jasmine did occasionally miss dance classes in order to make more time for revision, and sometimes took revision with her to dancing, she mostly used dance as a structured 'break' from revision and an opportunity to 'forget' about her forthcoming GCSE exams. Thus, Jasmine actively made a space for dance in her everyday life during exams by incorporating it into her revision schedule. I discuss the importance of dance as an escape from the pressures of everyday life, including GCSE and A-level exams, in more depth in Chapter 6 (Section 6.1). Jasmine's comments are also indicative of the positive relationship she had with her dance teachers, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2).

In addition to school work, some young people also talked about the difficulties of balancing their participation in dance with other extracurricular activities. For example, at the dance school, Chloe (15) explained that although she was part of her secondary school netball team, sometimes she was unable to play in matches because they were on week nights when she had dancing, which took priority, and Lucy (12) chose not to be part of her school netball or badminton teams for this reason. At the secondary school, Joe (18) explained:

> I used to be heavily sports orientated [Emma: Did you?] especially through, from like Year 5 to like Year 8 or 9 [Emma: Oh right]. I used to play volleyball, basketball, rugby, football [...] [Emma: Ok]. Er I did golf for a bit [...], so I did quite a lot. Erm.. but the thing is like erm, when I first started in Year 7 [...] Boys Dance [club] like clashed with volleyball [...]. So I had to give up [...]. I just jacked volleyball in [Emma: Ok] and just did dance. But then eventually dance just kept going up, and then kind of, sports kind of fell behind really [Emma: Yeah]. It's a shame really, because I did really enjoy [...] playing different sports, so at least I've still got like the physical-ness of dancing still, cos it still keeps you moving and things like that.

Although Joe enjoyed participating in a range of different sports, his commitment to dance had led him to drop out of other clubs and activities. Thus, making a space for dance their everyday lives sometimes involved compromise and came at the expense of young people's participation in other extracurricular clubs and activities.

4.1.4 The Space of Dance in Young People's Imagined Futures

In this section, I argue that at all three fieldsites it was clear that for many participants dance not only had a space in their present everyday lives, but also their imagined futures. All the young people I interviewed wanted to continue to dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance

group in the immediate future. In the longer-term, many expressed a desire to dance recreationally at university and into adulthood. Some also wanted to pursue a career in dance and saw a space for themselves in the professional dance world.

'Young people's transitions to adulthood, and the ways in which they perceive and orientate themselves to their future adult lives' has been a concern of social scientists in recent years (Brown, 2011: 8–9), including children's geographers, particularly in relation to future education and employment (e.g., Ansell, 2002; Brown, 2011; Grant, 2017; Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). Ansell et al. (2014: 388) note that the arguments put forward in the new social studies of childhood that children should be understood as 'beings' whose current lives are worthy of attention, rather than 'becomings' or adults in the making, has tended to result in an emphasis on their 'everyday realities, not their likely futures'. However, recently 'recognition has grown that children, like adults, are living lives of constant change, leading to a new embrace of the 'becomingness' of children (Horton and Kraftl, 2006a), although focused predominantly on the ongoing everyday' (Ansell et al., 2014: 388–389). Ansell et al. (2014: 389) argue that Uprichard's (2008) stance is particularly useful here, in which she suggests that children should be conceptualised as both 'being' *and* 'becoming', 'their present and future lives are fundamentally interwoven and research should consider both together'. In this section, I take Uprichard's (2008) view forward through a consideration of how young people's present experiences of participation in dance informed their imagined future participation in dance.

The distinction Nilsen (1999) draws between young people's 'dreams', 'hopes' and 'plans' for their imagined future lives is useful in providing a framework for understanding young people's imagined future participation in dance. Nilsen (1999: 178–180, original emphasis) conceptualises 'dreams' as 'belong[ing] in a timeless and spaceless realm' and 'not requir[ing] any commitment from the person having them'; 'hopes' as 'more tangible and concrete in the sense that they are seen within the realm of the possible having time and space associations, however vague'; and 'plans' as the 'most concrete' with 'a set time horizon, and also a space or place association, in that they are normally expressed in connection with something the person in question has a feeling of *control* over'. All of the young people I interviewed had 'plans' to continue to participate in dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance group in the immediate future (Nilsen, 1999). For example, at the secondary school, participants said that they planned to carry on taking part in extracurricular dance clubs and to perform in school dance shows until they left school, and several GCSE Dance students also said that they intended to study A-level Dance. For example, Year 10 GCSE Dance student, Lily (14), commented:

Yeah, I will [stay on at school for Sixth Form] and [...] I already know [...] I'm gonna choose [A-level] Dance.

At the dance school, young people said that they intended to continue to dance at The Southern School of Dance until they finished secondary school. For example, Year 10 student, Isabel (14) said:

Yes definitely [I will continue to come to dancing next year and in the Sixth Form] [Emma: Umhum]. Until I'm not allowed to come anymore! [Both: *Laugh*] I'll have to go!

Jasmine (15), a Year 11 student at the dance school, explained that she wanted to continue to attend lessons until she was in Year 13 so that she could perform in her final show and take her final Ballet exam:

I plan to stay on at [The Southern School of Dance] [...] because I have like one show left [Emma: Yeah]. And [...] like cos I'm in [name of Grade] Ballet [...] I'd like to like complete all of my Ballet grades.

For Jasmine, her plans to continue dancing at the dance school were also linked with an anticipated sense of future achievement associated with taking her final Ballet exam (see discussion in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3). At the dance group, many young people also said that they wanted to continue to participate in dance classes and performances. For instance, Ruby (25) commented: 'I will definitely [...] carry on dancing, yes'. Ruby's mum, Helen, confirmed that she thought Ruby would continue to dance with the group for as long as possible. Thus, all the young people in my research had firm 'plans' (with a fixed time-frame and space/place association) to continue to participate in dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance group in the near future, albeit for related but different reasons (Nilsen, 1999).

At the dance school and secondary school, many young people planned to go to university and said that they wanted to continue to participate in dance as an extracurricular activity when they arrived. According to Nilsen's (1999) categorisations, these can be understood as 'hopes' for the future, in that they had time-space associations and there was a real possibility that this imagined future would come to fruition. For example, dance school student, Emily (16), explained:

Yeah I would love to [carry on dancing in the future]. When I'm looking at like UCAS[45], universities, all this sort of thing, I've had a look to see if they've got dancing there! [Emma:

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[45] The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is the organisation responsible for the application process for British Universities.

Yeah]. Cos I think it'd just be such a waste [Emma: Umhum] otherwise not to carry on. And I do love it, so [Emma: Yeah]. Yeah, I would definitely like to carry it on.

Freya (17) similarly commented:

I just enjoy it so much I couldn't imagine not dancing. Like even when I'm at uni, I think I'll have to dance! [...] Like I don't, I don't think I could just give it up like that. And erm I think also with all the stresses like that comes along with it, like uni and everything [Emma: Yeah], I think I'll definitely have to continue for that. [...] I think also it provides you with something that in uni, if you didn't have any clubs or activities [Emma: Yep] it's harder to make friends [Emma: Yep], so it's nice knowing that when I go to uni, I'll be able to like be in a group again.

Both Freya and Emily 'hoped' to continue to dance at university, motivated by a love or enjoyment of dance and a feeling that they could not imagine dance not being part of their future lives. These comments further indicate the importance of dance within their present lives. For Freya, participating in dance at university also represented an opportunity to make friends and to manage future stress. In Chapter 5 (Section 5.1) and Chapter 6 (Section 6.1), I argue that friendship and escape from the stresses of everyday life were two important reasons for young people's current participation in dance; thus, Freya's future hopes to participate in dance at university were driven by her current experiences of dance.

Several participants also explained that they saw a place for dance in their future adult lives. For example, at the secondary school, Leah (17) commented:

Yep. I wanna [carry on dancing in the future] anyway like, even if it's just like what my mum does, and does Tap every [Wednesday] like with all her friends. Just stuff like that, I dunno, I don't wanna, really wanna give it up. Cos I enjoy it [Emma: Yeah]. So, yeah. So hopefully, I wanna be doing it, like for as long as I can.

Dance school student, Freya (17), similarly remarked:

And I think even in later life, if I, if I don't go to dance classes, there's always like aerobics or pilates, which are all related to dance [Emma: Yeah], so I think like I'll always continue. And I think if I did have kids, I'd definitely want them to go to dancing, just to see like if they like it as much as I do.

At the secondary school, Lily (14) envisaged dancing into her old age:

Even when I'm a granny, and I'm like 80, I'll still be dancing! [...] I wanna be one of those [grannies that can do the splits!]. I wanna keep it going.

For Leah, Freya and Lily, dance was clearly part of their imagined future adult lives, and even the lives of their potential future children. Lily's comments indicate that her vision of her future adult life was also an imagined *embodied* future, in which her older dancing body would still be able to do the splits. Following Nilsen's (1999) categorisations, the imagined futures described by Leah, Freya and Lily can be understood as 'dreams', rather than the more concrete 'plans' to continue to participate in dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance group, or 'hopes' to dance at university described by participants above, in that they do not have any specific time-space associations or require any current commitment.

At the dance school and secondary school, a few participants also explained that they were hoping to have a future career in dance. Several young people wanted to study Dance as a subject at university or to further their dance training at a vocational dance college, aiming to pursue a career as a dancer performing on stage (e.g., in the West End, on a cruise ship), a choreographer or a dance teacher.[46] At the secondary school, two of the male A-level Dance students who I interviewed had (with the help of school teachers who had provided them with information about dance colleges, prepared them for auditions etc.) applied for vocational dance colleges and been offered places to study next year. Joe (18) explained:

> I used to consider [dance] as a hobby, but now it's a career choice. [...] [N]ext year I'm hoping to do a degree in Dance [...]. I've been accepted into one place so far [...]. I've auditioned at a couple of others but er I haven't heard back from them yet [Emma: Ok]. But I think [name of college] is the one for me [...]. [In an ideal world, in 5 years time] I would like to be.. either on stage or in like a, like music video [...], even on television or something like that [...] in like that sort of industry [Emma: Yeah]. Erm whether it be as an ensemble dancer or in the back, or even if it's like a front man, it'd just be very, you know, it'd just be such great fun. [...] I'd love to have that sort of job where, it's new every single time, and it's just constantly, you know, changing.

However, Joe, like many other young people who I interviewed, was well aware of difficulties of working in the dance industry:

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[46] At the dance school and secondary school, a number of former students had gone on to study dance at vocational colleges (e.g., The Royal Ballet School, The Urdang Academy, London Studio Centre, Bird College of Dance) and at university, pursuing careers as performers, choreographers and teachers. At the dance group, the dance teacher said that one former student had auditioned for Candoco Dance Company (a performing company of disabled and non-disabled dancers), but that this was unusual.

[T]here's like payment and things like that [Emma: Umm] as well not having like a stable [Emma: Yeah] life [...], like musical theatre and dance, you have like a job for 6 months or a year [Emma: Yeah, then], and then [...] you have to look for the next one and keep bouncing around, looking for the next thing [Emma: Yeah], so that's kind of like scary [...]. [Y]ou could be like [...] doing like the most amazing show like one minute, then the next minute, you're, you know, got no job and then you're thinking, "Now what?". So that's quite scary [...]. And.. yeah er like a dance career is sometimes short lived as [...] you may have an injury or something [...], or you may be like not as employable when you get older [Emma: Yeah]. So then, erm there's other options I could turn to like, it's good to have a degree, so you can turn to teaching [...]. But, it's still exciting anyway, like, I'd rather be doing that than like working in an office or something like that.

Thus, dance occupied a key space in Joe's current and imagined future life. Joe's short-term imagined future involved 'plans' to study for a degree in Dance at a vocational college, with his longer-term imagined future including both 'hopes' (to perform 'on stage' or in a 'music video') and 'dreams' (to have a successful career as a performer or teacher) (Nilsen, 1999). Whilst Joe was aware of the difficulties of pursuing a career in the dance industry, this ultimately did not deter him from following his dream and he saw a space for himself in the professional dance world. Joe's views resonate with Brown's (2011: 18) findings in his research exploring the aspirations of white working-class teenagers in south-east London, in which many young people emphasised the importance of 'finding a job that they enjoyed (or even loved)' and indicated that 'being wealthy was not the primary motivation' for success.

However, at both the secondary school and the dance school, many other participants had decided that they did not want to pursue a career in dance, although most had considered it (to varying degrees of seriousness) at some point. For example, Freya (17) explained:

I've always wanted to be a [name of job], so [...] I always saw [dance] as a hobby. I did think when I started teaching dancing [as an assistant], like I loved that so much, like I loved working with the little children [...] so I thought [...] well oh maybe if it didn't work out, I'd definitely consider something in dance, but I'd never want to do it on stage, or be like a professional, I'd wanna be a teacher I think, if I did anything with dance. [...] I don't think that I'm good enough for the dance industry. I think that you have to be like super, super good [Emma: Yeah] to be in it. And also there's other things like erm like they're obviously all like really, really skinny. And I just think that's like a bit off-putting in some ways. And erm it's really, it's a really hard life [Emma: Yeah]. Like even though, money doesn't matter that

much, but you don't get paid that much and you don't, like you don't have a career for the rest of your life. Like it only lasts till you're 30. And then you have to decide something else. And I don't think I'd like that, I'd like just like a steady career I think.

Freya, like many other participants, did not want to pursue a career in dance for three key reasons. First, many young people were put off by the harsh reality of the dance world, including the difficulty of successfully gaining a place to train at a vocational dance school, for example Leah (17) reported that 'one in eight boys' and 'one in 250 girls' who audition get in, and the tough working life of a dancer, including poor pay, job security, career length and competition getting jobs.[47] Second, they thought that they were 'not good enough' (Charlotte, 16) to be a professional dancer, including not being 'flexible enough' (Charlotte, 16) or not being the 'right shape' (Camilla, 18) (cf. Section 4.2.3 in which I discuss the very different views expressed by young people about *not* needing to be a particular body shape/size to dance at the dance school or secondary school), and not having the correct training or 'grades' (Brooke, 15) (e.g., not having studied Ballet or taken exams). Third, many participants simply did not want to be a professional dancer, seeing dance as a hobby, wanting to pursue a more 'academic route' (Ruth, 16) or to go to university, or having another career in mind. Thus, for many young people, dance occupied a dual position; dance had a space in their everyday lives and their imagined futures, but they felt that there was no space for them in the professional dance world.

4.2 The Space of Young People's Dancing Bodies

In the second half of this chapter, I now redirect the focus of the discussion to the space of young people's dancing bodies. I explore how young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies. I focus in particular on young people's experiences, knowledges and understandings of their physical embodiment, drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only. In Sections 4.2.1, I consider how participation in dance resulted in physical changes to young people's bodies (e.g., increased strength and muscular flexibility). Then, in Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, I argue that being a dancer involved the negotiation of perceptions about what a dancer's body 'should' look/be like in terms of gender, body shape and body size.

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[47] Figures about the number of students who successfully audition for vocational dance schools and the number of dancers who successfully gain employment in the dance industry are difficult to find. However, Dance UK (2015) report that there are at least 450 dancers in West End musicals, 209 dancers from the UK performing onboard cruise ships, 539 dancers employed by Contemporary Dance companies in the UK, and 262 professional Ballet dancers in England and Scotland.

In this section, I argue that being a dancer at the dance school and secondary school meant developing two key physical bodily characteristics: improved muscular strength and increased flexibility. I argue that this process of bodily change was gradual, but marked by specific physical achievements (e.g., doing 'the splits' for the first time).

Many young people at the dance school and secondary school spent several hours participating in dance classes each week and had done for a number of years. A number of participants explained that this had resulted in physical and material changes to their bodies, in particular increased muscular strength and flexibility.[48] For example, at the dance school, Isabel (14) explained:

> Yeah [I'm] definitely [stronger and more flexible than I used to be]. And compared to all my [school] friends [...] they are really un-flexible and they have fat bellies, and me, I can do the splits and [...] I have like a toned belly [Emma: Yeah] and I have muscles in my legs compared to all my friends.

For Isabel, the strength and flexibility she had gained through dancing, demonstrated by her 'toned belly', the 'muscles in [her] legs' and her ability to 'do the splits', marked her body as different to her non-dancing school friends and were indicative of her physical embodiment as a dancer.

This process of bodily change was gradual and most obvious when reflecting on changes to the body over several months or years. This is illustrated by my own experience of bodily change over the 11-month research period. When I first started participating in dance classes at The Southern School of Dance in September 2014, I felt that my own body was 'out of shape'. Since leaving the dance school when I was 18 years old, I continued to dance at university whilst studying for my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees; however, whilst I attended 8 hours of dance classes each week at the dance school when I was 18, at university I only took part in between 3 to 4 hours of dance each week. When I first returned to dance classes at the dance school in September 2014, I felt that my own body was far less flexible and not as strong as it used to be, as illustrated by the following extract from my field diary:

> Miss Mary puts the music on for the grand battements exercise at the barre. I prepare my arm to fifth position. The exercise starts with one grand battement développé en avant with the right leg, followed quickly by two grand battements. I kick my leg as high as I can, but it doesn't go anywhere near as high as it used to and I can feel the stretch in my hamstring!

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[48] I define 'flexibility' as '[t]he range of movement in the joints (involving muscles, tendons and ligaments)' and strength as '[m]uscular power' (AQA, n.d.: n.p.)

[...] The next exercise at the barre is développés. This exercise is a real test of strength. I lift my leg in retiré and slowly développé my leg en avant, opening my arm through first to second position. I aim to hold my leg just above 90 degrees, but there's no way I can sustain this so have to drop my leg lower. It's disappointing as I used to be able to hold my leg at this height, but even having dropped my leg to lower I can feel the muscles in my thigh, bottom and tummy working so hard! I'm so out of shape! (Fieldwork notes, Ballet class)

However, as the year went on and I participated in an increasing number of hours of dance classes and rehearsals each week at the dance school (5 hours in the autumn term, increasing to up to 8 hours and 45 minutes in the summer term) I gradually regained some of the strength and flexibility that I had lost. For example, in Ballet lessons I slowly increased the height to which I could grand battement and développé my legs by practising the exercises on a weekly basis. There was no single moment when I felt that I had regained my strength and flexibility; I experienced this more as a subtle and gradual process of bodily change over a number of months.

However, I argue that this gradual process of bodily change was also marked by specific memorable physical achievements. For example, several young people at the dance school and secondary school could remember clearly the first time they had done 'the splits'. For example, at the dance school Freya (17) explained:

I think the first time you do the splits, it's like, "Oh my Goodness, I've achieved my life goal!" [Both: *Laugh*]. I remember when I went down into the splits the first time, it was just like, I think I was just having a warm day, and I just like popped into it on the Friday, and the first thing I did was like ring my Grandma and I was like, "I did the splits, Grandma!".

For Freya, being able to do the splits for the first time was obviously an incredibly exciting moment, associated with a sense of bodily achievement (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2 for a discussion of the importance of the feeling of achievement in motivating young people to participate in dance). I argue that one of the reasons why this moment had 'stuck' in Freya's memory was because it provided a clear marker in the transition towards her having a 'dancer's body' and her embodiment as a dancer.[49]

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[49] It is important to note that whilst many young people were proud that their body was more flexible than it used to be, nobody I interviewed said that they felt any 'pressure' to be flexible. For example, at the dance school, Charlotte (16) commented that not only did she not feel any pressure to be a particular body shape (see Section 4.2.3), she also did not feel any pressure to be 'flexible': 'And the same goes for flexibility as well, because there's girls like Ava, she's the most flexible person I've ever met in my life [Emma: *Laughs*], she like kicks herself in the face when she grand battements! And I'm like the total opposite [...], I can't even do the

4.2.2 Being a Male Dancer: The Importance of Strength

In this section, I argue that boys at the dance school and secondary school felt that strength was a particularly important physical characteristic for male dancers to develop. Furthermore, I suggest that some boys used strength to challenge the social stigma associated with being a young male dancer, and that at the secondary school teachers encouraged boys to participate in dance by engaging them in a 'masculine' style of dance that was focused on strength and athleticism.

Several young people said that strength was a particularly important bodily characteristic of being a male dancer. For example, at the secondary school, Tom (17) explained:

> [A]s a male dancer, if you're not strong, you're not gonna go anywhere in [the] business [Emma: Yeah]. Like say in the style pas de deux, which is partner dance, if you're not strong, you're not gonna be chosen [Emma: Ok, yeah]. Cos strength is the main thing in [...] lifts. It's not just the strength of being able to get the girl in the air, it's like the core strength of being able to hold yourself [Emma: Yeah] so they don't fidget around.

Tom identified strength as a defining characteristic of being a successful male dancer, especially in the professional dance world.

At the dance school, Josh (12) similarly explained that two of the key things he got from dance were 'strength and stamina', which helped his rugby playing. When I asked Josh if he told the other boys in his rugby club that he danced, he explained:

> Yeah [the boys at rugby do know that I dance]. They did laugh at me. They said: "Ha ha, you do Ballet". "But the most strongest people in the world come from Ballet" [Emma: Yeah]. "Oh. Alright then, fine". They stopped laughing. [Emma: Ok, yeah. So it's fine now?]. Yeah.

For Josh, the strength required to be a dancer was important for justifying his participation in dance and challenging the social stigma associated with being a young male dancer. This supports existing research in dance education that has shown that boys and young men who dance often experience social stigmatisation, particularly in relation to the cultural positioning of dance as a 'feminine' activity, and the association between male dancers and homosexuality, and that attempts to encourage or justify participation are often achieved by 'masculinising' dance through comparison with athletic sport (see Burt, 2007; Gard, 2006; Polasek and Roper, 2011; Risner, 2002, 2009, 2014).

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splits, I'm really bad. And that's never like, I'm in [...] a really high [Ballet] grade [...] and it's never held me back'.

At the secondary school, Boys Dance club aimed to engage the boys in a 'masculine' style of dance focused on strength and athleticism, through combining Street and Hip-hop dance steps with athletic movements (e.g., lifts, flips). I was struck by the strength and power demonstrated by the boys who performed in the Boys Dance club routine at the school dance show:

> The first dance being performed is the Boys Dance routine [...]. The dance starts with all 30 boys on stage doing a Hip-hop shoulder freeze, facing the back – this is really impressive! [...] The routine is packed with tricks, jumps, flips and lifts [...]. The boys make a big circle, then individual dancers run across the middle doing tricks and jumps. One boy does five straddle jumps in a row! [...] This style of dance is not about being 'dancey', but about being masculine, showing off and demonstrating strength and power. (Fieldwork notes, Dance show)

Mr Brown, Head of the Dance department at the secondary school, explained that it was particularly important to challenge the boys with a style of dance that was physical and athletic:

> [By providing] an opportunity for *just* the boys [to dance together] [...] you can focus the skill and the style to them [...]. [W]hen it's all very er.. too dancey [...] [that's] not what the boys wanna do [...]. You have to challenge them [the boys] in a different way, very physically and athletically. [...] [Y]ou kind of can't argue with it when they dance, it just looks really good and impressive [...]. [W]hen we go elsewhere, sometimes [...] particularly when [the boys are] the minority, you get a lot of feminine boy dancers [...] and that's absolutely fine. That's not what we, we seem to be about. Not that we're anti-that, but we, our approach has always been just to get the boys, you know, erm doing something [Emma: Yeah] and, and that sort of ethos, a bit rough and ready, and kind of rough round the edges, erm I think it, it helps us to an extent, to, to deliver within our environment [the secondary school].

Thus, the Boys Dance club at the secondary school aimed to engage boys in dance by focusing on a 'masculine' dance style that 'challenged' them 'physically and athletically', that enabled the boys to 'impress' the audience with their strength and power. As Mr Brown explained, this was not only important because it was 'what the boys wanna do', but in order to encourage boys to participate in dance 'within the school environment'. The association between dance, athleticism and strength is likely to be part of the reason why several boys reported that being a male dancer was 'very accepted' (Joe, 18) at the secondary school.[50]

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[50] Although a few boys at the secondary school reported having been teased on occasion for their participation in dance, all the boys who I interviewed said that in general it was 'completely fine' (Tom, 17) to be a male

4.2.3 Being a Female Dancer: Not Being a Particular Body Shape or Size

In this section, I argue that the girls I interviewed did not feel that they needed to be a particular body shape or size to be a dancer at the dance school and secondary school. Girls said that they did not feel any pressure to be a particular body shape or size from dance teachers or other students; however, some did indicate indirect pressures associated with the dance class environment (e.g., use of mirrors in the dance studio). Furthermore, many girls were aware that needing to be a certain body shape/size was an issue for professional dancers.

Several studies have demonstrated that dance can improve girls' body image and physical self-perception (e.g., Burgess et al., 2006; Daley and Buchanen, 1999).[51] However, there is also a body of work suggesting that dance can have a negative impact on the body image of girls and women. Research has shown that (particularly female Ballet) dancers may feel pressure to obtain an 'ideal' body size, as a result of environmental risk factors (e.g., a competitive environment, teacher and peer pressure, wearing tight-fitting dance clothes, use of mirrors in the studio) and individual risk factors such as personality traits (e.g., perfectionism), and typically reports a higher than average prevalence of eating disorders among dancers (e.g., Anshel, 2004; Bettle et al., 2001; Druss and Silverman, 1979; Garner and Garfinkel, 1980; Heiland et al., 2008; Neumärker et al., 1998; Nordin-Bates et al., 2011; Oliver, 2008; Reel et al., 2005; Ringham et al., 2006; Thomas et al., 2005). Oliver (2008: 20) notes that '[t]he issue of negative body image is not limited to dancers; our society places enormous pressures on all of us to look and act in culturally acceptable ways'. 'Looking slim, well-proportioned, toned, and young are all highly valued physical traits in our society, as well as in the dance world' (Oliver, 2008: 20).

The girls who I interviewed were clear that they did not feel that they needed to be a particular body shape or size to be a dancer at the dance school or secondary school, and that they did not feel any

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dancer within the secondary school. Some participants attributed this to a particular culture of acceptance within the secondary school, for example Joe (18) felt that it was because the school is 'known for Boys Dance'. Others attributed it to a wider shift in societal expectations, for example Joe (17) explained that: 'In previous years, it was more of like, it was socially, I don't know [Emma: Yeah] different to be a male dancer, but now it's a lot more, it's like masculine as well', perhaps due to the success of male dancers on TV programmes such as 'Britain's Got Talent' and 'Strictly Come Dancing'. Several boys explained that they had just learnt to accept that they would be in the minority; for example, Tom (17) said: '[I]n your [...] whole [...] dance career [...] there will always be more girls than boys [...], that's just what dance is like [...]. I've just kind of learnt to get on with it [...]. You just kind of get on with it [...], you don't really think about it'.

[51] Body image refers to 'an individual's perceptions, feelings and thoughts about one's body and incorporates body size estimation, evaluation of Body Attractiveness, and emotions associated with body shape and size' (Burgess et al., 2006: 57). Self-perception refers to 'the multifaceted way a person 'sees' themselves derived from social and visual cues' (Burgess et al., 2006: 57).

pressure from dance teachers or other students to be a particular body shape or size. For example, at the dance school, Charlotte (16) explained:

> [T]here's people of all different body shapes who dance in the school, and that's fine, no one comments about it or is-, says that you have to be a particular body shape. [...] [B]ody shape and body type is really like, no one cares [...]. [N]o one's ever told me anything bad about my body [at dancing] [Emma: Yeah] and I have never heard anyone say anything else about anyone else's body [Emma: Yeah]. And if someone's like, "Oh I look so fat today", at least five people will be like, "You're not fat! You don't need to lose weight! [Emma: *Laughs*] God shut up! You're so skinny, oh my God!". So it's a good confidence boost as well.

Charlotte's comments indicate that she did not feel under pressure from either dance teachers or other students to be a particular body size or shape, and that students in fact supported each other by reassuring their dance friends that they did not need to 'lose weight'. At the dance school, Freya (17) similarly highlighted the supportive nature of her dance teachers:

> [T]his dance school doesn't ever say anything about anyone's weight, or [Emma: Yeah] and erm if like any of us loses weight, like they're really supportive. Like I remember one of the girls, she'd lost loads of weight, it wasn't even because she'd gone on a diet, it was just literally because she'd grown just so much, that like she'd been originally like a bit chubby and then just slimmed down [Emma: Yeah]. But I remember [Miss] Mary just saying to me like, "Oh is she ok? Like, I know she's lost a lot of weight. Can you make sure that she's like eating and stuff?". So I think, if you're in other dance schools, I know [one of my friends who goes to another dance school] was on a strict diet, like she wasn't allowed to eat anything [...]. [But] I think this dance school, like it [having to be a particular shape] hasn't affected me at all because I'm in this dance school [Emma: Yeah], but I think other dance schools you would probably be affected by such things.

Whilst Freya recognised that it was not necessarily the case at all dance schools, she felt that her dance teachers were supportive and concerned that their students maintained a 'healthy' body weight (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3 for further discussion about the 'caring' relationships between teachers and students).[52] Existing research has shown that teacher and peer pressure have a negative impact on a dancer's body image and contribute to an increased risk of them developing an

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[52] Freya's comments also raise an important methodological issue: this research investigated young people's experiences of dance at three specific fieldsites, and whilst it is likely that there are similarities with young people's experiences of dance at other dance schools, secondary schools and dance groups, this is not necessarily the case. I cannot claim that the experiences of the young people in my research represent the experiences of all young people.

eating disorder (e.g., de Bruin et al., 2009); however, Charlotte and Freya's comments suggest that a social environment where dance teachers and students are supportive can reduce the pressure young people feel to be a particular body shape or size, and increase young people's body confidence.

However, some girls explained that they did feel some pressure related to body shape and size as a result of the nature of the dance class environment. Several girls talked about comparing their own body shape and size to other dancers in their classes. At the dance school, young people were able to see the shape and size of each others' bodies in detail as they wore tight-fitting dance leotards, tights or leggings in Ballet, Modern and Jazz lessons (although students were allowed to wear loose-fitting T-shirts in Tap). The process of learning to dance also involved young people actively watching and copying the bodies of other young people in their class (see discussion in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.4), and so they became very aware of the shape and size of the bodies of others. Dance school student, Freya (17) explained:

> I think sometimes [...] you might have a McDonald's before dancing or something, and you turn up to dancing and you think, "Oh my goodness, everyone's really skinny" and sometimes you do think, "Oh", like, "You need to lose some weight". But I don't think like, it doesn't really affect me that much.

Freya explained that looking at the 'skinny' bodies of the other girls in her class sometimes made her feel like she needed to 'lose some weight'. Several students talked particularly about the shape and size of the bodies of dancer's from other dance schools when attending vocational graded Ballet examination preparation classes at the exam board headquarters. For example, Isabel (14) explained:

> I'm fine with my body [Emma: Yeah]. And there's no need to get any skinnier [Emma: Yeah] or gain weight or anything [Emma: Yeah]. Erm.. but it is.. pressure. Because you see, I went on my course for [my Ballet exam] [Emma: Oh yeah] and erm all the girls in there were stick thin, thigh gaps[53] [Emma: Umhum], like completely flat-chested. They were really, really skinny. And they were the perfect figure for ballerinas [Emma: Umhum]. And it was kind of daunting, because you didn't know whether they'd be any good [Emma: Yeah], or if they would be, what they could do.

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[53] A 'thigh gap' is a recently popularised term used to describe the space between the inner thighs of some people when they stand with their legs straight and their feet together.

Isabel identified specific traits (being 'stick thin', having 'thigh gaps', being 'completely flat-chested') that she felt constituted the 'perfect figure' for a ballerina, positioning herself outside this perceived ideal. Notable here is the way that Isabel questions whether being the 'perfect figure' for a ballerina would necessarily mean being a 'good' dancer.

A number of girls also said that looking at themselves in the dance studio mirrors made them more aware of their own body shape and size; however, they also felt that the mirrors provided a useful tool to help them improve their work.[54] For example, dance school student Emily (16) said:

> I think you do notice things [about your body] more when you've got the mirror, you kind of pick up on things [...]. Obviously you use it primarily to just check you're doing things right [...]. But yeah, I do think you look at yourself more, like kind of judge how you look, cos obviously you're not dressed in very much, you're like [Emma: Yeah] it's all tight fitting as well.

Megan (14) similarly said:

> I sometimes like it that you can dance and you'll see what you're doing, or it's helpful if you're in the back and [you can] see what the front people are doing [Emma: Yeah]. But I sometimes get a bit.. I don't know, I do like the mirrors though. But I kind of wish they weren't there because they would stop making me think like, "Oh my gosh, I look like this in my leotard", or, and it kind of distracts me and [Both: Yeah] and it distracts a lot of other girls cos we're kind of like teenagers and a bit worried about what we look like [Emma: Yeah]. But they definitely do have advantages.

Although both Emily and Megan said that the mirrors provided a useful tool to help them improve their work, seeing their own bodies in the mirrors also increased their self-awareness of their body shape and size. In her Foucauldian analysis of the dance class, Green (2003: 112) theorises the mirror 'as a means for self-surveillance' enabling dancers to 'continuously check their bodies and movements'. Green (2003: 112) argues that the mirror acts as 'an ominous and powerful presence that contribute[s] to physical self-evaluation, behavior regulation, body objectification, and

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[54] At the dance school, one of the three dance studios had floor-length mirrors along one wall. Some classes were taken facing the mirrors, to help students to learn exercises and routines by watching and copying each other's reflections, self-correct shapes they made with their bodies by providing immediate visual feedback for self-evaluation, and to improve their spacing in group dances. Sometimes classes were taken facing away from the mirrors (e.g., if the teacher wanted to make sure students were not relying on the mirrors, and would be able to perform their dances from memory on stage or in an exam), and the dance teacher would ask the class to turn to the mirrors to correct particular alignments. At the secondary school, both dance studios had floor-length mirrors along either one or two walls, and were used by teachers in a similar way. In addition, students used the mirrors to help themselves improve their own choreography.

competition'. Therefore, whilst the mirror encourages self-awareness, self-discipline and self-improvement of dance technique, it can also become a 'conduit' for self-criticism of body shape and size (Oliver, 2008: 22). Girls' awareness of their own and other students' body shape and size were increased because of the tight-fitting dance leotards worn.

However, it is important to note that some girls saw the mirrors in positive light. For example, secondary school student, Leah (17) said:

> I find [the mirrors] helpful, if anything [Emma: Yeah]. Cos it's just the way, you can see like, how you can visually improve what you're doing straight away cos you can see, it's like, "Oh that arm looks bad, let's change it", or [Emma: Yeah]. Yeah.

At the dance school, Jasmine (15) similarly explained:

> I think they're [the mirrors are] quite helpful [...]. [I]n our lessons, we'll use them sometimes, like we'll turn the class round and then you can see like what shapes you're actually trying to make [Emma: Yeah]. We don't, obviously we don't really stand in the mirrors, and we're like "Ooh I think my legs are a bit big". We use them more just for like actually like correcting our positions [Emma: Yeah] and stuff [Emma: Yeah]. Rather than as a negative of being [Emma: Yeah] like "Ooo I feel a bit uncomfortable" [Emma: Yep]. I wouldn't say I felt uncomfortable in front of them. I use them as more.. as a positive to like [Emma: Yeah] actually [Emma: Yeah] make sure that all my alignments are in the right positions.

Thus, for Leah and Jasmine, the mirrors were a useful tool to help them improve their dancing, rather to scrutinise their body shape and size.

Although young people explained that they felt it was not necessary to be a particular body size or shape to be a dancer at the dance school or secondary school, several girls said that they thought this would be an issue if they wanted to be a professional dancer. For example, at the dance school, Charlotte (16) said:

> I think there is like the stereotypical shape that, if you want to be a famous ballerina then you have to be, which isn't that good. But it's like what, how it is [Emma: Yeah]. But if you're just doing Ballet because you like it and it's exercise, you think it's fun, I don't think there's a particular shape that you have to be.

Dance school student, Jasmine (15), similarly explained:

I do sometimes feel like you do have to be slim to actually be like a professional in it [Emma: Yeah]. But I feel like [...] just at dancing like here [Emma: Yeah], I don't think it's an issue [Emma: No]. I think it's more of an issue when you're looking to be like a professional dancer [Emma: Yeah] like on a, like a Broadway show or something [...]. But I think when you're just like doing exams and stuff, I don't think it really [Emma: Yeah it doesn't], it isn't really an issue.

As discussed above in Section 4.1.4, the pressure that professional dancers may face in terms of having to be a particular body shape put many students off pursuing dance as a career.

4.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this empirical chapter I have highlighted the importance of space to young people's experiences of participation in dance in two key ways, addressing the first and second research questions.

In Section 4.1 I focused on the space of dance within young people's everyday lives and imagined futures. First, I provided an overview of young people's participation in dance in order to give a broad sense of the extent to which dance classes, rehearsals and performances were part of young people's everyday lives. I argued that many young people had participated in dance for a number of years and now took part in several hours of dance each week. Second, I argued that dance had a central space within many young people's everyday lives (e.g., as part of their after-school routine), but also within their lives more broadly (i.e. becoming part of their sense of identity). Third, I focused on the space of dance within the wider context of young people's everyday lives, highlighting some of the challenges that young people faced in terms of managing dance classes, rehearsals, performances and exams alongside other parts of their everyday lives (e.g., homework, revision, other extracurricular clubs), and some ways in which young people made space for dance in their everyday lives (e.g., by using dance as a 'break' from revision). Finally, I argued that dance had a space in young people's imagined futures. In the short-term, young people planned to continue to participate in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances at the dance school, secondary school or dance group, and in the longer-term, many hoped to continue to dance as a recreational activity, and some also dreamt of pursuing a career in dance. In summary, I have demonstrated the importance of dance in young people's lives: not only in terms of young people's everyday lives, but also shaping their sense of identity and their imagined future lives. As such, I have made an original contribution to recent work in children's geography focusing on the role of extracurricular activities

in the lives of many children and young people by explicating the extent and significance of extracurricular dance in young people's everyday lives (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014).

In Section 4.2, I shifted the focus of discussion to the space of young people's dancing bodies. I explored how young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance were informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies, drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only. I argued that, for the young people in my research, being a dancer meant developing two key physical bodily characteristics: flexibility and strength. I argued that this process of bodily change was gradual, but that it was marked by specific physical achievements (e.g., doing 'the splits' for the first time). In the following sections I argued that being a dancer involved the negotiation of perceptions about what a dancer's body 'should' look/be like in terms of gender, body shape and body size. I argued that boys felt that strength was a particularly important physical characteristic for male dancers to develop. I suggested that strength was used by some boys to challenge the social stigma associated with being a young male dancer, and was used by teachers at the secondary school to encourage boys to participate in dance. Finally, I argued that girls did not feel that it was necessary to be a particular body shape or size to be a dancer at the dance school and secondary school. Whilst girls did not feel any direct pressure to be a particular body shape or size from their dance teachers or other students, some did indicate indirect pressures associated with the dance class environment (e.g., use of mirrors in the dance studio). In presenting these ideas, I have contributed to recent calls for children's geographers to consider the 'ways in which children and young people experience, live with/in/through and understand their bodies', by highlighting the ways in which young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance (were) informed (by) their knowledges and understandings of their bodies (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2010: 4). I explicitly attended to and engaged with young people's experiences and understandings of the materialities of their bodies, exploring their ideas about what young dancing bodies (should) 'look like' (e.g., muscle tone, body size, body shape, gender) as well as what they (should) 'do' (e.g., be strong, be flexible).

Chapter 5: Relationships

<u>5.0 Introduction</u>

> I just love coming to dancing cos I think the relationship between me and my teachers and, well, the other students [Emma: Yeah], which I like to refer to as my friends, because they're so close to me and I'm so close to them, we just get along so well. (Abigail, 10)

This comment made by Abigail, a 10 year old student at the dance school, provides a useful way into the discussion that follows in this chapter. Abigail explained that the close relationships that she had formed with her dance teachers and the other students at the dance school were central to why she enjoyed dancing, an idea also expressed by many other young people at the dance school, secondary school and dance group. Abigail's comments raise two key questions: why were the relationships that Abigail had made with her dance teachers and the other students so close, and how had Abigail formed such close relationships with them? This chapter will explore the significance of such relationships in motivating young people to participate in dance, and the multiple practices and processes that are involved in their formation and maintenance. In doing so, this chapter addresses the third research question.

In this chapter, I take 'relationships' to refer to '[t]he way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave towards each other' (Oxford University Press, 2017b: np). I focus specifically on the relationships between young people and other young people, and the relationships between young people and their dance teachers. I define 'friendship' as a particular kind of relationship between two people who have 'a bond of mutual affection, typically exclusive of sexual or family relations' (Oxford University Press, 2017a: np). Like Abigail, many young people described their friendships with other young people as 'close', taken here to mean that: they knew their friend well; felt a strong bond or connection with them; enjoyed talking to and spending time with them; felt supported by them; felt they could go to them for help; cared about them; trusted them; and could have fun with them. Many young people also said that their relationships with their dance teachers were 'close', understood here to mean that the young person: felt that they got on well with their dance teacher; liked their dance teacher and felt that their dance teacher liked them; felt that their dance teacher knew them well; felt a bond or connection with them; respected their dance teacher and wanted to listen to them; felt that their dance teacher was interested in and cared about them; trusted their dance teacher (in terms of their knowledge and skill as a dance teacher, and more generally); and felt that their dance teacher would be willing and able to help them with problems they encountered.

The chapter is split into two key parts. In Section 5.1, I focus on friendships that young people had made with other students in their dance classes. In Section 5.1.1, I argue that friendships were a key reason for young people's participation in and enjoyment of dance, and that for many young people the friendships that they had made through dance were particularly close. In the following sections, I discuss the mechanisms through which such friendships were formed and the reasons why they were so close. In Section 5.1.2, I begin by arguing that friendships were often developed over many years. This meant that young people got to know each other well, contributing to the close formation of friendships. Also, young people shared many experiences and had many shared memories of dancing together with their friends in classes, rehearsals, exams and performances, strengthening relationships by creating a sense of shared journey and history. In Section 5.1.3, I suggest that friendships were built and strengthened as young people talked, helped and supported each other (both practically and emotionally) during dance lessons and shows, thus enabling young people to get to know each other and developing feelings of trust and care. Finally, in Section 5.1.4, I argue that friendships were developed through the body, in particular through: watching, copying and learning from each other's dancing bodies (e.g., watching another student demonstrate a dance movement); moving in synchronicity (e.g., when performing a group dance); becoming familiar with how each other's bodies moved and touching each other's (sweaty) bodies (e.g., when dancing with a partner); and being exposed to each other's bodies (e.g., during a quick costume change backstage at a dance show). I argue that these processes resulted in a sense of bodily trust, unity and intimacy between young people which developed, solidified and deepened friendships, and in so doing took them beyond the level of friendships formed in other contexts.

In Section 5.2, I switch the focus of the discussion to young people's relationships with their dance teachers. In Section 5.2.1, I argue that for many young people the relationships that they had formed with their dance teachers were an important reason for their participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. Furthermore, I argue that many young people described these relationships as particularly close. In the subsequent sections, I suggest a number of reasons for this. In Section 5.2.2, I highlight the significance of the body in the formation of close relationships between young people and their dance teachers, focusing in particular on the importance of: young people watching, copying and learning from the dance teacher's body (e.g., when demonstrating a dance sequence for the class to follow); the dance teacher watching young people's bodies (e.g., to give feedback on their choreography); the dance teacher getting to know young people's bodily capabilities and habits (e.g., their ability to perform certain movements); and physical bodily contact and touch between teachers and students (e.g., when correcting a particular position). I argue that this resulted in a sense of bodily unity, familiarity and intimacy between young people and their dance teachers,

beyond that typically experienced in relationships with other teachers. In Section 5.2.3, I argue that young people developed close relationships with their dance teachers through talking to them informally about their everyday lives (e.g., school, exams, family, holidays). As a result, many young people felt that their dance teachers were interested in their everyday lives and cared about them, and that they could go to their dance teachers for help with problems. Some even described their dance teachers as being like a 'second mum'. In Section 5.2.4, I argue that many young people had been taught by their dance teachers for a number of years and often spent several hours in rehearsals with them each week (sometimes in very small classes). I suggest that the longevity and intensity of student-teacher relationships were crucial factors in establishing close and strong bonds.

By making these arguments, I make several contributions to the literature. First, I extend the existing literature in the social sciences that has already highlighted the significance of friendship in motivating young people to participate in sports and the arts (e.g., Aujla et al., 2014; Fredricks et al., 2002; Patrick et al., 1999; Walker et al., 2012; Weiss and Smith, 2001) by focusing on the mechanisms through which such friendships are formed and why they are particularly close. Second, I add to recent research on friendship in children's geographies and the discipline of human geography more broadly by examining the formation and significance of young people's friendships in the space of the dance class. In particular, I contribute to literature in children's geographies that has emphasised the role of support and trust in children and young people's peer relations (e.g., Dyson, 2010; van Blerk, 2005) by drawing attention to the importance of practices such as helping and supporting in strengthening trust and care between friends in the context of dance. I also develop existing literature in children's geographies that has highlighted the significance of children's and young people's bodies in friendship formation by emphasising the bodily processes involved in the formation of friendships between young people. As such, I also add to literature on children's and young people's bodies (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009) through an engagement with theoretical work on intercorporeality (Weiss, 1999) and the geographies of touch (Dixon and Straughan, 2010; Paterson and Dodge, 2012). Through a discussion of the importance of friendship in the space of the dance class, this chapter also contributes to work in children's geographies on extracurricular activities, and on spaces of education and learning, by highlighting the importance of friendships in such contexts. Third, I contribute to work on the geographies of education and learning by exploring the specificities of the formation and significance of the student-teacher relationship within the context of the dance class. Fourth, I contribute to work on the geographies of dance that has focused on the relationships between dancing bodies, but not specifically on the formation of friendships and student-teacher relationships. For example, I extend Cant's (2012) work on Argentine Tango dancing by arguing that the level of physical unity and intimacy involved in

dancing with a partner created a sense of togetherness that strengthened friendships between dancers.

5.1 Friendships

In the first half of this chapter, I focus on the friendships that young people formed with other students in their dance classes.

5.1.1 The Significance of Friendships in Motivating Young People to Participate in Dance

In this section, I argue that friendships were an important reason for young people's participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. I argue further that for many young people the friendships they had made with other students in their dance classes were particularly close.

At all three fieldsites, friendships were a key reason for young people's participation in dance. Some participants explained that they had initially started dance classes with their friends, or because their friends who already attended classes suggested that they come along too. Many participants also said that they had made new friends at dance classes; for example, at the dance group, Daniel (22) commented that he enjoyed going to dance lessons because he liked 'making new friends', and at the secondary school, Leah (17) said that dance classes were 'a way of making friends through something that you all like doing'. This supports the findings of literature focusing on the health and wellbeing benefits of participation in dance that has highlighted that dance classes may improve young people's social wellbeing by providing an opportunity for them to make new friends (e.g., Beaulac et al., 2011; Harris et al., 2012). Several other participants similarly said that dance provided an opportunity to make new friends with other young people who shared an 'interest' (Becky, 17) in dance. For instance, at the dance school, Freya (17) explained, 'I think that's the best thing about dancing, like everyone has different personalities [Emma: Yeah] but because you share an interest [in dance], like, you're all friends because of that', and at the secondary school, Lydia (14) similarly remarked, '[I think I enjoy dance because] you get to be around everyone you like [Emma: Yeah], and [...] you're there because you all like it [Emma: Yeah] and you share the same passion'.

For many young people, the friendships that they had formed with other students in their dance classes were an important reason for their continued participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. For example, at the dance group, when I asked Liam (22) why he enjoyed dancing he replied: 'I like dancing with my friends'. At the dance school, Abigail (10) explained:

> I enjoy coming [to dance classes] because, I'm not sure if it's the dancing or if it's my friends. I don't know. Maybe it's a bit of both. [...] I like to hang out with my friends, and so I think

that makes dance even better. So if it was like a private lesson, like it would be good cos you'd be getting better, but I just don't think it would be *as* fun as with all your friends.

Abigail enjoyed dance lessons not only because she liked dancing, but because she liked 'hang[ing] out' with her friends. Thus, Abigail emphasised the value of dance lessons as somewhere to have fun with her friends rather than simply to learn to dance. Although Abigail recognised that she would probably make more progress in a 'private lesson', she indicated that it would not be as enjoyable because she would not be able to have fun with her friends. Miss Sally, a dance teacher at The Southern School of Dance, also said:

I *think* there are a lot of people that are here purely because of friendships [Emma: Yeah] and not necessarily because they actually like the dancing! [...] And I do believe that as they've got older, they don't want to leave because they don't want to be apart from their friends [Emma: Yeah]. So they put up with the class [Emma: Yeah] to be with their friends [Both: *Laugh*].

Miss Sally thought that many of the young people who attended dance lessons at the dance school did so primarily because they wanted to spend time with their friends. These findings support research on young people's participation motives and reasons for commitment to sports and the arts which has highlighted the significance of friendships as a motivating factor (e.g., Aujla et al., 2014; Fredricks et al., 2002; Patrick et al., 1999; Walker et al., 2012; Weiss and Smith, 2001). However, I argue that what is absent from this work is a sustained interest in how friendships form between young people in such contexts. Thus, in the following sections, I extend this literature by considering how friendships formed between young people in the context of the dance class.

Many young people said that they had made some of their 'closest' friends at dance classes. For example:

I'm close friends with quite a handful of them [students in my GCSE Dance class]. (Lydia, 14)

I have like really good friends here [at dancing]. There's like nine of us who are a really close group of friends, so I just love going to see them [...]. [L]ike they are my best friends. So I'd say I'm a lot closer to them than to any of my school friends or anything [...]. [W]e're just such a close group of friends, I do love them to bits. (Freya, 17)

[S]ome of my closest friends are from dancing. [...] I've kind of been with them for like, some of them for like 3, 4 years now [Emma: Yeah] and some of them, like erm one of my closest

friends I've been- she started when I started, so we've kind of done it always together. (Chloe, 15)

Lydia, Freya and Chloe had formed particularly 'close' friendships with other students in their dance classes. Freya's comments indicate that such friendships could be even closer than those made in other contexts such as school. Aujla et al. (2014) conducted interviews with young people aged 11-17 attending dance classes at a UK Centre for Advanced Training in order to explore the factors affecting their commitment to dance training; the researchers similarly found that friends were an important motivation for continued participation in dance, and that young people reported that their friendships with other dancers in their classes were particularly close.[55] However, Aujla et al. (2014) do not explore the reasons why young people forged such close friendships. In the remainder of this section I seek to further extend the existing literature on young people's participation motives and commitment to dance by discussing how and why young people formed such close friendships. For example, as indicated by Chloe in her comments above, in the next section I argue that one of the reasons that young people had developed such close friendships was because they had participated in dance classes together for many years.

5.1.2 The Longevity of Friendships

In this section, I argue that young people had often been friends for many years and had participated in many hours of dance classes, rehearsals, performances and exams together. Thus, young people got to know each other well, contributing to the close formation of friendships. Furthermore, young people had shared many experiences of dancing and shared many memories of dancing together. I suggest that this also contributed to the development of close friendships between young people by creating a sense of shared journey and history.

At all three fieldsites, many young people had been friends with other students in their dance classes for several years. At the dance school, many young people had been friends since they first started dance lessons, and had participated in many dance classes, rehearsals, shows and exams together. For example, Lucy (12) explained:

I've known about six of us from when I first started because we all did Ballet together. But then there's been a few new people [who have joined] and [I've made] friends with them. But I've known loads of people for about 8 years, and I think I've known my longest friends for about 10 years now.

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[55] UK Centres for Advanced Training are government-funded and offer part-time dance training to talented young people aged 10-18.

Becky (17) similarly commented:

> I think [Jessica and Rosie are] the oldest friends I've had at dancing, cos I've known them ever since I came here [when I was 5 years old]. And then the other girls I either met like later on, or they came to dancing [when they were older].

Some young people at the secondary school had been friends through dance for up to 7 years (from Year 7 to 13) and had participated in lower-school, GCSE and A-level Dance lessons, extracurricular lunchtime and after-school dance clubs, and school dance shows together. Similarly, many young people at the dance group had also often been friends with other dancers in their class for several years (some for nearly 15 years since the dance group first formed) and had danced together during lessons, exams and performances, and taken part in many social events (e.g., theatre trips, Christmas parties) with each other.

Several participants at the dance school said the length of time that they had known their friends at dancing meant that they had got to know them well and that they felt particularly comfortable, relaxed and confident around them. For instance:

> I know everyone at dancing really well. And I feel comfortable around everyone because I've known them from a young age [Emma: Yeah] so I think that definitely helps kind of enjoying it [dancing] more. (Megan, 15)

> With some people I guess I can come across a bit shy, but then when it comes to dancing, cos I've danced with like the people in my class for so many years [...], I dunno, I become quite confident. (Jasmine, 15)

Megan and Jasmine had spent lots of time with their friends over many years so had got to know them well. This process of getting to know each other involved Megan and Jasmine talking to the other young people in their dance classes and finding out about their personalities, backgrounds, likes and dislikes, interests and hobbies (see also Section 5.1.3 below). I argue that this process also involved Megan and Jasmine developing a knowledge and understanding of how the other young people in their dance classes were likely to act and behave, and so they felt more comfortable and confident taking social risks in front of them (e.g., putting their hand up to answer a question asked by the teacher, or dancing a solo) that involved putting themselves in a position of vulnerability (e.g., answering the question wrong, or forgetting the dance routine) because they knew that they could trust their friends not to laugh or make fun of them if the risk did not pay off. I argue that the development of trust over a period of years contributed to the formation of deep friendships.

Furthermore, I argue that knowing each other for a long time meant that young people felt they had had 'grown up together' and so had a sense of shared journey and history, which contributed to the development of close friendships. For example, at the dance school, Emily (16) said:

> I think [I'm close to my dancing friends because] obviously we've known each other for a long time, so we've grown up together.

The process of 'grow[ing] up together' involved young people sharing experiences of participating in dance classes, preparing for and taking dance exams, and rehearsing for and performing in dance shows, which I argue were important in the formation of close friendships. This included everyday experiences in weekly dance classes. For example, at the dance school, Charlotte (16) explained:

> Oh yeah [Charlotte: *Laughs*], especially in [...] Ballet on a [Monday] night when it's like an hour and three quarters, from [6] till [half 8] or whatever it is on a [Monday], and we're all like exhausted by the end of it [Both: *Laugh*]. Like, "Help me!" [Both: *Laugh*], "Stop!". When we're doing Pointe and like, "I'm in so much pain!". But yeah definitely the experiences throughout the class [bring us closer together] or like if it's difficult, we'll all be like, "It's fine, we're going through the same thing together, we can make it". [Emma: Yeah]. Yeah. A sense of camaraderie really.

Charlotte felt that the shared experience of bodily exhaustion and pain from Pointe work established a sense of 'camaraderie' between the young people in her Ballet class (see also discussion below in Section 5.1.4 regarding the role of the body in the formation of friendships). Charlotte's comment, 'we're going through the same thing together, we can make it', also indicates a sense of shared journey which I argue helped to build a strong relationship between her and her friends. In addition to everyday experiences such as this, exceptional experiences could also create a sense of shared journey bringing friendships closer together. For example, at the secondary school, Joe (17) explained:

> Well four friends of mine became a lot closer through doing a piece together. [...] Cos we got given an opportunity to do it at like a, er [a local theatre] [Emma: Oh right, yeah]. Er for like [a community showcase]. So we thought, "Oh we might as well just give that a go". And then erm it happened to be that kind of pushed us even further. And then ended up, someone spotted us and thought, "Oh right, can you be in our show?", then we kind of thought, hang on we've got something going here [Emma: Oh right]. So then we kind of got excited about it and it just kind of became like a big thing. And then before you knew it we were.. got to, got the opportunity to perform at [a large and highly-regarded theatre] in London [Emma: Oh

wow]. That was amazing like, to see how far we could go [Emma: Yeah] and [...] the people who were in that, we became really close from that.

For Joe, the shared experience of rehearsing and performing a dance on stage at a local theatre, and then being invited to perform the dance at a prestigious theatre in London, had led him to develop a much closer relationship with the four students he danced with. The excitement Joe experienced whilst on this shared journey (actual and metaphorical) with his friends is particularly evident here and served to further deepen and solidify their friendships.

Several participants commented that the experiences that they had of taking part in dance lessons, exams and shows with friends meant that they also had many shared memories. For example, Becky (17) explained:

> And like knowing them [my dancing friends] for a long time, it has been nice, because you have sort of memories like [...], "Oh remember when you did that, like when you were really young?". And things like that. Or you're in the shows together and you see pictures of each other when you were younger [Emma: Yeah]. And it's like nice to see each other when you were younger and laugh a lot so.

I argue that the photographs of Becky and her friends at dancing when they were younger acted as a material reminder of the past (see G. Rose, 2003) and of their shared histories. The process of reflecting on memories with each other further strengthened friendships through reminding young people of their shared experiences. It was clear that the memories young people had of spending time with their friends at dancing were often cherished. For example, at the dance school, Chloe (15) said:

> I think that [my favourite dance memory] might have to be [...] not last year, the year before in the dance show [Emma: Umhum]. And I just remember sitting, cos we were [in] the [...] smallest [dressing] room. And there was like 50 of us in there. And there were no windows or anything. And I just remember everyone in the middle of the show when no one was dancing, everyone just lying down and being absolutely boiling [Emma: *Laughs*]. And obviously at the time it was horrible! But looking back on it, like everyone was in the same position and obviously we were all like hyped up on adrenaline [Emma: Yeah] and sugar and everything [Emma: *Laughs*]. But I just remember it as being really happy, I felt really like comfortable, contented cos I was with the people I love doing what I love most [Emma: Yeah]. In a boiling hot room with no air! [Both: *Laugh*]. Yeah. [Emma: But it doesn't matter?]. No, because you're happy and you're with the people you like.

For Chloe, the experience of being backstage in the dressing room with her friends in the dance show was firmly placed in her memory as a time when she felt 'really happy' to be 'with the people I love doing what I love most'. The sense of shared experience is highlighted in particular by Chloe's comment 'everyone was in the same position', which I argue was important in the development of close friendships. These comments from Chloe also draw attention to the variety of 'permanent' (e.g., the dance studio, the changing rooms) and 'temporary' (e.g., the dressing room backstage) spaces where friendships developed.

5.1.3 Talking, Helping and Supporting Each Other

In this section, I argue that young people developed close friendships through talking, helping and supporting each other (practically and emotionally) before, during and after dance lessons and performances, thus enabling young people to get to know each other and establishing feelings of trust and care.

I argue that an important part of the process of young people becoming friends was getting to know each other through talking to each other informally, both about dancing (e.g., whether they were enjoying learning a particular dance routine, whether they were feeling nervous about a dance exam, what costumes they would be wearing for the school dance show) and about other aspects of their everyday lives (e.g., school, homework, GCSE or A-level exams, their family, holidays, fashion). For example, when conducting participant observation at the dance group, I noticed that during the 5-10 minutes before the dance class started young people had time to chat to each other (as well as the dance teacher, student and parent helpers, see Section 5.2.3) as they waited for everybody to arrive:

> I walk through the double doors into the school hall. Alison, the dance teacher, is setting up the stereo. Some dancers have already arrived and are sitting on the benches talking to each other and to the student helpers. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed [...]. I sit down on a bench next to Henry, who is telling his friend Ryan about a football match he played in last week. Liam is practising some dance moves on his own in the middle of the hall. [...] Annabel walks through the double doors. Claire spots Annabel, waves and walks over to her. The girls start chatting straight away. [...] I think that these few minutes before the dance class starts are a really important time when young people can get to know each other and catch up with their friends. (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

The few minutes before the dance class started each week were an important opportunity for young people to build friendships through talking to each other informally, enabling them to get to know

each other better. At the secondary school and the dance school, I also observed that there were similar opportunities for young people to chat to each other informally before dance classes started whilst they were getting ready in the changing rooms or as the teacher took the register in the dance studio.

There was also often some opportunity for young people to talk to each other during dance lessons (although they were obviously expected to stop talking, listen and concentrate on their work when the teacher asked them to). For example, whilst participating in dance lessons at the dance school, I found that there was often time to talk to other dancers for a few minutes between exercises, or if the dance teacher asked to see an exercise in small groups there was time to talk to other dancers who were also waiting for their group to dance. At the dance school, Chloe (15) said that the 'bonds' between her and the other students with whom she was taking her ISTD Modern exam had become 'a lot tighter' as a result of talking to each other during their extra exam preparation lessons:

> I think I quite like the exam kind of lessons, like the extra lessons [Emma: Yeah] because you become closer with the girls that you're doing your exam with [Emma: Yeah] cos you kind of see them like twice a week for an hour and you kind of, when you're not dancing you're sitting there talking to them [Emma: Umhum], so [...] like the bonds become a lot tighter.

I argue that by talking to other young people in her ISTD Modern exam preparation class Chloe had strengthened her relationships with them through getting to know them better. In addition to time before and during dance classes, there were also many other opportunities for young people to talk to each other, for example in the changing rooms after class, in the dressing rooms backstage at the theatre, or in the exam waiting room.

Furthermore, I argue that friendships were developed and strengthened as young people helped each other to learn and devise choreography. At the dance school, students often asked each other for help during lessons if they had missed a class and needed to catch up. Jasmine (15) explained:

> Everyone in my classes at the moment are all really good friends. [...] Like, you all support each other, like if you miss a lesson and you're doing an exercise [Emma: Yeah] and you're doing it in groups, you can ask anyone and they'll help you with it if you missed a bit.

The friendships that Jasmine had formed with the other young people were demonstrated and strengthened through the practical act of helping each other to learn choreography. The importance of practical acts of support in building friendships here resonates with Dyson's (2010: 490) research on girls' work and friendship formation in the Indian Himalayas in which she argues that friendships were 'produced and affirmed' as girls' provided each other with practical assistance and support

(e.g., helping each other if they had finished early) during leaf collection work. At the secondary school, students spent time choreographing solo or group routines and, similarly, often asked each other for help if they got stuck. Lily (14) explained:

> Yeah, yeah [we help each other with choreography]. Like er if someone says, "Oh what [can] I do for this bit?", I'd be like, "Oh I can help you out that's fine, I'll tell you what to do". Then they'll go away and do it and they'll be like, "Oh my God, that was a really good idea, why didn't I think of that!?".

Thus, the process of learning to dance not only involved students learning from the teacher, but also students teaching and learning from each other (see also Section 5.1.4 for a discussion of the importance of the body in this process). I argue that teaching and learning from each other was significant in the formation of friendships because it involved young people helping and supporting each other in a practical way, establishing a sense of trust (i.e. young people could trust their friends to help them to learn choreography if they were behind or to devise choreography if they were stuck) and demonstrating an ethic of care (i.e. their friend cared about their learning and progress).

In addition to helping each other in lessons, dance performances were also an important time when young people supported each other. For example, when conducting fieldwork at the dance group I noticed that whilst waiting backstage to perform in a 'Community Dance Show', dancers supported each other practically (e.g., by practising dance choreography with each other, helping each other to put costumes on) and emotionally (e.g., reassuring each other that they would perform well, wishing each other good luck, congratulating each other when the performance was over). Helen, Ruby's mum, confirmed:

> They've all, as you observed, bonded as a group [Emma: Yeah]. They're each other's closest friendship group [Emma: Umhum]. And that's particularly important because they have, when they're off performing, sometimes with the travel and the waiting and the rehearsing [Emma: Yeah], they'll have a whole day together [Emma: Yeah]. They'll be backstage [Emma: Umhum] hanging out together [Emma: Yeah] and they encourage each other, help each other with costumes [Emma: Yeah] and help each other with nerves [Emma: Yeah]. You know, they, they really, buddy each other [Emma: Support each other, yeah] all the way through.

I argue that through providing each other with emotional support, a caring relationship was established between young people, and that this was an important component in the formation and maintenance of close friendships. These findings also support existing research that has shown how

emotional support is an important factor in developing close friendships within sport (Weiss and Smith, 1999, 2001; Weiss et al., 1996).

Furthermore, I argue that as well as helping and supporting each other with dancing (e.g., helping each other with choreography, supporting each other during shows), young people also provided each other with emotional support in relation to issues or problems in their wider lives. At both the dance school and the dance group, over the course of my fieldwork I observed a student in tears due to an issue at home or school (unrelated to dancing). On both occasions the young person's friends quickly gathered round, offering support and reassurance. Miss Sally, the dance teacher at The Southern School of Dance, explained:

> [I]t's nice to see the students care about each other [Emma: Yeah]. That's what I really like to see. The little friendships and, you know, if somebody's upset or had a bad class, you can sometimes see their friends all rally round them. And they care [Emma: Yeah]. And I think that's really important. Because in not, e-, sort of not every hobby or discipline do you get that [Emma: No]. You know [Emma: Umm], cos things can be so competitive and bitchy [Emma: Yeah]. And some of the dance schools can be really bitchy [Emma: Yeah]. I mean, that's why we don't touch competitions or anything, we don't [Emma: Yeah] want that side of it [Emma: Right, ok]. We want it to be a positive experience for everybody.

Miss Sally felt that the dance class should not simply be a space where young people were able to learn to dance but also a space where they felt cared for and supported by each other, rather than in competition with each other, and it was for this reason that the school did not participate in dance competitions (both internal and external) (see also Section 5.2.3 for a discussion of the caring relationships between young people and their dance teachers). Miss Sally's comments also highlight the connection between friendship, emotional support and care: friendships between young people were developed as young people demonstrated care for their friends through supporting them when they were upset.

5.1.4 Developing Friendships through the Body

In this section, I argue that friendships between young people were developed through the body, in particular through: watching, copying and learning from each other's bodies; moving in synchronicity with each other's bodies; becoming familiar with how each other's bodies moved; touching each other's (sweaty) bodies; and being exposed to each other's bodies. I argue that these processes resulted in a merged sense of 'self' and 'other', a feeling of bodily oneness and the transgression of bodily boundaries, establishing a sense of bodily trust, unity and intimacy between young people

which developed, solidified and deepened friendships, thereby taking them beyond the level of friendships formed in other contexts. Throughout this section I emphasise a relational understanding of young people's bodies 'not as [...] individual entit[ies], but as thoroughly intertwined with, nestling in and depending on other bodies, textures, materials and objects' (Hörschelmann and Colls, 2010: 9) (see also Chapter 2, Section 2.1.4).

The process of learning to dance, at all three fieldsites, involved young people watching, copying and learning from each other's bodies. For example, at the dance school, most lessons in the autumn term were spent learning and practising set exercises from graded ISTD or RAD examination syllabi. Students who had been in the grade for several terms and would be taking their exam soon formed the 'front line'. They were followed by students who had slightly less experience in the grade, who made the 'middle line', and students who had just moved up and were completely new to the grade, who formed the 'back line'. At the start of term, the dance teacher usually spent time going through the set exercises slowly so that students in the back line had a chance to learn them. However, there was often not enough time to go through exercises slowly more than once and so students in the back line were expected to watch and copy students in front of them. Matilda (13) explained:

> I don't know [...] what I would do in the back line without them [the front line] [Emma: Yeah]. Cos they're kind of just, they're at the front and they just kind of [...] look after you, cos you're just looking, watching them [Emma: Yeah] [...]. [Y]ou can just follow them and you just trust them [Emma: Yeah], that they're gonna do it right and you can just like follow them.

Matilda's comments raise two key points regarding the significance of the body in the formation of friendships between young people. First, Matilda's remarks suggest that the process of watching and copying young people in the front line established a feeling of trust and care between them *through the body*; many young people explained that trust and care were important in the formation and maintenance of a close friendship. Second, the process of 'follow[ing]' young people in the front line involved Matilda watching their movements and reproducing them using her own body. Weiss' (1999) theoretical term 'intercorporeality' provides insight into thinking about the bodily relations between Matilda and the students in the front line. According to Weiss (1999: 5), '[t]o describe embodiment as intercorporeality is to emphasise that the experience of being embodied is never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interaction with other human and non human bodies'. The notion of intercorporeality, therefore, 'contributes to a denaturalization of the relations between the limits of the body and the limits of 'I' understood as a discrete entity' (Waldby, 2002: 241). Through 'follow[ing]' the movements of the students in the front line, the

distinctions between Matilda's body and the bodies of students in the front line became less clear; in other words, there was a blurring of 'self' (Matilda's body) and 'other' (the bodies of the students in the front line) as Matilda watched and copied their bodily movements. I argue that this contributed to the formation of friendships between young people through the establishment of a sense of bodily oneness, which resulted more broadly in a feeling of being united and in harmony with each other.

At the dance school, the dance teacher would also sometimes ask the class to watch one of the students in the front line demonstrate a particular movement, and then try to replicate the movement themselves when going through an exercise slowly. For example:

> Miss Sally says she will go through the beginning of the exercise slowly for us, without the music. She stands at the front of the class, talking through and demonstrating the movements step by step [...]. She explains that you have to lift your leg in attitude at the back and then carry it into second position on a plié, rotating the hip so that the leg is turned out. Miss Sally demonstrates this movement herself. She then asks Kirsty to demonstrate [...]. Kirsty lifts her leg up to the back. Miss Sally catches it and holds it in position. Miss Sally uses Kirsty's leg to show and explain to us the correct leg alignment that we need to make. [...] Miss Sally supports Kirsty's leg and helps her rotate it into second position, commenting to the class: "Look how much your hip has got to move!". [...] Miss Sally thanks Kirsty for her help and tells her to relax. She then asks everyone to have a go. I practice and watch myself in the mirror. (Fieldwork notes, Modern class)

By watching Kirsty's body carefully and attempting to move our own bodies in exactly the same way, remembering and replicating Kirsty's leg alignment with our own legs, the separation between our bodies became less distinct. This blurring of bodily boundaries was epitomised by Miss Sally's use of the pronoun 'your' in her remark, 'Look how much your hip has got to move!'; it was as though our bodies were 'one body', that Kirsty's leg *was* our leg. I argue that this experience of embodiment as intercorporeality (Weiss, 1999) established a feeling of bodily oneness between young people and contributed to the development of close friendships through developing a sense of unity between all the dancers in the class. Whilst this bodily oneness was reinforced by Miss Sally's choice of pronoun, it was already implicitly understood by the class; our movements were at once individual and collective, and friendships between class members were reinforced through the experience of shared movement and learning.

The process of dancing together in a group also involved young people closely watching and copying each other's bodies in order to move in synchronicity with each other in dancing, rather than as part of a learning process. When playing back video footage of a group dance in which she was performing, secondary school student Brooke (15) explained:

> [T]he whole time through the dance I was trying to keep in time with everyone else [...]. [Y]ou have to concentrate on what everyone else is doing [...] to do the moves at exactly the same time.

At the dance school, Emily (16) watched back GoPro video footage of herself rehearsing a Ballet dance for the show and commented that it was essential that she was aware of whether she was moving in synchronicity with the other dancers and staying in line:

> [Y]ou have to keep your arms going the whole time as well, like making sure you're all in sync with each other, cos obviously we're all the same [Emma: Yeah]. And then you can't be the one sticking out! [...] I think it's hard because [...] the patterning has got to be exactly correct. Like it's got to be all complete lines, you have to like check where you are, so you're not sticking out.

I argue that attempting to dance in synchronicity contributed to the development of friendships between young people in three key ways. First, it strengthened the bonds between young people by requiring them to work together as a team with a shared aim and responsibility. Second, and relatedly, it necessitated bodily cooperation and coordination on a physiological or mechanical level. Third, in attempting to move together 'as one' (i.e. not as many individual bodies, but as one body comprised of many individuals) it further contributed to the blurring of self/other bodily boundaries. Dancing 'as one' symbolised a reinforcement of the friendships formed between young people as their synchronised movements represented unity, togetherness and a shared journey towards their goal.

Anthropologists, sociologists and historians have argued that, throughout history, rituals such as community and festival dancing, religious ceremonies and military practices involving synchronous activity have encouraged social bonding (McNeill, 1997) by weakening 'the psychological boundaries between the self and the group' through producing 'positive, pro-social emotions' (Wiltermuth, 2012: 453) (e.g., 'collective joy', see Ehrenreich, 2007). Research in the fields of social-cognitive neuroscience and experimental psychology has also demonstrated that dancing in synchrony (Tarr et al., 2015, 2016), and other synchronised movements including bouncing, tapping, rocking and walking (e.g., Cirelli et al., 2014; Demos et al., 2012; Hove and Risen, 2009; Launay et al., 2013;

Tunçgenç et al., 2015; Valdesolo and DeSteno, 2011; Wiltermuth and Heath, 2009), have positive effects on social bonding, social closeness and pro-social behaviour in infants, children and adults. This effect has been attributed to the 'co-activation of action and perception networks which is believed to blur a sense of 'other' and 'self' [...] leading to a social bond between co-performers' (Tarr et al., 2016: 344) and more recently to the release of neurohormones such as endogenous opioids 'caus[ing] some form of social 'high', which increases positivity towards those in the vicinity' (Tarr et al., 2015: 3). 'As a result of these various socio-cognitive effects, it is hypothesised that the prosocial effects encouraged during synchrony would be evolutionarily advantageous in other domains which require coordination such as hunting, gathering, building shelters together and mutual defence against predators or conspecific raiders' (Tarr et al., 2016: 345). The relationship observed in these literatures between synchronisation, positive emotion and social connection resonates with my own experience of participating as a dancer in classes at the dance school. For example:

> Miss Mary quickly runs through the grande battement en cloche exercise, before putting the music on. We've practised this exercise a few times now, so I'm beginning to know it. On the introduction, I prepare my leg to the back and open my arm to second [...]. For a few counts, I am completely in time with Becky who is standing in front of me. I throw my leg to the front at exactly the same time as her and I hear our legs swish on the floor through first position on the same count in the music. It feels so powerful to be moving completely in sync with her. It's like our bodies have connected. (Fieldwork notes, Ballet class)

The experience of moving exactly in time with Becky felt empowering and contributed to my sense of 'bodily connection' with her (see also Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1 for a discussion of the feeling of empowerment in relation to the physicality of dancing). I found that this feeling was enhanced when dancing in synchronisation with a large group of young people. For instance:

> Miss Rachel asks all the lower grade Tap students to come back to the centre and do their 'Warm Up' altogether. She then asks if the higher grade Tap students want to join in too [...]. It's SO LOUD and powerful when we all dance together [...]. The drop to the side is so together and so loud, it feels quite empowering and thrilling! (Fieldwork notes, Tap class)

The sense of 'bodily connection' experienced when our bodies were dancing in synchronisation was evoked by the feeling of power and the sound generated by our Tap shoes. In McNeill's (1997: 2) words, dancing in synchronisation as part of a bigger group produced 'a strange sense of personal enlargement; a sort of swelling out, becoming bigger than life' that gave rise to a sense of power and

excitement. My experiences provide qualitative evidence to support the findings of research in social-cognitive neuroscience and experimental psychology, which describes the association between positive emotions, pro-social behaviours and synchronised movement. In relation to this thesis I argue that such an association may reinforce and deepen friendships between young people.

Moving in synchronisation with other bodies was also important when carrying out lifts. When watching back GoPro video footage of one of her show dances, Chloe (15) explained:

> I think it's definitely an element of teamwork, because I mean, if one of us [Laura and I] just like didn't do it [lift Lizzie] at the same time, it would completely fall apart and we would drop her [Emma: Yeah]. But I think because Lizzie, obviously she's tiny, she's flexible, she can jump so high [Emma: Yeah]. I think if she wasn't able to do that, it wouldn't work [Emma: Umhum]. Also Laura is really strong, she's got like really good upper body strength, I think all three of us working together, we can then hold her up.

Chloe's comments highlight the importance of teamwork and coordination in carrying out the lift successfully; Chloe, Laura and Lizzie's bodies had to move (i.e. Chloe and Laura pushing Lizzie up, and Lizzie jumping) at exactly at the same time, working together 'as one'. Chloe also indicates a knowledge and awareness of the different strengths of their bodies (e.g., Lizzie is 'tiny', 'flexible' and able to 'jump high', and Laura has 'really good upper body strength') and how this enabled them to work together to make the lift happen. This knowledge of each other's individual strengths and weaknesses demonstrates a level of intimacy and shared understanding that the young people identified as characteristic of their closeness as friends.

The process of dancing with a partner also involved young people getting to know each other's bodies. This is something that Chloe (15) commented on when watching back GoPro video footage of herself dancing with her partner whilst rehearsing a show dance:

> [T]his bit is the worst bit, out of all my show dances – that little turn! [Emma: *Laughs*] [...] It's been nearly a year and we still can't do that! [Emma: *Laughs*] And we try every week, "Right we need to, we need to work that out", but we never do! [Emma: [*Laughs*] What's so tricky about it?]. It's just, you've gotta get the momentum going I think. [...] If you go into it wrong, or at the wrong time with your partner, it's just absolutely shocking! [Emma: Oh ok] You have to get it just right. [...] Because it was still, it was like maybe Christmas [when we learnt it] we didn't really know each other that well, we weren't really comfortable with our [Emma: Yeah] partners, so it was still kind of awkward. But then you never really have a chance to kind of, "If you go up, I'll go down", and then really get used to it. And you can't be

afraid to get close and personal in this dance [Emma: Yeah [*Laughs*]] which obviously, like this is the first time I've [...] [danced] with these people [...]. So I think in September it was quite daunting, kind of coming, this is your partner [Emma: Yeah]. "Hi! Oh my God!" [...]. But we've actually become quite close now. We're quite good friends. So I think it's kind of, you have to get used to how each other moves [Emma: Yeah].

Chloe highlights two important points in relation to the significance of the body in the formation of friendships. First, Chloe indicated that dancing successfully with her partner involved a high degree of physical bodily coordination and cooperation. This was illustrated by Chloe's description of the difficult turn that required her and her partner to move with momentum at exactly the same time, one partner going up whilst the other went down. It also involved Chloe and her partner becoming attuned and aware of how each other's bodies moved. This resonates with Cant's (2012: 211) description of Argentine Tango dancing in which she argues that this improvised partner dance requires '[e]ach person in the couple [to] 'listen' to the other intently with their body, in order to communicate (wordlessly) within the embrace'. 'If one dancer metaphorically steps away from the embrace whilst dancing and stops listening, the connection breaks down. In successful embraces the dance is a conversation, a listening to each other' (Cant, 2012: 226). As Fabiano (2010: 1) explains, 'a successful tango connection [...] is one in which information flows back and forth, replacing the perception of two with the awareness of one'. Thus, 'the dancing couple must be attuned to each other's bodies, bringing shared kinaesthetic experience into inter-corporeal being' (Paterson and Dodge, 2012: 22). I argue that dancing together in partnership involved young people developing a level of physical intimacy and unity that contributed to the development of close friendships.

Second, dancing together required Chloe to 'get close and personal' with her partner with whom she had not worked before. Chloe initially found this process quite 'daunting', and felt 'uncomfortable' and 'awkward' with her partner; however, over time they became more relaxed and had become 'quite good friends'. The close physical proximity and intimacy involved with dancing with a partner was also something that I experienced whilst rehearsing partner work for the dance show, as illustrated in the following extract from my field diary:

I've not worked with Imogen before, but I've spoken to her a few times and she seems nice [...]. The first move together as partners involves us holding hands. Then Imogen has to turn in front of me, so that we swap positions and end up holding hands on the other side [...]. Next we have to take up a Ballroom hold. Considering that Imogen and I have only actually spoken to each other a few times, this seems quite intimate. I feel a bit embarrassed that Imogen has got to put her hand and arm on my sweaty back, so I apologise to her for being

so sweaty! Imogen laughs and says not to worry as she's also really sweaty! We embrace the sweat and continue! (Fieldwork diary, Show rehearsal)

Although we did not know each other very well, as dancing partners Imogen and I had to get 'up close and personal' almost immediately and our bodies even had to 'touch'. Recent work on the geographies of touch (see Dixon and Straughan, 2010; Paterson and Dodge, 2012) has highlighted that touch is 'the most intimate spatial relationship between people' and that '[t]he places where people want to touch, are allowed to, obliged to, refuse to, or are forbidden to touch form a complex and delicately-patterned socio-spatial landscape that is negotiated largely subconsciously' (Paterson and Dodge, 2012: 8). This example of my body touching Imogen's as we took up the 'Ballroom hold' demonstrates two key points regarding the importance of touch in the formation of friendships between young people. First, Dixon and Straughan (2010: 454) note that touching 'destabilises the boundaries between self and other'; this is because to touch another person also involves the other person touching you. I argue that this weakening of self/other bodily boundaries strengthened the sense of bodily cohesion between dancers and created a feeling of 'togetherness' associated with friendship. Second, as Cant (2012: 220) notes in her analysis of Argentine Tango, dancing in an 'embrace' involves a 'tactile encounter' that 'foster[s] a particular kind of intimacy that seemingly oversteps the 'norms' of encounter with strangers'. In taking up the 'Ballroom hold' our bodies were forced to become physically close and the personal spatial boundaries usually observed were transgressed. Cant (2012: 221) further argues that 'to hold someone, perhaps someone you have not met before, requiring intimacy, there is vulnerability'. In this example, touching each other's bodies involved coming into physical contact with each other's sweat. Despite the fact that getting sweaty was a normal bodily function associated with dancing (and actually demonstrated evidence of hard work to the dance teacher and to other students), I felt embarrassed and worried that Imogen would find the act of touching my sweaty, sticky body repulsive. This was perhaps unsurprising given that sweat is often positioned in cultural discourse as a bodily fluid that is dirty, disgusting and unfeminine, and that visceral encounters with the materialities of sweat and sweatiness (i.e. sight, touch and smell) can evoke feelings of self-disgust, shame and embarrassment in many contexts (Waitt, 2014). Imogen's acknowledgement of her own sweat, acceptance of my sweat and reassurance that I did not need to worry about it, cast aside my feelings of vulnerability and created a sense of sameness and mutual acceptance. Touching each other's sweaty bodies also facilitated an 'intimate relationship' at 'a visceral level' facilitating 'a sense of 'togetherness'' (Waitt, 2014: 677). Thus, I argue that touching each other's (sweaty) bodies contributed to the formation of close friendships between young people.

As discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.3), students at the dance school were expected to wear a leotard and tights for most lessons and so were able to see each other's body shapes and sizes clearly. I argue that being exposed to each other's body shapes and sizes in this way further contributed to a sense of physical intimacy between young people. Young people were sometimes even more exposed to each other's bodies as a result of quick costume changes backstage at the school dance show. As Becky (17) explained:

> Last time [show] I had so many quick changes in the second half I was like naked [...] most of the time [Emma: *Laughs*] [Becky: *Laughs*]. I was just like, "Guys, I'm getting changed! Move out my way" [Becky: *Laughs*]. Because there was no time to co-, be like, conserve-, like reserved about it, or conservative about it, or whatever the word is. [...] [B]ut I know all the girls so well, so it doesn't even matter. They've probably seen me naked about a million times before, so I'm not really bothered anymore!

I argue that the dressing rooms and stage wings at the theatre represented an exceptional space-time where normal expectations and codes of behaviour surrounding nudity were suspended; as Becky explained, there was simply not time to be 'reserved' or 'conservative' when getting changed, making it acceptable for the girls to be and to see each other naked. Although being naked in front of her friends placed Becky in a position of physical and emotional vulnerability, she felt that she knew all the girls 'so well' that this did not matter. This comment not only indicates that Becky felt that her friendships with the other girls were sufficiently emotionally secure that she was also comfortable being more physically exposed, but that she knew she could trust her friends to respect her (i.e. by not making negative comments about her body) if she put herself in a position of physical vulnerability. Becky's comment that she was 'not really bothered anymore' because the girls 'have probably seen me naked about a million times before', indicates that this relationship had already been tested in the past and so she was confident and willing to trust her friends again. I argue that this experience of physical intimacy and vulnerability contributed to the formation of close friendships because it provided a context in which trust could be earned, shared and acknowledged, an element of friendship that young people explained was particularly important.

5.2 Student-Teacher Relationships

In this second half of the chapter, I focus on the relationships between young people and their dance teachers.

5.2.1 The Significance of Young People's Relationships with their Dance Teachers in Motivating Them to Participate in Dance

In this section, I argue that for many young people the relationships that they had formed with their dance teachers were an important reason for their participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. I further argue that many young people described these relationships as particularly close.

At all three fieldsites, many young people explained that the relationship they had formed with their dance teacher(s) was an important factor in motivating them to participate in dance and contributed to their enjoyment of dance lessons. For example, at the secondary school, Brooke (15) explained:

> [I think that the relationship I have with my Dance teachers is important for why I do dance and why enjoy it], because if you don't really get along with your teachers you never really wanna go to the class. But if you have like that bond and that connection it makes you want to dance more [Emma: Yeah] and it makes you like want to go to your lesson and makes you want to learn. It just makes you want to do it like more.

Brooke indicated that she got along well with her Dance teachers which motivated her to want to go to her dance lessons and to learn to dance. At the dance school, Megan (14) similarly said:

> Yeah [I think that the relationship I have with my dance teachers is] definitely [important for why I enjoy dancing] because if you don't like them [...] or if you don't respect them [Emma: Yeah] then there's obviously like a big problem because you're not going to want to listen to them and [Emma: Yeah] you're just not gonna wanna dance [Emma: Yeah]. So yeah, I really love Miss Mary, Miss Sally and Miss Anna, and all my teachers. Miss Rachel. And yeah, I hope they like me!

Megan's relationships with her dance teachers were clearly significant in motivating her to participate in extracurricular dance lessons. These findings support existing research on children and young people's participation in dance (e.g., Aujla et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2012) and sports (Barnett et al., 1992; Cox and Ullrich-French, 2010; Keegan et al., 2009) that has already highlighted that teachers and coaches can 'influence self-perceptions, feelings of enjoyment or anxiety, and the desire to continue a particular sport or physical activity' (Weiss and Smith, 1999: 146). In the following sections, I make an original contribution to this existing literature by considering how relationships between students and teachers are formed in the specific context of the dance class.

Many young people reported that they felt 'closer' to their dance teachers than to their other school teachers. For example, at the secondary school, Lydia (14) explained:

I don't know, it [my relationship with my Dance teachers] just feels a lot different [to other school teachers], like you just feel you're closer with them than other teachers.

At the dance school, Isabel (14) similarly said:

I think you have a much closer relationship [with your dance teachers] [Emma: Umhum] than your school ones.

In the sections that follow, I also suggest some reasons why young people felt so 'close' to their dance teachers and how such close relationships formed (see Section 5.0 for a discussion of what I am taking this to mean). I begin by highlighting the importance of the body in the formation of close student-teacher relationships.

5.2.2 Developing Relationships with Teachers through the Body

In this section, I focus on the role of the body in the formation of close relationships between young people and their dance teachers, in particular I highlight the importance of: young people watching, copying and learning from the dance teacher's body; the dance teacher watching young people's bodies; the dance teacher getting to know young people's bodily capabilities and habits; and physical bodily contact and touch between young people and their dance teachers. I argue that these processes established a sense of bodily unity, familiarity and intimacy between young people and their dance teachers, contributing to the formation of close student-teacher relationships.

The process of learning to dance, at all three fieldsites, involved young people watching, copying and learning from the teacher's body. For example, at the dance school, the process of learning set exercises from the ISTD and RAD exam syllabi or choreography for the school dance show often involved the dance teacher standing at the front of the class and demonstrating movements slowly whilst the students watched and copied. The teacher would then sometimes dance the routine with students to the music, before watching them dance it on their own. For example:

Miss Sally explains that this lesson we're going to go through the next section of the dance and polish it [...]. Miss Sally: "Right, so you've got a relevé on one leg with your 'bow and arrow' arms. Then you've got that little twitch of the leg. Then I want you to *really* relax that head over and then look up with the eye line". Miss Sally demonstrates the movements to us while she talks. We watch carefully and copy her movements. Then Miss Sally asks to watch us dance this bit altogether. I concentrate on relaxing my head as far as I can and then following my arm with my eye line, just like Miss Sally did. (Fieldwork notes, Modern class)

The process of polishing the dance required us to watch Miss Sally's bodily movements and then to imitate them using our own bodies. Bandura (1986) describes this form of social cognitive learning as 'observational learning' which is comprised of four phases: attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. We observed Miss Sally's movements and listened to her instructions, practiced the movements with Miss Sally in order to retain them, reproduced the movements with our own bodies, and Miss Sally motivated us by expecting us to copy her and then asking to watch us dance the movements altogether while she watched. I argue that through this process of observing, remembering and reproducing Miss Sally's movements with our own bodies, the separation between our bodies was blurred. This can be understood as an example of intercorporeality (Weiss, 1999). Miss Sally's description of her own bodily movements using the pronoun 'you' (e.g., 'you've got a relevé on one leg', 'your 'bow and arrow' arms', 'you've got that little twitch of the leg', 'I want you to *really* relax that head over') illustrates this merging of her body, my dancing body and the bodies of the other students in the class. I argue that this contributed to the formation of close relationships between teachers and students through creating a sense of bodily unity. The act of reproducing Miss Sally's movements also indicated our respect for and willingness to learn from her in a manner that was immediately visible.

At the dance group, I found that my position as a 'teacher' helped me to form relationships with young people in the group through them watching and copying my body. This was especially important for young people who had limited speech and language abilities. I formed a particular connection with Adam (who was in his late teens/early twenties), a dancer who did not use speech very much:

> Alison, the teacher, explains to the class that this week they're going to try something a bit different: "Emma is going to teach you some Ballet" [...]. I ask everyone to spread out and form a large circle [...]. I demonstrate and explain to the class: "We're going to start by standing with our feet in a special Ballet position, called first position, which means that you have to stand with your heels together and your toes pointing out to the corners". The class move their feet into the same position as mine [...]. "We're going to put our hands on our waist and then we're going to do something called a demi-plié, which is just a fancy way of saying 'bending our knees'. Like this [I demonstrate]. Does everyone want to have a go?". I continue to demonstrate and everyone copies me. Adam, who is standing on the other side of the circle to me, does a full plié right down to the ground! Alison says: "Adam! Well done! Look at that!". We're all amazed and pleased that Adam's joined in, because he often doesn't join in with the group and just does his own thing! (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

In the weeks following this first Ballet session, Adam continued to copy my movements and even chose to stand next to me whilst we were doing exercises:

> I explain that the next Ballet exercise we're going to do is using our arms [...]. "We're going to start with our arms down here [I demonstrate] [...]. We're going to imagine we're each holding a big Easter egg, and we're going to carry the Easter egg to our tummy buttons, then up above our heads. Then we're going to open our arms out to the side and take them back to where they started" [...]. I put the music on. Adam, who has again been joining in and copying my arms, comes and stands right next to me! Alison: "Wow, Emma, Adam has come to stand right next to you! Now that's a big compliment!". (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

> Heather asks everyone to spread out for the warm-up. She puts some music on and we start dancing. Adam has just arrived. He spots me and comes and stands right next to me. I smile and say hello. He starts copying my movements in the same way that he did with the Ballet last week. I do some heel digs and he copies me, although more slowly. Adam is joining in with the dancing, but by watching me and copying my body, rather than copying Heather's body or any of the other young people in the class [...]. Heather asks us to spread out and make a circle for a 'pass the move' game. Adam stands really close to me in the circle, in exactly the same position to my right as he did last week during the Ballet. Heather comments: "You've got a friend there, Emma!". (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

The relationship I built with Adam was based not on verbal interaction (he did not actually speak a single word to me during my entire time at the dance group), but through our bodies. Adam's decision to reproduce the movements of my body with his body created a feeling of unity between us (i.e. between me as a teacher, and Adam as a student). Through watching and copying my body like the other students in the class, a sense of unity was also established between the class as a whole, and Adam became 'part of the group' in a way that he often did not when he was doing 'his own thing'. Adam's decision to copy me also suggested that he liked me as a dance teacher. This was also indicated by the physical location of Adam's body; he initially chose to copy my movements at a distance (i.e. the other side of the circle), but in later weeks chose to come and stand right next to me. This was further underlined by Heather's remark: 'You've got a friend there, Emma!'. Thus, I argue that student-teacher relationships were developed through the body; Adam's decision to copy my movements and his close physical proximity were embodied manifestations of this process.

As well as young people watching the dance teacher's body, participating in dance classes also involved the dance teacher watching young people's bodies. For example, at the secondary school,

students often spent time in lessons devising their own solo or group choreography. The Dance teacher would often watch the students dance and give them suggestions for how to improve. For example:

> The class are choreographing their solo routines this lesson. [...] Brooke has been working on a new section of her dance which starts on the floor. Brooke: "Miss Wood, can you watch my floor bit?". Brooke dances and Miss Wood watches. Afterwards Miss Wood gives her suggestions about how to improve it. Miss Wood: "Yeah, it's a good start. Why don't you have your feet flat rather than pointed at the beginning though, so it's more robotic?". (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

This process of Miss Wood watching Brooke's dancing body and then giving her feedback developed the student-teacher relationship in two key ways. First, this process involved Miss Wood paying close attention to Brooke's body and noticing the intricacies of her movements (e.g., whether her feet were pointed or flexed). I argue that this contributed to the formation of a closer bodily relationship between the Dance teacher and student than between other subject teachers (e.g., Maths, English) and students, where feedback is provided on students work on paper and does not require attention to students' bodies. Second, this process involved Brooke trusting Miss Wood to be able to help her improve by giving her positive and constructive feedback, and Brooke showing her respect for Miss Wood by listening and taking her comments on board. These were both important characteristics in the formation and maintenance of a positive student-teacher relationship.

Furthermore, watching young people's bodies involved the dance teacher developing a detailed knowledge of their 'bodily capabilities'. I am using the term 'bodily capabilities' here to refer to the inherent (i.e. aspects of a dancer's physical facility that are genetic or physical skills that are innate) and learnt (i.e. aspects of a dancer's physical facility that are improved through training or practice, and skills that they have been taught) ability of the body to perform particular movements. This is highlighted in the following extract from my field diary at the dance school:

> Miss Anna puts the music on for petit jetés. As the class dance, Miss Anna walks around the room watching the students dance. Miss Anna: "Lizzie! Petit jetés are a Grade 2 step! I need more turnout from you! I know you, I've taught you for a long time now!". Lizzie smiles and continues jumping, suddenly turning out her feet from about a '5 to 1' position on a clock face to a '10 to 2' position. (Fieldwork notes, Ballet class)

Miss Anna had been Lizzie's Ballet teacher for several years and as such had developed a detailed knowledge of what Lizzie's body was capable of, in this instance, her turnout facility. At the

secondary school, Lydia (14) also explained that when choreographing for a school dance show, her Dance teachers knew that she was able to perform difficult acrobatic moves (that she had learnt at her cheerleading group outside of school) and would ask her to include them:

> They'll go, "Oh can you do a flip here, can you do a flip here [Emma: *Laughs*], can you do this, can you do that?", so, at least they know what we can do and it's not as if we're stuck doing all the kind of boring basic stuff, so it's quite nice that we get to do sometimes something different than everyone else cos they know that we can do it.

Lydia was appreciative that her Dance teachers knew 'what we can do' (i.e. her ability to do 'flips') because it meant that she was not 'stuck doing all the [...] boring basic stuff'. I argue that the acquisition and application of such bodily knowledge contributed to the development of close relationships between dance teachers and students because it demonstrated to young people that their dance teacher knew them well, and recognised and appreciated their unique potentialities and talents, as well as further facilitating a sense of bodily familiarity and intimacy.

At the dance group, Alison, the dance teacher similarly explained that knowing the types of movements that young people in the group could perform well was important when choreographing dance routines:

> [I]t's all about showing them in their best light [Emma: Yeah]. Finding out what they're good at. And I'll watch them [dancing] at [birthday] parties and I think, [Emma: *Laughs*] "Hmm you can do that, I'll, I'll put that in", and the, and the bringing the best out and – for instance, Daniel can easily do the splits [...] and er they're quite flexible like that. They probably, they can, can do the splits or sit in second position. You know, what they can't do is getting themselves off the floor. So, they haven't got that, the erm getting that upwards movement [Emma: Yeah]. The jumping's hard [Emma: Ok]. Erm leaping is impossible. I can't get leaps out of them at all. So it's just playing around with what you can do with them and what they're good at.

Alison's comments demonstrate her knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the young people with Down's syndrome in the dance group in terms of their ability (as a group and as individual students) to perform particular movements, based on her observations and experience. Alison explained that she used her awareness to choreograph routines that would '[show] them in their best light'. This not only demonstrated an intimate knowledge of their dancing bodies, but also exemplified the sense of care that imbued the relationship between Alison (the

teacher) and her students. The importance of care in the formation and maintenance of student-teacher relationships will be discussed further in Section 5.2.3 below.

Watching young people's bodies also involved the dance teacher getting to know young people's 'bodily habits', defined here as the physical tendencies young people often demonstrated (e.g., not turning out their feet properly, not fully straightening their supporting leg, lifting their shoulders too high). At the dance school, Isabel (14) commented:

> Yeah [I think that my relationship with my dance teachers is important for why I like dancing]. Because they know, they know me well [Emma: Yeah] so every week, they'll have a nag about something that [...] I normally do, like habits and stuff [Emma: Yeah]. And they'll remember.

Isabel used the phrase 'know me well' not in relation to her dance teachers' knowledge of her personality traits, but to their knowledge of her dancing body and in particular her 'bad' bodily habits. This knowledge was demonstrated through her dance teachers' 'nagging' her during dance lessons each week. I argue that the process of dance teachers getting to know young people's bodily habits contributed to the formation and maintenance of close student-teacher relationships through establishing a sense of bodily familiarity and intimacy.

The process of learning to dance also involved the teacher touching young people's dancing bodies. The dance teacher sometimes touched a student's body (head, neck, upper and lower back, arms, hands, tummy, legs and feet) in order to correct or help them to find a position, improve their alignment or encourage them to engage or relax particular muscles; this happened most frequently at the dance school due to the emphasis on technique, but also to a lesser extent at the secondary school and dance group. This is illustrated in the following extract from my field diary at the dance school:

> The next barre exercise is grand rond de jambe. Miss Mary puts the music on and starts to walk along the barre whilst we dance [...]. You have to lift your leg in attitude with your arm in fifth position, on a rise and penché over. On the penché, Miss Mary lifts Freya's leg with one hand and guides her arm with the other, helping her to tilt into the correct position. Miss Mary touches Freya delicately, using only her fingers. Miss Mary: "And reach. Go on. That's it". (Fieldwork notes, Ballet class)

At the dance school, the dance teacher would also sometimes spend several minutes going around the room and checking the position of each student, guiding each student's body into the right shape, before putting the music on for the class to dance with the music, for instance:

We dance the exercise with the music and Miss Sally watches. Afterwards, Miss Sally comments: "Ok girls. It's getting there! One thing I noticed that everyone needs to think about is really relaxing that upper back over on that position to the side". Miss Sally demonstrates, showing us which position she's talking about. It's the position where you are facing right diagonal front, with both legs on a plié and your right leg on a tendu to the side. You have to relax over with just your upper back. Miss Sally: "Let me just see that position, girls". Miss Sally comes round to each of us to check our position individually. She starts with Rosie, then Alexandra and Georgina. Then she comes to me. I concentrate on what Miss Sally has said, trying to relax my upper back over as far as I can, whilst keeping my torso lifted. Miss Sally: "That's it". She puts her hand on my lower ribs, checking I'm only relaxing over with my upper back. "And look right down at your tummy". Miss Sally gently pushes my head down with her finger tips, so that I'm looking straight at my tummy button. I feel myself go a couple of inches further than I had been. "That's it, Emma". Then she checks the rest of the class. (Fieldwork notes, Modern class)

I argue that this physical contact and touch contributed to the formation of close relationships between students and their dance teachers in three key ways. First, this tactile mode of learning involved the teacher touching the young person's body in order to physically manipulate it into an improved technical position which required a level of physical intimacy not typically experienced in other classroom contexts. Second, the 'receptive experience of allowing oneself to be moved' contributed to the development of trust between students and teachers (Fensham and Gardner, 2005: 18). It required the student to trust their teacher to be gentle and not to push their body too hard or force it into a position that would be painful. In the examples above, it is notable that Miss Mary touched Freya 'delicately, using only her fingers' in order to lift her leg and guide her arm into a correct penché alignment, and that Miss Sally 'gently push[ed] my head down' with her 'finger tips' exerting minimal pressure but guiding my body into an improved technical position. This process also required young people to trust their dance teacher in terms of their technical knowledge of dance (i.e. their ability to adjust their body into a position that was technically correct or improved). Third, at a symbolic level the act of the teacher touching the young person's body represented a merging of self/other student/teacher bodily boundaries. Dixon and Straughan (2010: 454) argue that touch 'has the capacity to dissolve boundaries, to make proximate that which was far away, and in doing so not only rearrange our metaphysics of intimacy and distance, but pose a danger to any and all systems of order that rely upon distraction and separation'. In other words, touch 'challenges an 'us' [singular] as a definite, definitive and distinguishable form' through a destabilisation of self/other bodily boundaries (Hawkins and Straughan, 2014: 132). I argue that this weakening of the

self/other divide created a temporary moment of intercorporeality (Weiss, 1999) representative of a bodily oneness and connection between student and teacher. Thus, the act of touching contributed to the formation of close relationships between students and teachers through creating a sense of bodily intimacy, trust and unity beyond that experienced in other educational settings.

5.2.3 Talking and Caring

In this section, I argue that young people developed close relationships with their dance teachers through talking to them informally about their everyday lives (e.g., school, exams, family, holidays). As a result, many young people felt that their dance teachers were interested in their everyday lives and cared about them, and that they could go to their dance teachers for help with problems. Some even described their dance teachers as being like a 'second mum'.

During dance classes and rehearsals, teachers and students talked informally (i.e. not in relation to the process of learning to dance), particularly at the dance school and dance group, which I argue was important in the formation of close student-teacher relationships. For example, at the dance school, teachers often spent a few minutes at the start of the lesson talking to students informally whilst they were taking the register (e.g., asking them how they were, whether they had a good day at school). Dance teachers and students also sometimes had short informal conversations during dance lessons (e.g., for a few minutes between practising different exercises, whilst students were doing their own stretches or changing into their Pointe shoes), particularly in classes with senior students (aged 16 and above). These conversations were sometimes initiated by the dance teacher (e.g., teachers often shared anecdotes from their everyday life with the class) and at other times by the students, and often involved the whole class sharing experiences, discussing opinions or ideas, asking questions, and giving each other advice. In my fieldwork diary over the course of the year, I noted a wide range of topics of informal discussion, including (to name just a few) previous school dance shows, costumes, school, exams, holidays, pop songs, wedding planning, tax returns, Christmas presents, water aerobics and universities. Several participants explained that the feeling that they could talk 'normally' to their dance teachers was important for why they felt closer to them. For example, Emily (16) explained:

> I'd say it's [my relationship with my dance teachers is] different [to my relationship with my school teachers]. I'd say you're probably closer here [at dancing], because.. yeah you just have more normal conversations with the teachers here rather than at school where it's purely just, mostly educational. But you actually, yeah you have just normal conversations as if they were friends here.

Becky (17) similarly said that she felt her relationship with her dance teachers was different to her school teachers because it was less 'formal' and that this meant she could 'talk more freely about things' with them. Abigail (10) also explained:

> I just love coming to dancing cos I think the relationship between me and my teachers, [...] it's not like at school where it's the teacher, you can't tell them like some, like not family problems, but things that are happening during your family [Emma: Yeah]. But in dancing, they're like close to you like [...]. Yeah, it's not, "I'm your teacher!" [Abigail: *Laughs*] [Emma: Yeah], if you kind of know what I mean! [...]. Like... if I tell Miss Mary something that's happening at home, something like that, or tell her my birthday, she will remember [Emma: Yeah]. And she will ask me how it's going and things like that.

Abigail felt closer to her dance teachers than to her school teachers because she could talk to them informally in a way that she would not with school teachers. Abigail's comments also indicate that she felt that her dance teachers cared about her; this sense of care was manifest through her dance teachers remembering details about her life (e.g., her birthday) and demonstrating an active interest in it (e.g., asking 'how it's going'). This resonates with Conradson's (2003: 508) conception of 'care' as 'the proactive interest of one person in the well-being of another and as the articulation of that interest [...] in practical ways. Care may thus be present in everyday encounters between individuals who are attentive to each other's situation, who perhaps provide practical assistance or who simply make time to listen to what the other has to say'. Abigail clearly felt that her dance teachers had time to listen to, and were interested in, what she had to say, and this created a sense of care which contributed to the closeness of their relationship.

The feeling that dance teachers cared about them was also indicated by several young people who said that they felt able to talk to their dance teachers about problems they were having and would go to them for help. For example, at the secondary school, Camilla (17) said:

> I know if I ever have a problem, that I could go to one of [my Dance teachers] and they'd be there [Emma: Ok]. I know like they get angry with us, but I know if [Emma: *Laughs*], I know if I had a problem, even if it wasn't to do with dance, that I know that they'd find a way to help me or they'd want to help. [...] I do kind of feel like I have a better relationship with [my Dance teachers] than I do with other [school] teachers [Emma: Yeah]. I feel like if I had a problem [...], I'd rather go and see them, rather than my other [school] teachers or [the Head of Sixth Form].

Camilla felt that her Dance teachers cared about her to the extent that if she went to them with a problem they would want, and find a way, to help her. She also felt that she had a better relationship with her Dance teachers than her other school teachers and as such she would rather go to them for help than her other school teachers. Stinson (1992: 23) interviewed 37 high school students in North Carolina, USA and similarly found that students reported that their Dance teachers were different to their other school teachers because they were more caring and understanding; one way through which Dance teachers demonstrated care was by helping students not only with problems in dance classes (e.g., when they did not understand or had difficulty learning), but by helping them with 'personal problems'.

Dance school student Freya (17) said that she was 'really close' to her dance teachers, Miss Mary and Miss Sally, and the feeling that they would 'have a solution' to any problem that she came to them with prompted her to describe them as being 'like second mums':

> [Miss] Mary and [Miss] Sally, like I'm really close to. Like they're just so lovely. Like you can talk to them about anything. And I just think, like, uhh they're just like second mums, like whatever you say they'll just like have a solution. And [Miss] Rachel's the same. Like she's so lovely. If you have any problems, you just tell her, and she's just, she's so nice [Emma: Yeah]. And you feel at home when you're at dance. So you never, like I know some of my friends who go to [another dance school] and stuff and the teachers are really scary. Like I know [Miss] Mary can be scary sometimes [Both: *Laugh*]! [...] But erm usually they're just like so lovely. And I'm just glad that I have them as dance teachers and no-one else.

Becky (17) also described Miss Mary as being 'like a second mum':

> I don't know, with [Miss] Mary I always feel like, she's like, like a second mum, sort of thing [Emma: Yeah], like she does give a lot of advice and she's... I don't know, sometimes it's not even about like [Both: dancing!] [Emma: *Laughs*]. It's, she's like given me advice about school before and I've thought, this is really weird, but it's quite helpful! [Emma: *Laughs*] [...] And like with [Miss] Sally, she's probably the loveliest person ever and like, I love going to class if it's [Miss] Sally [Emma: Yeah] cos she's just so nice. [...] But I do think the relationship that we have is good. I do think it's important to like have that sort of friendliness as well as them being a teacher [Emma: Yeah] because especially when you're older, it makes you want to listen and like respect them a bit more.

Becky felt that Miss Mary was 'like a second mum' in the sense that she often gave her advice not just about dancing, but also about other aspects of her life including school. Becky also felt that

developing an affable relationship with her dance teachers was important because it made her want to listen to and respect them more. I asked Miss Sally, a dance teacher at The Southern School of Dance, to reflect on this:

> Emma: A couple of the girls kind of have talked about you and [Miss] Mary as though, like they've mentioned like, you're like a second mum [...]. Is that something that you like would have thought of kind of-?
>
> Miss Sally: Erm. Well I suppose in a way [Emma: *Laughs*]. Especially when you've known them for so long. And especially, not necessarily even maybe the students that speak to you [in class lots], but sometimes if they have problems and things [Emma: Umm] and they do come to you. And it's almost like you feel quite.. privileged that they've come to you [Emma: Yeah]. Erm and over the years one or two have shared some quite erm serious [Emma: Yeah] issues with me, that I've sort of thought, "Oh do you know what, the trust that they must have to share this information [Emma: Yeah] erm with me". But I suppose yeah, you feel like sort of a mother hen, with all your [Emma: *Laughs*], all your children! You know, cos you get to know everyone so well. So you sort of, you get involved in their lives, and you just want the best for them so [Emma: Yeah].

Miss Sally felt that she was like 'a second mum' to some students not only because, like most parent-child relationships, she had known them for many years (see Section 5.2.4), but because students sometimes came to her with problems or issues. Miss Sally's comments suggest that she really cared about the young people in her dance classes, not just in relation to their progress and achievements in dance, but also through getting involved in their wider lives and wanting the best for them. I argue that this attitude was clearly recognised and appreciated by the young people in her dance classes, demonstrated through their trust in her and willingness to share 'quite [...] serious issues', and that this contributed to the formation of close student-teacher relationships.

5.2.4 The Longevity and Intensity of Relationships

In this section, I argue that many young people had been taught by their dance teachers for a number of years and often spent several hours in rehearsals with them each week, sometimes in particularly small classes. I suggest that the longevity and intensity of student-teacher relationships meant that dance teachers got to know their students well, which encouraged the development of close relationships.

At all three fieldsites, many young people had known their dance teachers for a number of years: at the dance school, young people had known their dance teachers for up to 16 years since they first

started dance lessons when they were as young as 2 years old; at the secondary school, students had known their Dance teachers for up to 7 years since they started at the school when they were 11 years old (and some for longer than this through a primary school outreach programme); and at the dance group, young people had known their dance teacher for up to 15 years since the group was first established. Many young people said that their relationships with their dance teachers were particularly close because they had known them for such a long time. For example, at the dance school, Lizzie (14) explained:

> [I'm] [q]uite close [to my dance teachers] cos erm obviously I've known them since I was very young [Emma: Yeah] and they've kind of like taught me each stage of dancing. So yeah I'm quite close.

Lucy (12) similarly commented:

> I do know them all quite well because, I, I've danced since I was about 4 [years old] here [Emma: Umhum]. So they've basically known me all my life cos they've watched me grow up so.

Lucy and Lizzie had been taught by their dance teachers since they were 'very young'. I argue that this contributed to the development of close student-teacher relationships in two key ways. First, it meant that there had been plenty of time for young people and teachers to get to know each other, and for other aspects of a close student-teacher relationship such as trust to develop. Second, I argue that the longevity of student-teacher relationships was similar to that of child-parent relationships; Lucy and Lizzie's dance teachers occupied a unique position in their lives as one of only a few adults (excluding parents and other family members) who had 'watched [them] grow up'.

At the dance school, Abigail (10) explained that she had got to know her teachers at dancing much better because, unlike at school where you 'change teachers every year', at dancing 'you just stay with the same teacher'. This was something that Miss Sally, the dance teacher, also commented on:

> I do [think the length of time I get to know the students is important in building a good relationship with them] because I think that we're probably the most constant [Emma: Umhum] teacher [Emma: Yeah] in somebody's life. Because school you go from infant, junior, senior and amongst that you get all different teachers [Emma: Yep], don't you? [Emma: Yeah] Whereas I think, I have been constant since 7 [years old] [Emma: Yeah] through to, you know, we, 18, 19, well yourself [Emma: Yeah] [...]. I mean, it's, it's *years*. So yeah I do think that, that helps with the relationship [Emma: Yeah]. And yeah, I think it's quite important that they do have [...] a constant through their lives.

Miss Sally thought that being 'the most constant' teacher through a students' primary and secondary school career helped them to develop a good relationship with her. I argue that this was because dance teachers occupied a position of stability and reliability in young people's lives that contributed to the development of trust.

At the secondary school, several participants said that they felt that their relationship with their Dance teachers was closer than with other school teachers because they spent many hours each week in lessons and rehearsals with them which enabled them to get to know each other better. For example, Camilla (17) explained:

> I'm not really sure [why I feel like I have a better relationship with my Dance teachers than my other school teachers]. I think maybe because when you do dance you have to stay for a load of after-school rehearsals so you see them more.

This was also something that Miss Wood, a Dance teacher at the secondary school, commented on:

> [W]ithin Performing Arts, especially Dance [Emma: Yeah], the amount of after-school rehearsals we do is ridiculous [Emma: Yeah]. And like in half-term I came in for a whole day with the students [Emma: Yeah] erm and I think you do get to know them more.

Miss Wood highlighted that it was not only the number of hours spent in after-school rehearsals (as well as lunch time and before school) but also extended periods of time spent during school holidays, that enabled her to 'get to know' her students better.

At the dance school, when preparing for exams students were asked to attend an extra lesson each week just for students preparing to take their exam. Several participants explained that exam classes offered an opportunity to get to know teachers better because there would only be a few students (usually four to eight students, but sometimes as few as one or as many as 12) in the dance class. For example, Chloe (15) explained:

> I think [the relationship I have with my dance teachers] it's quite a lot different [to teachers at school] because it's, kind of you're not sitting down doing work with like a class of 30 [students] [Emma: Yeah], you might be in a class of like six if you've got in the exam class, so it's more like one-to-one. And it becomes [Emma: Yeah] kind of more personal in some levels, so you get to know them a lot better than you do like your normal teachers.

Miss Rachel, a dance teacher, also commented:

[I]t's so nice when you get to exams and you have smaller classes, like exam lessons and you get to know students, [...] especially the quieter ones as well, the student that might in a big class not say a word [...]. When you have the smaller exam lessons, it's so nice because you, you build a kind of relationship through it, through the 10-week term, by, you know, just, not just through their dancing, just by being able to speak to them a bit more [Emma: Yeah], finding out how, how they work in different scenarios as well [Emma: *Laughs*], like working up to-towards an exam.

Both students and teachers at the dance school felt that exam classes provided a chance to get to know each other better because they were so small, through talking to each other (see Section 5.2.3 above) and getting to know 'how they work in different scenarios'. This was different to other educational settings such as school where there could be up to 30 students in the class. Therefore, dance exam classes provided an opportunity for students to get to know their teachers in a manner that was unlikely to occur in other contexts.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that, for many young people, the relationships that they had formed with other students in their dance classes and their dance teachers were an important reason for their ongoing participation in, and enjoyment of, dance and that these relationships were often particularly close. I suggested a number of processes that were important in the formation and maintenance of close relationships, highlighting some of the 'complex social/corporeal transactions [that] occur in [the dance class] setting' (Fensham and Gardner, 2005: 17). As such, this chapter has addressed the third research question.

First, I argued that the longevity of relationships contributed to their closeness. Friendships between young people were often developed over many years. This meant that young people got to know each other well, contributing to the close formation of friendships. In addition, young people shared many experiences and had many shared memories of dancing together with their friends in classes, rehearsals, exams and performances, strengthening relationships through the establishment of a sense of shared journey and history. Many young people had also been taught by their dance teachers for a number of years and spent several hours in (sometimes very small) classes with them each week. I suggest that the longevity and intensity of student-teacher relationships were crucial factors in establishing close and deep bonds.

Second, I highlighted the importance of practices of talking, helping, supporting and caring for each other in developing close relationships. Friendships were built and strengthened as young people

talked, helped and supported each other (both practically and emotionally) during dance lessons and shows (e.g., talking to each other informally about dancing and other aspects of their everyday lives, helping each other to learn choreography, supporting each other with nerves before a performance, offering each other emotional support in relation to issues or problems in their wider lives). This enabled young people to get to know each other and contributed to the development of feelings of trust and care. Young people also developed close relationships with their dance teachers through talking to them informally about their everyday lives (e.g., school, exams, family, holidays). As a result, many young people felt that their dance teachers were interested in their everyday lives and cared about them, and that they could go to their dance teachers for help with problems that they encountered. Some even described their dance teachers as being like a 'second mum'.

Third, I suggested the importance of the body in the development of close relationships. I argued that friendships between young people were developed through the body, in particular by: watching, copying and learning from each other's dancing bodies (e.g., watching another student demonstrate a dance movement); moving in synchronicity (e.g., when performing a group dance); becoming familiar with how each other's bodies moved and touching each other's (sweaty) bodies (e.g., when dancing with a partner); and being exposed to each other's bodies (e.g., during a quick costume change backstage at a dance show). I asserted that these processes engendered a sense of bodily trust, unity and intimacy between young people which developed, solidified and deepened friendships, and in doing so took them beyond the level of friendships formed in other contexts. The body was also significant in the formation of close relationships between young people and their dance teachers. In particular, I illustrated the importance of: young people watching, copying and learning from the dance teacher's body (e.g., when demonstrating a dance sequence for the class to follow); the dance teacher watching young people's bodies (e.g., to give feedback on their choreography); the dance teacher getting to know young people's bodily capabilities and habits (e.g., their ability to perform certain movements); and physical bodily contact and touch between teachers and students (e.g., when correcting a particular position). This resulted in a sense of bodily unity, familiarity and intimacy between young people and their dance teachers beyond that experienced in relationships with other teachers.

Chapter 6: Emotions

<u>6.0 Introduction</u>

In this chapter, I focus on young people's emotional experiences of participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances. I define emotions as 'socially named and recognised feelings' (Brown, 2011: 9) (see also Chapter 2, Section 2.1.5), for example the sense of 'excitement' associated with perfecting a dance movement (see Section 6.2.1) or the feeling of 'nervousness' experienced when waiting in the theatre wings to dance on stage (see Section 6.3.3). In this chapter, I also attend more generally to the emotional and physical 'feelings' associated with dancing, such as the sense of 'escape' that many young people explained they felt when they entered the dance studio (see Section 6.1) or the feeling of 'bodily liberation' sometimes experienced as a result of dancing (see Section 6.3.1). I highlight the myriad of emotions and feelings that dancing evoked and where these took place (i.e. in-body and in spaces such as the dance studio, theatre or exam room). As such, the chapter can be situated within, and makes a contribution to, literature on (children's) emotional geographies (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.5) (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Blazek and Windram-Geddes, 2013). I argue that the emotional experiences and feelings involved with dancing were significant in motivating young people to participate in dance, and explore how these were felt and narrated. Thus, in this chapter I address the fourth research question.

In Section 6.1, I discuss young people's experiences of dance as an escape and an emotional release, drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only. First, I argue that one of the reasons why young people enjoyed participating in dance was because it provided them with an escape from everyday life (e.g., family life, school, homework, and GCSE and A-level exam revision), functioning both as a physical space to which they could escape and an activity that absorbed and distracted them. I suggest that many young people were actively using dance in this way as a mechanism for coping with and managing stress in their everyday lives. Thus, in relation to Chapter 4, Section 4.1, I assert that for many young people dance occupied a dual and contradictory position both as a key part of, and a way to escape from, everyday life. Second, I argue that for many young people dancing provided an emotional release, enabling them to express their emotions through movement rather than words. I suggest that for some young people this sense of release was intimately connected to the physicality of dancing and the feeling of 'getting rid' of their emotions in a physical manner. Finally, I argue that dance teachers were not only aware of the role of dance as an escape and an emotional release, but encouraged young people to make use of dance in this way.

In Section 6.2, I argue that the sense of achievement that young people experienced as a result of participating in dance was an important reason for their participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. The discussion is divided into four sections, focusing on the feeling of achievement associated with: learning to dance, in Section 6.2.1; choreographing dance, in Section 6.2.2; passing a dance exam, in Section 6.2.3; and performing dance, in Section 6.2.4. I argue that the process of achieving was understood and experienced in a number of different ways, having various meanings (e.g., learning and perfecting a movement or exercise, creating an original solo or group composition, practising for, taking and passing dance exams, performing dance to an audience), forms of recognition (e.g., an internal feeling, or external praise from the dance teacher, other class members, a dance examiner or an audience), spaces (e.g., in the body and in spaces such as the dance studio, the exam room and the theatre) and times (e.g., 'in the moment' or over several weeks or months) in which it happened, and involving various emotional and embodied feelings such as stress, worry, nervousness, frustration, exhaustion, excitement, thrill, enjoyment, success, pride, satisfaction, and a sense of bodily control and bodily pleasure.

In Section 6.3, I argue that young people participated in dance classes, rehearsals and performances because they were intrinsically enjoyable. The section is divided into three parts, each focusing on a different element of the experience of participating in dance that many young people found enjoyable. In Section 6.3.1, I focus on the sense of enjoyment that young people experienced as a result of actually dancing or physically moving their bodies. I argue that the embodied experience of dancing sometimes resulted in a sense of bodily liberation, freedom and empowerment that was associated with a feeling of pleasure at a visceral level. In Section 6.3.2, I argue that dancing was enjoyable because it enabled young people to 'have a laugh' with their friends (e.g., being silly with each other, going wrong together), which made the experience of learning to dance fun. In Section 6.3.3, I focus on the sense of enjoyment that young people associated with the experience of rehearsing and performing in the dance show at the dance school. I argue that the experience of participating in the show was enjoyable because it was exciting. I explore young people's experiences of rehearsing in the dance studio, arriving at the theatre, being backstage in the dressing rooms, waiting in the wings and performing on stage. I illustrate how young people's emotional experiences changed over space and time from rehearsal to performance.

Through a discussion of young people's embodied and emotional experiences of participation in dance, I contribute to the geographical literature in a number of ways. I contribute to research in children's geographies on embodiment (see Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009) and emotion (see Blazek and Windram-Geddes, 2013). I highlight the significance of dance as a form of escape and emotional

release, as well as some of the emotional experiences involved with learning to dance, choreographing dance, taking a dance exam and performing dance to an audience. I extend recent work focusing on children's emotional geographies of physical activity, sport and exercise (Hemming, 2007; Windram-Geddes, 2013) by attending to children's and young people's embodied emotional experiences of actually moving. I provide evidence to suggest that the emotional experiences involved with dancing (e.g., enjoyment, excitement) were more important than the need to exercise in motivating young people to participate in dance (see Hemming, 2007). In Section 6.3, I focus on young people's experiences of enjoyment, fun and excitement, responding to Evans' (2008: 1675) call for 'a 'youthful' geography that engages with young people's experiences around issues of 'fun', exuberance, and the excitement of new opportunities and possibilities'. As such, I also contribute to work on the geographies of education and learning that has recently been concerned with embodiment (Cook and Hemming, 2011) and emotion (Kenway and Youdell, 2011) through an explicit attention to the importance of emotional embodied experiences involved in the process of learning. I also expand work on the geographies of dance, by investigating the emotions and feelings involved with dancing, rather than attempting to 'read off' meanings. Throughout the chapter, I draw on research in the field of dance education (e.g., Bond and Stinson, 2000; Gardner et al., 2008; Stinson, 1992, 1997; Stinson et al., 1990; Thomas, 1993), engaging children's geographies and the geographies of dance with research beyond their disciplinary boundaries.

6.1 Dancing as an Escape and an Emotional Release

In this section, I draw on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only.[56] First, I argue that for many young people dancing provided an escape from everyday life, functioning both as a physical space to which they could escape and as an activity which absorbed and distracted them. Second, I argue that for some young people dancing provided an emotional release, offering them a way to express their emotions through movement rather than words.

At the dance school and secondary school, many young people said that one of the reasons they enjoyed participating in dance was because it provided an escape from everyday life, in particular from family life, school, homework, and GCSE and A-level exam revision.[57] For example:

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[56] At the dance group, dance as an escape or emotional release was not something that participants brought up during interviews or that I asked them about (I felt this would have been too difficult considering the limited speech and language skills of the young people I interviewed). Therefore, in this section I draw on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school only.

[57] Although several participants at the dance school talked about dancing as a space where they could escape from homework and revision, I did notice that during breaks between dance classes or rehearsals some young people completed homework or revision (particularly during the GCSE/A-level exam period) in the changing rooms or waiting area (as highlighted by Jasmine in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.3). I argue that this contradiction

I think dance just makes you forget about all your problems. It just makes you concentrate on one thing only. [...] I think it is a massive escape from reality. (Brooke, 15)

It's like somewhere where I can go [...] and it makes me like forget about everything. [...] If something's going on or something [Emma: Umhum] then I just sort of forget about it when I come to dance [...] cos I have to focus on [dancing]. (Becky, 17)

When you're in there [the studio] like you *can't* think of anything else [Emma: Yeah] except what you're meant to be doing. [...] I think it kind of like gives you a sense of freedom [...] from the rest of your life. [...] It's just like everything else goes away for a couple of minutes. (Rosie, 17)

When I'm dancing, I just feel like I'm in a different world. I don't have to think of anything else. (Freya, 17)

I think it's just nice to like get everything off my mind and just like focus on my dancing. [...] It's just nice to get away from [...] everything and just like dance. Cos it, it makes you forget about everything. (Lucy, 12)

These comments raise two key points regarding the connections between dance, emotions and space. First, they indicate the importance of dance classes as a physical space to which to escape; dance classes offered 'somewhere' to go (Becky, 17) or 'get away' to (Lucy, 12) that was physically separate from other everyday spaces such as school and home. Second, they suggest that dancing was an activity that allowed young people to escape from everyday life; it required young people to 'concentrate' (Brooke, 15) and 'focus' (Lucy, 12) on dancing to the extent that they forgot about 'everything else' (Rosie, 17). This resonates with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) description of 'flow', a state of consciousness in which a person feels so absorbed in what they are doing that nothing else seems to matter. This feeling of total immersion is often described as being 'in the zone' or 'in the groove' (Csikszentmihalyi and Jackson, 1999: 11). I argue that dancing enabled young people to 'escape from reality' (Brooke, 15) and enter into a 'different world' (Freya, 17) by allowing them to achieve a state of 'flow' in which they were so absorbed in what they were doing that they were distracted from other things going on in their lives. These findings support existing research on young people's experiences of participation in dance that has highlighted that dance can provide opportunities for escape from and transcendence over everyday life (Bond and Stinson, 2000; Gardner et al., 2008; Stinson, 1992, 1997; Stinson et al., 1990; Thomas, 1993). For instance, in her

was perhaps indicative of a tension between young people's *idealised* positioning of dance as a space away from homework and revision, and the difficulty of maintaining this spatial division in reality (i.e. not being able to uphold this division when the pressure to revise for A Level or GCSE exams became too great).

study of 16-18 year old female dancers in the USA, Stinson et al. (1990: 17) found that dancing seemed to enable 'a transcendence of structure, a release and/or an escape from the everyday world'. Several dancers described a feeling of 'total absorption' to the extent that 'the rest of the world is blocked out'; as one dancer explained, 'I'm so caught up with it that the whole world could crash around me' (Stinson et al., 1990: 17). Thus, in relation to the discussion presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.1 of this thesis, I argue that for many young people dance occupied a dual and contradictory position as both *part of*, and *a way to escape from*, their everyday lives.

When participating in dance classes at the dance school, I similarly found that dancing could function as an escape from everyday life. For instance:

> I've been very stressed out this week. [A member of my family] had an operation yesterday and is recovering in hospital. I walk into the dance studio and the door slams behind me. I've been looking forward to this class all week – I know that for the next hour I can forget about everything and just focus on dancing. [...] Miss Sally asks us to spread out for the 'Warm Up'. This exercise is fast and complicated, so I really have to concentrate on what I'm doing! I stand with my feet in second position, ready to start. Miss Sally counts us in. I roll my shoulders, right, left, right, relax my body over and swing my left arm up. I throw my left arm down, flinging my right arm up and circle it round. I relax forward and jump, then step back on my right foot taking my arms to second. I always go the wrong way on the next bit, so I watch the other girls closely. I join my feet together and take my left arm high, facing left diagonal front. Miss Sally is shouting instructions at us! [...]. I'm concentrating so hard on what I'm doing that I can't think about anything else. I have to focus on the here and now. There's no time to be in two places at once. (Fieldwork notes, Modern class)

The dance studio functioned as a physical space that I could escape to. As I walked into the dance studio and the door slammed behind me, I physically left 'reality' behind and entered into a separate space where I could 'forget about everything'. The experience of dancing also enabled me to escape. The movements in the exercise were 'fast and complicated' which meant that dancing them required my complete concentration to the extent that I was distracted from thinking about a member of my family being in hospital. I entered into a 'flow' state in which I was 'totally absorbed' in what I was doing to 'the exclusion of all other thoughts and emotions' (Csikszentmihalyi and Jackson, 1999: 5). Furthermore, I had already anticipated that dance would provide an escape for me *before* I walked into the dance class and was looking forward to it. In other words, I was aware that dancing would enable me to escape and this was helping me to manage a stressful situation. I argue that, like me, many young people were actively 'using' the feeling of escape with which dance

provided them, and the anticipation of this feeling, as a mechanism for coping with and managing stress that they encountered in their everyday lives. This is highlighted by Jasmine in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.3 in her description of her experience of using dance as an escape from the stress of GCSE exam revision.[58]

Several participants talked about dancing not only as providing an escape from everyday life, but also as an emotional release. Joe (18), a student at the secondary school, explained that this was particularly important whilst studying for his A Levels which were very stressful:

> When I'm dancing everything sort of, kind of, goes away and I can just focus on dancing. And it's like an emotional release as well [...]. With like stresses of A Levels and things at the minute, I think everyone's stressed cos of all the exams and things so [Emma: Yeah] whenever I find time to just get into the studio, just put on a track and then just jam out I guess, if you call it that [Emma: Yeah]. And it just er, I dunno, all my, kind of, just troubles go away. And I just think, I get time to focus on myself and just let out, I guess, express my feelings through movement so [...]. It sounds a bit cliché, but! [Joe: *Laughs*]

Dancing not only provided a way for Joe to escape from reality, indicated by his remark '[w]hen I'm dancing everything, sort of, kind of, goes away and I can just focus on dancing', but also functioned as an 'emotional release' enabling him to 'let out' or 'express [his] feelings through movement'. This resonates with existing research on young people's experiences of dance that has demonstrated that dance can provide a means of non-verbal self-expression (Stinson, 1997; Stinson et al., 1990; Thomas, 1993). For example, Thomas (1993: 79) conducted research with 14-25 year old dancers attending Contemporary dance classes in inner city London, and found that dance 'enable[d] them to express themselves in a way that they [could not] with words'. Lily (14), another student at the secondary school, also said that dance was an important way of expressing her emotions non-verbally:

> [Dance] just kind of lets me talk through motions [i.e. movements], not in person [i.e. verbally]. Even though I'm a very talkative person, it's kind of nice to express [myself] in a different way, and that's through movement. [...] [For example] when I went through like tough times when I was younger, through like, a family problem with my mum and my dad

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[58] Although many young people said that dancing was a way of escaping or releasing stress, they also talked about the stress associated with, for example, rehearsing for shows and taking exams, as will be discussed later in this chapter. In this way dance occupies a dual position, both as a cause and a reliever of stress. Therefore, in this section I am not aiming to idolise dancing as a stress-free activity, but to highlight the role that it can play in helping young people to release or escape from stress in their everyday lives.

splitting up, it was kind of a.. tough space to talk about to people, so I just kinda went in my room, started dancing through my aggression and, but sadness as well.

Dancing offered a way for Lily to express her emotions without language and this had provided a coping mechanism for her when her mum and dad separated. Although she found it difficult to talk about her emotions at this time, she was able to 'dance through' her feelings of anger and sadness. Thus, dancing provided Lily with a way of processing, dealing with and releasing her emotions using her body. Thrift's (1997) conceptualisation of dance as a non-representational body practice that 'has a certain expressive quality that exceeds efforts to incorporate it within an epistemology and politics of representation' (McCormack, 2016: 105) is useful here in understanding Lily's experience. Lily used the 'physicality of [her] body to articulate complex thought[s] and feelings that [could not] be easily put into words (represented)' and this helped her to cope with her parents' separation (Somdahl-Sands, 2011: 512).

For some participants, it was clear that dancing as an emotional release (particularly the release of stress) was intimately connected with the physicality of dancing. At the secondary school, Leah (17) said: '[Dance is] like a way to just like express myself. [...] If I was upset like, "Ahh I just wanna dance" and like dance it out, kind of thing'. Leah further explained that it was the feeling of physically 'throwing the emotions out', through 'passionate[ly]' 'attacking' movements that enabled her to 'dance out' her emotions. At the dance school, Chloe (15) similarly explained:

> [I think I enjoy dancing] cos it's like a stress buster. Like some people go out running, like but instead I dance. Like it's... like a time when you don't have to think about like school or exams or stress or whatever's going on at home. You can just kind of not think about that and just [Emma: Yeah] dance it out! [...] [I]f you feel frustrated it gives you [Emma: Yeah] some way of getting rid of it without like yelling [Emma: *Laughs*] at someone!

Dancing not only provided Chloe with an opportunity to escape and forget about school, exams and her home life, but also acted as an emotional release. Dancing enabled Chloe to 'get rid' of her emotions using the physicality of her body, to express, release or let go of her emotions in a physical manner. This feeling was described by both Chloe and Leah as 'dancing it out'.

At the dance school, the importance of dancing as both an escape and an emotional release was recognised by dance teachers. This is highlighted in the following extract from the interview I conducted with Miss Sally:

Emma: Some of the girls have [...] spoken about dancing as erm like it's not home, and it's not school, but it's like [...] somewhere where they can forget about what else is going on in their life [...]. Is that something that you're aware of?

Miss Sally: We would hope. And especially while they've been going through their exams [Emma: Yeah]. You know, we say to them, just stop studying [Emma: Yeah]. Just come and have a break. Free your mind [Emma: Yeah] and have a break. And we hope it's somewhere that, if they've had a bad day [Emma: Yeah], they can come in and feel secure and safe [Emma: Yeah] and thrash it out in a dance class, and just for a moment, just get rid of the emotion [Emma: Yeah], before they've gotta go back out and face whatever it is they had to leave at the door [Emma: Yeah]. But yeah, we just try to encourage them to leave, leave it at the door, come in, press pause, erm [Emma: Yeah]. [...] And sometimes somebody will come in and say, "I've had a really bad day. I just need to get in". And, and you know [Emma: Yeah]. It's all-, it's nice that they can do that [Emma: Yeah, definitely] I think.

Miss Sally's comments highlight two key points. First, Miss Sally was aware that dance could provide a way for young people to escape from their everyday lives, to 'press pause' before going 'back out and fac[ing] whatever it is that they had to leave at the door'. In relation to Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.3) whilst young people knew that they could talk to their dance teachers about their problems if they wanted to, Miss Sally's comments also indicate that young people sometimes did not want to do this and instead used the dance class as a space to temporarily forget about their problems. Second, Miss Sally was aware that dance could provide an emotional release, an opportunity to 'thrash it out' or 'get rid of the emotion'. More significantly, Miss Sally's remarks suggest that she was not only aware of this, but actively encouraged her students to make use of dance in this way. In Miss Sally's view, dance classes were not only about providing young people with an opportunity to learn to dance, but also about offering them a 'secure and safe' space where they could escape, relax, express themselves and let out their emotions. The comments also indicate that Miss Sally's role as a dance teacher was about more than education, but involved a degree of care and concern about her students and their wider lives (see also Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3 for a discussion of the caring role of dance teachers).

6.2 Dancing and the Feeling of Achievement

In this section, I argue that the sense of achievement was an important reason for young people's enjoyment of and participation in dance. I structure the discussion into four parts focusing on the feeling of achievement associated with: the process of learning to dance during lessons; the process

of choreographing dance; the experience of practising, taking and passing a dance exam; and the experience of performing dance to an audience. I use the examples presented to 'unpack' the multiple different understandings of achievement in the context of dance in terms of: what it meant (e.g., learning and perfecting a step, movement or exercise, creating a solo or group dance, practising for, taking and passing dance exams, performing dance to an audience); how it was recognised (e.g., as an internal feeling or externally in the form of praise from the dance teacher or other class members, a mark or certificate awarded by an examiner, or applause from an audience); where it happened (e.g., in the body and in different spaces such as the dance studio, the exam room and the theatre); when it happened and how long the process of achieving something took (e.g., a feeling experienced 'in the moment', or over a longer period of time for example several weeks or months); and the emotional and embodied feelings that the process of achieving something involved (e.g., stress, worry, nervousness, frustration, physical exhaustion, excitement, thrill, enjoyment, success, pride, satisfaction, and a sense of bodily control and bodily pleasure).

6.2.1 Learning to Dance

In this section, I focus on achievement in relation to young people's experiences of the process of learning and perfecting dance steps, exercises and routines in dance lessons. I argue that a sense of achievement in this context: was experienced as a result of mastering a particular movement or sequence; was experienced as an internal feeling and enhanced when recognised externally by teachers and other class members; happened in the dance studio during lessons; was not always experienced immediately, but required effort and practice over several weeks or months; and involved emotional and embodied feelings including frustration, excitement, and a sense of bodily control and bodily pleasure.

The process of learning and perfecting a specific movement or dance sequence could take a long time, sometimes several weeks or even months. For example, Becky (17), a student at the dance school, explained when watching back video footage of herself dancing the first section of a technical sequence in her Tap lesson:

> I don't like that one [Emma: *Laughs*]. It's *really* hard! And also, you have to count the music *loads*, because it's [an irregular time signature] so it's really awkward timing. [...] I'm still not that good [at it]. [...] We haven't finished it [yet]. [...] I noticed I made some mistakes in that. [...] I think it's just one of those ones that's going to take a lot of time. And also, cos I'm not naturally good at *counting* music. Normally, especially with Ballet and Modern, it's easier to [Emma: Umm] just, I don't know, 'feel the music' I suppose people say, or just *know* when to

come in. Whereas Tap you have, especially with this dance, cos it's awkward timing, and it's all about getting it at the right time [Emma: Yeah], and you have to miss beats and the examiner will be looking out for that. It's a lot more difficult for me, personally [Emma: Yeah] to erm.. do that. [...] And then it makes you forget the steps when you're trying to think about timing [Emma: Yeah] and it's just crazy, there's too much to think about! [...] I think it will feel good once I've finished it and once I know it all [Emma: Umhum]. And it will, it'll feel like [...] an accomplishment [...] and I think that's the thing that makes me, sort of drives me and motivates me more, that it's like knowing something and feeling more accomplished with it makes you feel better about it I suppose [Emma: Yeah]. And it, it does make you enjoy it even more, when you feel like you've worked hard to get to a certain point where it's really good [Emma: Yeah]. So.. yeah, I'll just have to keep trying!

Becky's comments highlight three important points about the meaning of achievement in relation to the process of learning to dance. First, Becky's remarks indicate that the process of achieving involved effort over a long period of time. Becky explained that it was going to 'take a lot of time' to learn and perfect this exercise because it was particularly difficult: it had an irregular time signature and was rhythmically challenging, including a number of 'missed beats'. Second, Becky's comments highlight that 'setbacks or failure are a natural part of the learning process' and that it is often necessary to 'persist through obstacles to find the satisfaction of accomplishment' (Bond and Stinson, 2007: 163). Becky explained that because the exercise was in a complex metre this meant that she had to 'count the music *loads*' which often led her to 'forget the steps' as she had 'too much to think about'. Becky felt that this exercise was particularly difficult for her because she was not 'naturally good at *counting* music'. Thus, the exercise not only required Becky to master technical rhythmic challenges that it was designed to test, but also to overcome a personal obstacle, which was arguably cognitive as much as it was physical. Third, Becky's comments highlight that it is not just the 'end point' itself that is significant to the process and experience of achieving; the anticipation of this 'end point' and the experience of trying also matter. Although Becky had not yet mastered the technical sequence, her anticipation of the feeling of accomplishment she would gain from 'working hard to get to a certain point where it's really good' motivated her to 'keep trying' even though she found it '*really* hard'.

Several participants talked about the sense of achievement they felt when successfully performing a dance move or sequence for the first time. Joe (18), a secondary school student, explained:

Er yeah [I] definitely [get a sense of achievement from dancing]. Erm especially when you've been practising something for a while and maybe you can't get it, and then you suddenly do

get, get it [Emma: Yeah]. You think, "Oh wow, I can actually do that now". [...] [S]ay if you're working towards like a specific move that you can't do, and when you finally do get it, like execute that move, you think, "Oh wow, I can do that". It gets like a sense of that, you know, good feeling.

Joe indicated that although it required considerable time and practice, the sense of achievement that he experienced as a result of successfully executing a difficult movement made this investment worthwhile. Whilst participating in dance classes at the dance school, there were a number of occasions when I similarly experienced a sense of achievement from successfully executing a difficult step for the first time. For instance:

We practise the next Pointe work exercise at the barre with the music. [...] Miss Mary wants us to spend some time working on the fouetté. I've been struggling with this step and have never really understood how to do it properly – usually I just make a half-hearted attempt or miss it out. I'm hopeful that breaking it down slowly will help. [...] Miss Mary uses Steph to demonstrate: "Ok, Steph. Stand with your leg dégagé derrière". Steph follows Miss Mary's instructions and we watch. "As you come through first position, squeeze into your plié. Then relevé up to second position, stop there and put your hands on the barre. And then once you're there, you can fouetté round". I didn't realise you needed to stop in second position – maybe this will help. Miss Mary tells us all to have a go. I plié through first position and then relevé to second, trying to keep the knee on my extended leg straight. I throw myself slightly off balance with momentum, so pause to find my centre. Once I've stabilised myself, I twist round to the other side. I lose my balance again slightly, but manage to recover. Despite the balance issues, this is the first time I've actually properly attempted and completed this movement! [...] Once we've practised a few times, Miss Mary tells us to try taking our arms off the barre: "Take your arms down to first on the plié and then up to fifth when you face the barre, then drop your hand to the barre to help you stabilise the fouetté". I have a go – and it works! I am completely on balance and I feel totally in control of the movements. The fouetté seems easier and my movements are smoother and more fluid. [...] I have another go and it works again! I feel a rush of excitement. [...] I'm so pleased I've worked out how to do the fouetté successfully. There is still room for improvement – I know that my working leg could be higher and my knee could be straighter – but I feel really proud of myself. (Fieldwork notes, Ballet class)

This extract from my fieldwork diary describes in detail my experience of the process of learning to perform a fouetté en pointe for the first time in a Ballet lesson. At the start of the lesson, I found this

movement difficult and either made a 'half-hearted attempt' or 'miss[ed] it out' when practising the exercise. However, with help from the dance teacher and after practising it several times (using the barre to begin with) I learnt how to perform it successfully by the end of the lesson. My experience highlights three important points about the embodied emotional experiences and feelings involved in the mastery of movement. First, it was associated with a sense of bodily control; the experience of performing the fouetté without the barre for the first time was accompanied with a feeling of being 'totally in control of my movements'. Second, it resulted in a visceral feeling of bodily pleasure; I felt an ease, smoothness and fluidity of movement when executing the fouetté successfully which was enjoyable. Third, it was associated with a feeling of excitement, exhilaration and thrill; I felt 'a rush of excitement' when performing the fouetté successfully without the barre for a second time. This resonates with Foster's (1997: 237) claim that the sensation of 'mastery of the body' can produce a 'kind of ecstasy' that encourages dancers to continue dancing.

The feeling of 'control' associated with mastering a difficult movement was also something that Becky (17) described when watching video footage of herself performing a turning exercise in her Tap lesson at the dance school:

> Ok, er, this is probably my favourite exercise in the whole [Emma: Ok] syllabus erm I think. Because it's, well it's a turning step, and I quite like turning. So it's quite fun and.. erm the steps are quite fun. When you do the bit turning on the spot [...] I don't know, once you've got it, cos it's quite difficult to get and it makes you go out of control a bit, but once you've got it under control, it's like, it makes you feel quite accomplished and quite impressed with yourself. [...] I wouldn't say I was particularly like, I had a special talent for turning, but when I do, when you *do* do it right, and you do get on balance it makes, like it *feels* really good [Emma: Yeah]. So I suppose that's why I like it more.

Becky's comments highlight the feeling of 'accomplishment' she gained from getting the turns on the spot 'under control': the sense of achievement she experienced was not only related to executing the movements correctly, but also to being in control of her body. For Becky, and for me during my experience of learning to perform a fouetté en pointe, this sense of control and personal autonomy was related specifically to the feeling of being 'on balance'. Becky's words also indicate that this sense of achievement was associated with a physical feeling of bodily pleasure; it *felt* good when Becky was exactly on balance, in charge of her movements, and executing the turns perfectly.

The feeling of achievement associated with learning and perfecting dance steps, exercises and routines was enhanced when recognised by teachers. Several participants talked about how happy

they felt when a dance teacher praised or congratulated them on doing something well, and clearly enjoyed feeling that they had pleased and impressed them. For example, at the dance school, Freya (17) said:

> [I]f you do something like well in dancing and then [Miss] Mary says, "Oh well done", you think, "Ohh my goodness!". You feel so happy!

Megan (14) similarly commented:

> Yeah [I do get a sense of achievement from dancing]. Well, when I do something and I actually get it right, and Miss Sally's like, "Oh well done, that was really good", I feel really happy.

When participating in dance classes, I also felt particularly proud of myself when the dance teacher also recognised my achievement, as illustrated by the following extract from my field diary:

> The next exercise is a 'wings' sequence [...]. So far I've just practised this exercise with the wings facing the front, but Miss Rachel has been encouraging us to try turning them so I decide to have a go this week. I focus on elevating and whipping my head round. To my surprise, I manage to turn almost every wing successfully! At the end of the exercise, Miss Rachel says: "Your wings look so nice, Emma! Well done! You were really elevating them well!". I say thank you. Freya is grinning at me. Becky is smiling next to her too. I feel really proud of myself! Miss Rachel's not the only one who's pleased for me – the other members of the class are too. (Fieldwork notes, Tap class)

The feeling of achievement that I experienced internally was also externally recognised by both the dance teacher and the other class members. It was derived from the knowledge that I had performed the wings turning well not only in my own terms, but also in the dance teacher and the other class members' opinions. Thus, achievement was not an isolated experience, but shared with others, and contingent upon our shared understanding of success as it relates here to personal progress. This example also illustrates the supportive nature of the dance class environment (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of the caring role of dance teachers and students).

6.2.2 Choreographing Dance

In this section, I discuss the sense of achievement that young people at the secondary school experienced as a result of choreographing solo or group dances for their AQA GCSE or A-level Dance exam. I argue that the feeling of achievement: was not only associated with learning to dance (as discussed in Section 6.2.1 above), but also creating dance (especially original movements and

sequences); was dependent on both internal recognition (i.e. an internal feeling of pride) and external recognition (i.e. the award of a GCSE or A-level grade by an examiner); happened in the dance studio during lessons; was not experienced immediately, but involved hard work over time; and involved emotional experiences such as stress and frustration, but also excitement and pride.

Many young people at the secondary school said that the process of choreographing their GCSE or A-level Dance solos or group compositions could be 'difficult' (Camilla, 18) and 'stressful' (Brooke, 15), especially as they 'only [had] a certain amount of time to do it in' (Leah, 17). It could be frustrating if they reached a 'stuck point' (Leah, 17), '[w]hen you get like nothing else coming in your head, you're just a bit stuck' (Lewis, 15) and 'you can't think of what to do next' (Lily, 14). For example, Joe (18) explained:

> Yeah [I do enjoy doing my own choreography] erm. As much as it is hard sometimes, when you, you have to do a lot of choreography, sometimes you get like a, like a wall. But when you get your flow going, yeah, it's really interesting to see what you can create [Emma: Yeah] and like break boundaries of what's comfortable as well.

Joe's comments indicate that although he found choreographing 'hard sometimes' especially if he hit 'a wall', he also found it exciting to see what he could 'create'. His remarks also suggest that achieving a 'flow' state made reaching a longer-term or more difficult goal easier by suspending his awareness of time and external distractions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Several young people mentioned that a particular challenge was creating original or unique movements or sequences that would help them to gain access to higher mark boundaries when their pieces were finally graded. Ruth (16) said: '[I]t's quite difficult to find stuff that's completely original and that someone else in the class hasn't done before or that you haven't done a lot of times before'. However, when they did achieve this it was highly rewarding. For example, when watching back video footage of a group composition that she had choreographed and performed in, Ruth (16) said:

> I really like this bit as well, where the legs all go over. Cos particularly in our class, it's not something that.. we do very often and as in erm like an isolation sort of movement of canon [Emma: Umhum] and it's just a formation that I haven't seen anyone in our class do.

Ruth took particular pride in this piece of choreography because it was original. The feeling of achievement produced was associated specifically with the success of creating a sequence of movements that were new and different, and that would be recognised as distinctive by the Dance teacher or examiner and rewarded with a high mark.

Several participants also talked about the achievement felt when they had finally finished their composition. For example, Ruth (16) explained, 'Once I'd finished teaching my [group] composition to everyone, that was.. I liked that, cos I'd finally finished!', and Lily (14) commented, '[I]t was quite hard to get the routine together and stuff, but it's really exciting when you've done it'. After watching back video footage of his final solo dance, Joe (18) explained:

> [I]t's kind of like an achievement that I created this thing when like it was out of my comfort zone before to kind of create it [...]. Cos the whole feeling of the dance is quite different to what we've normally done [Emma: Yeah] and in some ways it works much better, [...] in other ways it challenges me as well a lot [Emma: Umhum]. So that's good. Erm yeah but just generally the whole, it's been a very like, enjoyable thing to create, and like see how it's come, how far it's come. And also working with other people to really refine it [Emma: Yeah] and make it like a, a better piece than it was before. So yeah, I'm just excited to, I'm actually quite excited to perform it in the next couple of days.

For Joe, the sense of achievement he felt as a result of choreographing his solo dance was enhanced for two key reasons. First, the dance he had created was in the style of a particular choreographer which presented an especial challenge and pushed Joe to work 'outside his comfort zone'. Second, looking back at the video footage prompted Joe to reflect on how far the dance had come. There is a sense that Joe had been on a personal journey, working alone and with others to 'refine' his work. Thus, the feeling of achievement was not only about the 'end point', but the journey it took to get there. Joe ultimately felt proud of his final creation and excited to perform it in front of others.

The feeling of achievement associated with choreography was also recognised by Miss Wood, a Dance teacher at the secondary school:

> Umm well yeah [I do think the students get a sense of achievement from what they do in Dance]. And I don't think it's just about the grade [Emma: Yeah]. As much as progress has got to be there in school [Emma: Yeah] I think to be able to say... "I choreographed that dance [Emma: Yeah] for 1 and a half minutes, that is mainly my ideas", I think that is an achievement. All of them performing their solos [Emma: Yeah] was an achievement [Emma: Yeah], regardless of whether they were good or not, they all stood up and performed a solo [Emma: Umhum]. So yeah, no I think there is a sense of achievement. I think they do still strive towards the grades [Emma: Yeah], but I do think there's a sense of achievement there.

Miss Wood's comments raise an important point about the meaning of achievement in the context of dance education. Although ultimately the purpose of young people choreographing dances at the

secondary school was so that they could be submitted as part of their GCSE or A-level exam portfolio and contribute to the award of a qualification, the process of choreographing and performing their solos also had an intrinsic value as a rewarding experience that led to a feeling of achievement. As Miss Wood explained when talking about her Year 11 GCSE class, 'regardless of whether they were good or not, they all stood up and performed a solo' and were 'able to say... "I choreographed that dance [...] for 1 and a half minutes"'. Thus, achievement here was about internal recognition (i.e. an internal feeling of pride) as much as it was about external recognition (i.e. the award of a GCSE or A-level grade).

6.2.3 Passing a Dance Exam

In this section, I argue that young people at the dance school experienced a sense of achievement as a result of practising for, taking and passing dance exams. More specifically, I show that the sense of achievement associated with passing a dance exam: was the result of young people improving and demonstrating their ability to dance to the standard required to pass an exam, and progressing through the grades; was felt internally and recognised externally by the dance examiner through the award of a particular grade and the receipt of a certificate; took place in the dance studio and the exam room; was experienced as students prepared for the exam, during and immediately after the exam, and when they received their results; and involved feelings of stress, worry, nervousness, exhaustion, enjoyment, success and pride.

At the dance school, during Ballet, Tap and Modern classes (when not rehearsing for the dance show) young people learnt and practised exercises and routines from the RAD or ISTD graded examination syllabi. When the teacher felt that the student had developed a good knowledge of the syllabus and standard of technique, they were invited to take an exam at the end of the term. Students taking their exam were usually asked to attend an extra weekly 'exam class', in addition to their usual lesson, in which the teacher focused on preparing them for their forthcoming exam. Several young people said that the process of preparing for dance exams could be 'stressful' (Megan, 14) and that they felt particularly under 'pressure' (Chloe, 15) in the lessons leading up to the exam. This was also something that I noticed whilst observing lessons:

> I sit at the front of the studio to watch the Ballet lesson. Jasmine and Darcey are taking their Ballet exam in 2 weeks time [...]. Miss Anna asks all the students to go to the barre and puts the music on for the 'Pliés' exercise. Jasmine looks worried. Miss Anna tries to reassure her, encouraging her to take a deep breath, relax and try to enjoy the dancing because she knows all the exercises well [...]. The next exercise is 'Battement Tendus and Battements

Glissés'. Miss Anna explains that they're going to go through this exercise slowly because Jasmine has asked to, even though Miss Anna knows that Jasmine knows it inside out! I think Jasmine is feeling nervous about her exam and panicking that she doesn't know this exercise very well! (Fieldwork notes, Ballet lesson)

This fieldwork extract highlights two important points about the emotional experiences involved in achieving an ISTD or RAD dance exam grade. First, the sense of achievement experienced as a result of passing a dance exam was preceded by feelings of worry, stress and nervousness. Jasmine felt worried about her forthcoming exam, and communicated this through her facial expressions, body language and request to go through the 'Battement Tendus and Battements Glissés' exercise slowly. Second, the extract highlights the role of the dance teacher in helping young people to manage feelings of worry, stress and nervousness. Miss Anna tried to reassure Jasmine by encouraging her to relax and be calm, and stating that she was confident that Jasmine knew the exercises well. She later reinforced this by making it known to the whole class when she explained the reason why they were going through the exercise again. Thus, I argue that the teacher's role was not simply to prepare the students for the exam by teaching them to dance, but also to provide them with emotional reassurance. In this example, Miss Anna was also demonstrating that she cared not only about Jasmine's learning but also about her feelings (see also Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3 for a discussion of the caring relationships established between young people and their dance teachers).

At the dance school, most exams took place in the church hall (although students taking vocational exams sometimes took them at the exam board headquarters). On the day of the exam, students were asked to arrive early to get ready (to put their leotards, tights and shoes on, get their hair into a bun, and warm-up). The examiner then called the candidates into the exam room. During the exam, the examiner sat at a table from where they gave instructions and made notes, and a student helper operated the CD player. There were usually between two and four students in the exam together, but occasionally a student would take an exam on their own. Several students talked about feeling nervous on the exam day. For example, Emily (16) commented:

I feel terrified [on the exam day]! [Emma: *Laughs*] I'm just so nervous! It's awful! I think once I'm in there [the exam room], if I've been doing a few exercises, I know it's going ok, then I will enjoy it more [...], especially if you've got a nice examiner. But before, it's awful! [...] I do get incredibly nervous before I go in! It's horrible!

Emily's remarks indicate that the feelings of nerves that young people felt as part of the process of preparing for the exam were intensified on the exam day. Many other participants similarly said that

the experience of being in the exam was 'nerve-wracking', especially 'when [the examiner is] looking at you and then you don't know if you're doing it alright and stuff, and then you smile but she doesn't smile back!' (Lucy, 12). Once their initial nerves had subsided they did (to some extent) enjoy the exam and saw it as an opportunity to 'perform' (Katie, 14) exercises and routines that they had worked hard to learn and perfect. Thus, the exam provided an opportunity for their hard work and commitment to be recognised externally by an examiner (i.e. not by themselves, other students in their class or their dance teacher). Becky (17) actually explained that the last Modern exam that she had taken was one of her favourite dance memories:

> I really enjoyed the syllabus that we did [for my Modern exam] because [...] I think it suited me more [...]. So when I did the exam I *really*, *really* wanted to do well, like more than I'd ever wanted to do well before. And I [...] felt that I *could* do well [...] not only because I enjoyed it, but because I felt like I was actually progressing more and like it felt good when I was doing it [Emma: Yeah]. So I think when I did the exam, even though in the exam I got so, so tired and at the end I thought I was gonna be sick! [Emma: *Laughs*] Because I was so tired, you know when you get that feeling in your stomach when you're so physically exhausted [...]. But I *did* enjoy the exam, like [...] not that I've never enjoyed an exam, but it's always been more nerve-wracking and more thinking "I have to do this well", rather than just enjoy it [Emma: Yeah]. I know they always say, "Oh just enjoy yourself", but you can't really. But in this one I actually did. So I think that was... a really nice feeling. And afterwards when I got the results... and I did do like well, I was really proud of myself [Emma: Yeah]. And so I think like all of it together just sort of adds up to my favourite dance memory or moment.

Becky explained that she '*really, really* wanted to do well' in her Modern exam, not only because she enjoyed dancing the syllabus but because she felt that she had progressed and improved during the process of preparing for the exam. Becky's Modern exam provided a chance for her to demonstrate how much she had improved, and therefore, even though the exam was tiring to the extent that she thought she was 'going to be sick', it was enjoyable. Thus, the exam presented an opportunity for Becky's internal feelings of progression to be recognised externally by the examiner; her progress was verified when she received her exam results and resulted in Becky feeling 'really proud' of herself. Becky's comments also indicate that the experience of physical exhaustion can be both rewarding and enjoyable: the 'physicality of dancing' offered a 'source' of 'enjoyment' (Lazaroff, 2001: 26) (see also Section 6.3.1 below).

At the dance school, the dance teacher normally received the exam results several weeks after the students had taken their exam, and gave students their mark sheets and certificates during their

lesson. Like Becky, many participants said that the feeling of achievement that they got when they found out that they had passed their exam made the hard work, stress and nerves 'worth it' (Lucy, 12). Matilda (13) said, 'When you get a Merit or a Distinction or something, I feel like really, over the moon. It's just so exciting'. Chloe (15) similarly commented:

> [I] definitely [get a sense of achievement from dancing]. I think kind of once you do an exam, and then you have to wait like whatever it is, 3 weeks for the certificate. I think once you get that, it really kind of makes you quite proud of what you've done cos you've studied for it like for a whole term and then you finally get that saying that like you've passed, you've got a Merit or a Distinction or something. It's like proof that you've, that what you did paid off [Emma: Yeah]. And it's kind of like uplifting and it makes you want to do even better.

The exam certificate that Chloe received provided her with 'proof' that the time, effort and practice that she had put into preparing for and taking her dance exam had 'paid off'. Chloe explained that the sense of achievement that she experienced as a result of passing her exam resulted in her feeling 'uplifted', and motivated her to want to improve even further.

Many participants explained that one of the reasons that they continued to attend dance lessons was the sense of achievement associated with progressing through the grades. Several young people said that when they first moved up into a new grade it was sometimes 'a big jump' (Jasmine, 15) and, as such, they initially 'struggled' and found it 'quite hard' (Lucy, 12). However, as time went on they gradually started to improve and this resulted in feelings of success and achievement. Jasmine (15) explained: '[W]hen you realise you can actually cope with [Emma: Yeah] the next like grade, I think that's quite rewarding knowing that you're like of a high enough standard'. Becky (17) similarly explained:

> When I first came to [this Ballet grade] I thought, "I'm never going to be able to get through this". And like we were doing [...] pirouettes and stuff like that, and I was like, "I can't do it!". I just, I will get quite frustrated at myself if I can't do something and I really wanna work on it. [...] And then like to go from that, to then passing my exam in a year, I was really like chuffed with myself [...]. Like I do find, still find it difficult, and I wouldn't say I'm perfect at all. But I would say that I have progressed [Emma: Yeah] like massively which is nice to know I suppose.

Becky explained that when she entered the Ballet grade she had found the movements difficult and often felt 'frustrated' because she could not execute them properly. However, with hard work and determination she improved and after a year she passed her exam. Becky indicated that challenge

itself was a motivator for her; the feeling of 'frustration' that she experienced as a result of the difficulty of the work made her 'really wanna work on it'. The exam provided a chance for Becky to prove herself and her comments indicate that that she surpassed even her own expectations when she passed the exam. In her research with 16-18 year old female dancers in the USA, Stinson et al. (1990: 17) similarly found that dance classes offered 'challenges' and gave students a 'forum for proving themselves'. 'Satisfaction [came] from meeting challenges (keeping up when the teacher "pushes you", keeping up with older and more experienced dancers, being able to do things which are physically demanding), doing specific movements correctly, improving (seeing the results of one's hard work), and getting recognition from the teacher or choreographer' (Stinson et al., 1990: 17). I would add that recognition could also come from passing a dance exam. Although Becky had passed her exam, she felt that she was not 'perfect' and that there was still room for improvement. Stinson (1990: 17) similarly found that dancers set 'high standards for themselves' and there was a sense that 'no matter how well one dances, one's body and technique are never good enough'; thus, dancers felt 'alternately full of deficiencies and limitations, trying to improve themselves; or strong and full of power, as they meet challenges and exceed the expectations of others'. This sense of dual and contradictory positions was expressed by Becky in the quotation above.

Many young people at the dance school discussed their past achievements alongside their potential future achievements. For example, Lizzie (14) said:

> [I think I've stuck at dancing for so long because] I think I just enjoy the feel of like accomplishing the exams and feeling that I've just done Grade [5] or whatever, and you're like, you're really happy that you've just done that. And then you're like, "Ok, now I can work towards the higher one". [...] [Y]ou get more excited about it and you want to just learn more, and then do your exam again, and then you just keep going through [Emma: Yeah]. It's quite a good feeling [Emma: Yeah] to carry on.

For Lizzie, it was clear that the sense of achievement she felt from passing an exam spurred her on to want to work towards the next exam; thus, her past success was driving her future success. Many participants also expressed that the feeling of progressing through the grade system motivated them to continue dancing. Several participants said that they wanted to continue to dance until they reached the 'highest grade' (Josh, 12). Freya (17) explained that this was something she had 'always wanted to do' and that she 'look[ed] up to all the older girls in dancing, and the girls that [had] just left' the dance school who 'all achieved [the highest grade]'. It was anticipated that this would bring the greatest sense of achievement because these grades were 'hard' (Lucy, 12) and something that not many dancers accomplished.

<u>6.2.4 Performing Dance</u>

In this section, I focus on the sense of achievement that young people at the dance school, secondary school and dance group experienced as a result of performing dance to an audience (see Section 6.3.3 for a discussion of the experience of performing in relation to enjoyment). I argue that this sense of achievement: was generally associated with a successful performance, and at the dance group was associated with raising awareness about Down's syndrome through public performances; was experienced personally and recognised externally in the form of applause and positive feedback from dance teachers, family and friends and the wider audience; took place at theatres and other performance venues; was often experienced 'in the moment' and then reflected on afterwards; and, involved the experience of stress and nerves, as well as exhaustion, thrill and pride.

At all three fieldsites, it was clear that although the experience of rehearsing for and performing dance in front of an audience could be 'stressful' (Emily, 16) and 'nerve-wracking' (Abigail, 10) (see Section 6.3.3), it was often incredibly rewarding and resulted in a sense of achievement. For example, secondary school student, Lewis (15) commented:

> If I've like done it really well [in a show or performance] and I know that I've done as well as I can, I feel really proud [Emma: Yeah] to know what I can do.

The sense of pride Lewis described feeling was related to his ability to prove to himself what he was capable of. Thus, the sense of achievement experienced as a result of performing to an audience was initially felt and recognised by Lewis at a personal level. This sense of personal achievement was also something that I experienced when participating in the dance show at the dance school myself, and is illustrated in the following fieldwork extract describing my experience of performing a Modern dance on stage at the theatre:

> I walk up the stairs and into the wings. [...] The lights go down and the music starts. I wait in the wings and listen carefully for my cue to go on stage [...]. I dance the first section really well! I come off stage and realise I have a stitch in my left side, below my rib cage. I breathe deeply, but it doesn't seem to help! I'm just going to have to keep going! [...] I wait in the wings for my next entrance [...]. I creep onto the stage and hold my position [...]. Next comes the fast section. I run to my place. I dance my hardest and absolutely nail it! I'm exactly in time and don't make any mistakes! I can see Miss Sally watching us dance from the 'voms' – she's absolutely beaming! I'm so pleased she seems to be impressed! [...] We reach the slow section and I suddenly realise how tired I am! I'm out of breath and my limbs feel heavy. I do the highest kick to second that I can... just keep going... only a few more counts! A huge

jump to finish. A gigantic clap from the audience and blackout [...]. I walk down to the dressing room, breathing hard. Kirsty asks me how it went, but I can't talk! I can feel sweat trickling down my face. [...] I'm absolutely exhausted! But I think this is the best I've ever danced it! I feel so pleased with myself! (Fieldwork notes, Dance show)

This performance experience was particularly rewarding for me because the physical effort that I put in which had resulted in me feeling physically exhausted (i.e. getting a stitch, being out of breath, my limbs feeling heavy, getting sweaty) had paid off: I felt this was 'the best [I'd] ever danced it!'. This sense of achievement and pride was initially felt and experienced at an embodied level, and as a result of exceeding my own expectations. The feelings of pride that I experienced were also enhanced by recognition from Miss Sally the dance teacher, whom I could see standing in the theatre vomitorium (a passage leading through the seats in the auditorium to the stage). She was 'absolutely beaming'. At the dance school, Emily (16) similarly explained:

> Yeah it is nice to see them [Miss Mary and Miss Sally] there [in the wings], especially when you come off stage I think, if you're doing one of their dances that they've choreographed and they say, "Oh well done, that was really good". I think it's nice to kind of make them proud as well. And they can see all your hard work and that *you've* been putting in [effort] as well.

Emily's feelings of pride were reinforced when her dance teachers recognised the hard work that she had put into a performance. Emily indicated that her own personal feelings of pride were further strengthened by the knowledge that she had made her dance teachers proud, particularly if it was a dance that the teacher had choreographed. Thus, the sense of achievement associated with a good performance was not only experienced and recognised internally at an individual level, but also externally by dance teachers.

Stinson et al. (1990: 17) found in her interview research with 16-18 year old dance students that 'audience response' was 'a major contributor' to the 'sense of satisfaction' experienced as a result of a dance performance; for example, one dancer said, '...it's nice to have someone say that was really wonderful... when you get the nice reviews and the compliments or maybe someone's admiration... these are like bonuses'. Several participants in my research said that positive feedback from family and friends in the audience strengthened the sense of achievement experienced. For example, at the dance school, Katie (14) explained:

Yeah [I do get a sense of achievement from dancing]. Like when it gets to the show and then like, like my parents come and watch, they're always like, "Oh you're so good!", and I'm like, I feel like so happy.

Katie's sense of achievement was reinforced by the positive feedback she received from her parents. Lazaroff (2001: 28) notes that participation in public performances can be 'particularly gratifying [...] since parents and friends who populate the audience are typically uncritical and mete out unconditional praise', and that whilst 'this kind of feedback is not terribly objective or reliable' it nonetheless 'should not be diminished or disregarded'. Katie's comment, 'they're always like, "Oh you're so good!"' supports Lazaroff's (2001) argument as it indicates that her parents provided a reliable source of praise, and that this made her feel 'happy'.

Several young people also indicated that their sense of achievement was reinforced through positive feedback from a wider public audience. For example, at the secondary school, Tom (17) talked about a performance he did at a prestigious theatre with a group of boys from his school:

After the performance we had random strangers coming up to us and saying like, "That was amazing. Looking at you boys, you would never think you're like that". [...] It really did like [Tom: *Laughs*] make you feel good. Like people coming up to you and saying like, "That was amazing". Like, it's a feeling that you can't explain [Emma: Umhum]. You're just sort of happy [Emma: Yeah]. You feel like you've done something good [...]. [It was] the biggest stage and theatre I've ever performed at. [...] I remember walking out, looking up and just, so you look out, you see the like floor seats [Emma: Yeah], you look up at the first balcony [Emma: Oh my gosh], you keep looking up at the second balcony, you look even further and there's a third balcony. I was just standing there like... erhh [Emma: Yeah]. Like I didn't know what to do! And then afterwards, like we finished, and just hearing the applause you get!

Tom received positive feedback from the audience in two forms; first, applause from the audience directly after their performance; and second, comments from members of the audience who said that their performance was 'amazing' and that the boys had exceeded their expectations. The 'feeling' that this response from the audience produced was difficult for Tom to capture with words, but it was clear that he felt an almost overwhelming sense of pride and achievement. At the secondary school, Lydia (14) similarly noted:

Yeah [I do get a sense of achievement from dancing] especially at competitions when you hear everyone cheer and it makes you feel that you're actually doing something that people enjoy and they like watching you. Erm it's just a great experience, like being on stage and it

gives you such a thrill [...]. Especially [when] people enjoy it, it's like, it feels good inside, like you feel like, oh I've actually done something that makes people happy.

Lydia indicated that the sense of achievement she experienced was related to the feeling that she had performed a dance that the audience enjoyed watching and that made them feel happy. Thus, achievement here was not just about an individual experience of meeting personal goals, but about pleasing other people. Lydia also said that the experience of being on stage gave her a 'thrill'; I discuss the sense of excitement generated by performing on stage to an audience in more detail in Section 6.3.3.

At the dance group, the dance teacher and the dance group organiser said that they were proud of what the group had achieved in terms of raising awareness about Down's syndrome through their public performances. Alison, the dance teacher, explained:

> [E]ven recently ago people would think you leave children with Down's syndrome indoors. [...] So one of our big things was to show, to raise awareness, and to show what they're capable of. And I think we've done that big time, you know. So I'm quite proud of that. That they can now go out and hold their own in whatever they do, you know.

Cathy, the dance group organiser, similarly explained:

> [I set the dance group up because] I wanted other children to enjoy it [dancing], because [my child] enjoyed it so much [Emma: Yeah]. Erm also I did want to educate the public and to, for them to see that, you know, a child with Down's syndrome doesn't just go around holding the hands of their parents and wearing white socks and all [Emma: Yeah], you know, these typical stereotype things, pudding basin haircuts etc. etc. Erm but they, they do have a life and they are capable of things. And some of, some of our dancers are actually capable of some very complicated moves [Emma: Yeah]. Erm but there's the other side as well, erm it helps them a lot [Emma: Yeah], it helps their balance and their co-ordination, and it helps them feel more like, you know the rest of the population [Emma: Yeah], you know, they can dance, just the same as somebody else. It may not be to the same level or ability, but, you know, they, they some of them really do give things a real good go, and they just love it, they love dancing. [...] [I]f they love doing something then the parents will be happy as well [Emma: Yeah]. And then that projects when they, when they go out and dance [Emma: Yeah], you know, the audience can see how much they love their dancing [Emma: Yeah] and I think that just projects a whole positive image [of Down's syndrome].

These comments highlight three important points regarding the relationship between performance and achievement. First, the sense of achievement that Alison and Cathy described was collective rather than individual; although they felt proud of individual dancers in terms of what they achieved when they performed, they were also proud of what the group achieved as a whole. Second, they were proud of what the group was able to achieve beyond entertaining the audience (i.e. the immediate performance value), but also in terms of raising awareness, educating the public and changing perceptions of Down's syndrome. In Alison's words, through their public performances the group were able to show what young people with Down's syndrome are 'capable of'. Cathy explained that although she originally established the group in order to provide other young people with Down's syndrome with the opportunity to enjoy dancing, she also hoped that the group could serve to educate the public about Down's syndrome and project a 'positive image' of disability. Thus, the purpose of the audience and performance is different here from at the dance school and the secondary school: it is focused on providing the public with an enjoyable performance, but also on educating them. Third, Cathy's words highlight the relationship between feelings of achievement, self-worth and self-confidence; providing young people with Down's syndrome with the opportunity to learn to dance and to perform to an audience was in part about helping them to 'feel more like [...] the rest of the population' and that 'they can dance, just the same as somebody else'.

6.3 Dancing and the Feeling of Enjoyment

In this section, I argue that young people participated in dance classes, rehearsals and performances because they were intrinsically enjoyable. The section is divided into three parts each focusing on a different element of the experience of participating in dance that many young people found enjoyable. In Section 6.3.1, I focus on the sense of enjoyment that young people experienced as a result of actually dancing or physically moving their bodies. I argue that the embodied experience of dancing often resulted in a sense of bodily liberation, freedom and empowerment that was pleasurable at a visceral level. In Section 6.3.2, I argue that dance was enjoyable because it provided young people with an opportunity to have fun with their friends (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1 for a discussion of the formation and significance of friendships). I argue that during dance classes and rehearsals young people could 'have a laugh' with their friends (e.g., being silly with each other, going wrong together) which made the experience of participating in dance and learning to dance fun. In Section 6.3.3, I focus on the sense of enjoyment associated with the experience of rehearsing and performing in the dance show at the dance school (see Section 6.2.4 for a discussion of the sense of achievement associated with performing). I argue that the experience of participating in the show was enjoyable because it was so exciting, although also nerve-wracking. I discuss young

people's experiences of rehearsing in the dance studio, arriving at the theatre, being backstage in the dressing rooms, waiting in the wings and performing on stage, illustrating how young people's emotional feelings changed across these space-times.

6.3.1 Embodied Experiences of Enjoyment: Bodily Movement, Liberation, Freedom and Empowerment

In this section, I argue that the embodied experience of dancing was often enjoyable, focusing in particular on visceral feelings of bodily liberation, freedom and empowerment that young people felt as a result of physically moving their bodies.

Many young people said that the embodied experience of dancing, the feeling of physically moving their bodies, was often enjoyable. For example, at the dance school, Isabel (14) explained:

> When I dance I can.. like sometimes when I do lyrical pieces in Modern I can like move my body. And I like, it's a bit of a weird thing to say [Emma: *Laughs*], but I like doing circular springs and erm... leaning over [demonstrates a side bend using upper body] [Emma: Yeah], like counter-balancing my weight. I don't know, it just feels nice.

Isabel indicated that the physicality of dancing provided a source of enjoyment. In particular, Isabel enjoyed doing 'lyrical' dances in her Modern class (lyrical dance is a style of Modern dance blending elements of Ballet and Jazz, typically involving smooth, fluid and expressive movements) because it enabled her to 'move her body'. Isabel experienced a sense of bodily liberation and freedom of movement when she performed lyrical dance movements that felt pleasurable at a visceral level. Isabel also explained that she liked dancing certain Modern dance steps such as 'circular springs', as well as movements that involved 'leaning over' with her upper body and 'counter-balancing' her weight, because they felt 'nice'. Isabel found the physical embodied sensations and kinaesthetic experiences (e.g., the sense of stretch, extension, fluidity and grace) involved with dancing these particular movements enjoyable.

At the dance school, Rosie (17) similarly indicated that the experience of freedom of movement was enjoyable when watching back video footage of her Modern 'Warm Up':

> I quite like the exercise because it's quite like erm, it's quite, like you can swing yourself around and stuff [...] like it's like quite a flowy one [Emma: Yeah]. And you feel like your body's going the right way and stuff [...]. [T]here's like lots of highs and lows in it, so like you go from like right up on demi-pointe with your hands in the air, to like a like forward bend with like erm knees bent [Emma: Yeah], so it's quite like erm up and down quite a lot, that's

quite fun [...]. [I]t's just quite like flowy, like you just erm, it kind of all runs into the next bit, and there's like, there is moments of still actually where you have to stand and balance, but then that moves quite quickly onto like another bit [...] when you're like running round the room [Emma: Yeah]. I quite like that. [...] I enjoy dancing it because of that.

Rosie explained that she enjoyed the physical experience of dancing the Modern 'Warm Up'. The exercise allowed Rosie to 'swing' her body around, for example taking her body from a high up position 'right up on demi-pointe with your hands in the air', to a low down position with the upper body in a 'forward bend with [...] the knees bent'. Thus, the exercise required and necessitated a freedom of movement or a bodily 'looseness'. Rosie also described the dance as 'flowy', explaining that although there were moments of stillness, the movements 'kind of all [run] into the next bit'. This 'flow' created a fluidity, ease and smoothness of movement that Rosie found pleasurable.

When participating in dance classes at the dance school, I found that I often experienced a feeling of enjoyment and bodily pleasure from physically moving my body, and that it could result in feelings of bodily freedom and liberation. This is highlighted in the following extract from my fieldwork diary in which I describe my experience of dancing a Modern 'kicks' exercise during a dance lesson:

Miss Sally splits the class into two groups and puts the music on. I love this exercise. I stand facing the mirrors with my feet together [...]. Miss Sally counts us in. I ball change to second, sticking my bottom out and trying to keep a flat back. I shimmy forward with my weight back. I can feel the shimmy reverberate through my chest. I kick my right leg, my left leg a little higher, then throw my right leg into the highest kick I can, whooshing my arms upwards into the air. I feel strong and powerful. I step ball-change to face the back. A moment of calm. I turn towards the back and throw my legs upwards. I land, thud. I quickly turn out of it and straight into the step ball-change. I propel myself into the splitlet and then throw myself into the développé leap, taking my arms to a high V. I thud to the ground and step backwards. I push my back leg up as quickly as I can, taking my arm upwards, making a strong, straight line from the top of the fingers on my left hand to the toes on my left foot. This exercise feels SO nice to dance, the steps all kind of flow into each other. The movements are so big and involve your whole body – you can really throw yourself into it. It feels liberating to dance. (Fieldwork notes, Modern class)

I argue that this exercise was particularly enjoyable to dance for two reasons. First, the exercise involved 'big' movements such as kicks and leaps which required me to 'throw' my 'whole body' into them. The experience of 'throwing' my legs, 'whooshing' my arms and 'propelling' my body made

me feel 'strong' and 'powerful'. I was most aware of the power and strength of my own body when I felt myself 'thud' to the ground following the développé leap. Thus, the feeling of dancing these movements was both empowering and liberating. Second, when dancing the exercise I felt that 'the steps all kind of flow[ed] into each other', resonating with Rosie's description in the previous example. This fluidity of movement was incredibly pleasurable. Thus, the physical experience of dancing this exercise resulted in a sense of empowerment, liberation and freedom of movement that was extremely enjoyable.

6.3.2 Shared and Collective Experiences of Enjoyment: Having Fun with Friends

In this section, I argue that for many young people dance was enjoyable because it provided them with an opportunity to 'have a laugh' with their friends. This made the experience of participating in dance fun. Thus, I focus on young people's shared and collective experiences of enjoyment in this section.

Many young people said that participating in dance classes and rehearsals was enjoyable because it involved 'having a laugh' with their friends. For example, at the dance school, Megan (14) said:

> I suppose if I didn't have my friends at dancing it wouldn't be as much fun as it is. I, I just, I think dancing with people [...] it's enjoyable and [...] basically what I'm saying, if, if I didn't have my friends there, it wouldn't be, I wouldn't enjoy it as much [...]. Because I do like [...] having a laugh with people!

Freya (17), also a student at the dance school, similarly remarked:

> I just think like [being with my friends is] what makes Saturdays like so much fun at the rehearsals [for the show], because obviously when you're really tired and you're dancing from 9 to 5 [Emma: Yeah], it's so nice that I have like a really good group of friends [...]. We just have such a laugh!

Megan and Freya explained that they enjoyed and had fun at dancing because they were able to 'have a laugh' with their friends.

At the dance school and dance group, although young people were expected to work hard and to concentrate during dance lessons and rehearsals, there were also opportunities for them to be silly with their friends. For example:

> I sit on the floor at the front of the class to watch this Ballet lesson. [...] The teacher explains that it is time for the class to do some Free Movement exercises. [...] The next Free

Movement exercise requires each student to dance with a scarf. [...] Juliette wraps her head in the scarf and says to Alisha, "I look like Red Riding Hood!". Alisha bursts out laughing. Juliette replies: "No, actually I look like ET!". She pulls a funny face. Juliette, Alisha and several others are now in absolute hysterics! (Fieldwork notes, Ballet lesson)

Whilst observing and participating in lessons at the dance school and dance group, there were many occasions like this when young people fell about laughing because a member of the class had been, said or done something silly. In general, dance teachers were happy for young people to have fun with their friends in this way, providing that their behaviour was appropriate and in moderation. This raises an important point about the role of the extracurricular dance class not only as a space of learning and education, but also as a space in which young people can relax and have fun with their friends, and highlights the role of the dance teacher in creating such an environment.

Laughter was sometimes a result of the experience of dancing itself. For example:

Heather stands at the front and leads the warm-up. [...] Heather starts shimmying. Everyone seems to enjoy doing this! The next move involves putting your elbows out to the side and shaking your body. First we do this on the spot, then moving to the side and, finally, at double speed! This generates a lot of laughter! Katrina and Ross who are standing at the back of the room are really giggling at each other! (Fieldwork notes, Dance class)

It was the shared and collective experience of young people moving their bodies in a way that felt 'silly' during the warm-up that generated laughter here. The process of learning and practising group dances together also sometimes caused laughter, especially when everybody 'went wrong'. For example, when Lucy (12) watched back video footage of a rehearsal of her Modern dance for the show, she explained:

[W]e learnt it that lesson and erm you have to go in a circle, but the movements are like really tricky, like you have to get the right leg up, but because I'm right at the end of the stage, I have to try and travel quite a lot [Emma: Ok]. So erm I have to like, I have to fit like a turn in, sometimes I don't face the right way. But I was laughing because no-one in the circle actually could do it properly! [Emma: *Laughs*] So everyone was just like doing random steps. And none of us could do it, so it was quite funny! [...] Miss Sally was really laughing at us because none of us could do it properly, so!

The sound of Lucy laughing was clearly audible in the video footage. Lucy's comments indicate that the experience of enjoyment here was related to a shared, collective experience of 'going wrong' with her friends. The experience of trying and failing was not stressful, but instead provided a source

of laughter for Lucy and her friends, which made the process of learning and practising the dance enjoyable. This example also further demonstrates that the dance class was a relaxed space in which young people could make mistakes and laugh about them, and not worry about 'getting it wrong'. In this way, laughter could be simultaneously euphoric and cathartic. Lucy's comment, 'Miss Sally was really laughing at us because none of us could do it properly' also indicates that the dance teacher played an important role in facilitating and encouraging this attitude to learning. Similarly, Chloe (15) watched back video footage of herself rehearsing a Modern dance for the show in which the sound of her and her class mates laughing was audible and commented:

> The bit, that's it, [running] round in the circle, I think it's, I think everyone's trying to go different ways [Emma: [*Laughs*] Yeah]. Then you have to jump and turn, then, you're like, "Wait what leg am I on? What leg am I meant to be using? Is it the inside leg, outside leg?". And there's Alexandra who just [Emma: *Laughs*], Alexandra just kind of stands there! She looks at me and goes, "What leg does it start on?". "I don't know, I'm copying you!" [Emma: *Laughs*]. And that always kind of stresses me out because everyone is doing it differently [Emma: *Laughs*]. I think it's one of those things where you just.. it, I can feel it coming up in the music, it's like, "No, no, no it's coming up! It's gonna happen, no!" [Chloe: *Laughs*]. [Emma: Uhhuh] But I think it's because everyone is in the same boat at this point that it's quite funny [Emma: Yeah], so we can kind of laugh it off, like we did at the end and everything [Emma: Yeah]. It's all part of the enjoyment, and hopefully it'll be cleared up by the show!

The experience of learning and practising this complicated section of the dance was clearly enjoyable for Chloe because it involved having a laugh with her friends. Chloe's comment, 'I think it's because everyone is in the same boat at this point that it's quite funny', indicates that it was the shared experience of confusion that resulted in laughter. Chloe's remark, 'I can feel it coming up in the music, it's like, "no, no, no it's coming up! It's gonna happen, no!"', indicates that the feeling of anticipation associated with dancing this section, and the possibility that it could all go wrong, further contributed to the sense of fun and enjoyment associated with dancing it.

6.3.3 The Enjoyment of Participating in the Dance School Show: Excitement and Nerves

In this section, I discuss the sense of enjoyment that young people associated with the experience of rehearsing and performing in the dance school show (see Section 6.2.4 for a discussion of the sense of achievement associated with performing). I argue that the experience of participating in the show was enjoyable because it was exciting. However, this excitement was also accompanied with feelings

of nervousness. I focus on young people's experiences of rehearsing in the dance studio, arriving at the theatre, getting ready backstage in their dressing rooms, waiting in the wings and finally performing on stage.[59] In doing so, I illustrate how young people's emotional experiences changed over space and time from rehearsal to performance.

The experience of rehearsing and performing in the dance show was one of the most enjoyable parts of my fieldwork at the dance school and many of the young people whom I interviewed clearly felt the same way. For example, Megan (14) said, 'I really love the shows and that's one of the reasons why I do dancing'. Becky (17) commented:

> The shows at [The Southern School of Dance] are really fun [Emma: Yeah] to do. Not just the, like, to be performing, but all backstage and like the run up to all the rehearsals and stuff. Like they can be tiring and difficult, but they're fun just to be around everyone [Emma: Yeah]. And I just find it quite exciting!

Although Becky explained that the experience of rehearsing, being backstage and performing in the show was sometimes 'tiring and difficult', she also said that it was 'fun'. Becky's comments indicate this was partly because during this process she was able to spend time with her friends (see Section 6.3.2). Becky also indicated that she enjoyed taking part in the show because she found it 'exciting'. I argue that it was not just the experience of performing on stage, but also the process of rehearsing and preparing for the dance school show that was exciting.

The process of rehearsing for the dance school show took a full academic year, starting in September and continuing until the following July when the show was performed. Rehearsals initially involved young people learning dances, then 'polishing' choreography (e.g., perfecting movements, correcting spacing), trying on costumes and practising using props. With only a few weeks left to go until the show, Chloe (15) explained:

> I think it's more excitement than nerves [Emma: Ok] at the moment [...]. I think it's kind of exciting because the costumes are all done, and we're starting the lighting, and so it's kind of, it feels like it's really coming together [Emma: Yeah]. It is nerve-wracking like with 4

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[59] Although young people at all three fieldsites described their experiences of performing as enjoyable, fun and exciting, in this section I draw on research conducted at the dance school only. As detailed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3), young people at the dance school took part in a show every other year. I conducted my fieldwork at the dance school in a show year and so was able to research young people's experiences of rehearsing and performing in the show, and could also take part in the show myself. Therefore, in this section I have chosen to focus on young people's experiences of participation only in the dance school show because it formed a significant part of my fieldwork at the dance school.

weeks and still thinking, "Oh my God, I don't know this bit, I don't know that bit" [Emma: Yeah]. But it always comes together, so I'm not that worried.

Chloe explained that although she was nervous with only 4 weeks to go until the show (as she was still unsure of some of her dances), these feelings were overwhelmed by a sense of excitement that everything was 'coming together'. Chloe indicated that she had confidence that all her dances would be ready to perform based on her past experiences of participating in dance shows, helping her to enjoy the experience of preparing for the current show more.

The show was performed at a professional theatre that had a large stage with curtains, wings and lights, and an auditorium with over 400 seats. In July, the dancers attended several rehearsals at the theatre, including a technical rehearsal in which they practised their dances on stage with music and lighting, and a dress rehearsal when they also got ready in their dressing rooms backstage and practised their dances in costume on stage with full stage lighting and effects. Many participants said that arriving at the theatre for the first time was an exciting moment. For example, Chloe (15) commented:

> I think [when you arrive at the theatre] for the first time, cos you only go kind of every 2 years [Emma: Yeah], it's, kind of you get like a huge flush of memories of everything you've done before and then it's just kind of sheer excitement and you can't wait to get back up there! Cos it's just, it's so different up there from performing in [the] studio [...]. I think, kind of especially when you walk, literally just walk in and you can see the stage, it's just, I always feel *really* excited [Emma: Yeah]. Which, it's quite childish [Emma: *Laughs*]! But I really kind of, I get kind of nervous as well.

Chloe said that the experience of arriving at the theatre resulted in a sudden rush of excitement and nerves. In the interview extract presented previously, Chloe explained that she felt a sense of excitement and nerves during the final few rehearsals before the show because everything was finally coming together. However, the feelings of excitement and nerves she described here were related to her anticipation of the experience of performing on stage. Importantly, Chloe indicated that it was her physical entrance into the theatre space that brought about such emotions.

There were four performances of the dance school show at the theatre: three evening and one matinee performance, although only older students danced in every show (younger students typically participated in two of the four performances). Several young people said that the experience of being backstage with their friends in their dressing rooms before the performance was enjoyable. For example, Charlotte (16) explained:

I love the feeling of the show when everyone's there and you're all like really nervous excitement and everyone's like really giggly and hyper [...]. And erm we all kind of keep forgetting bits and having to go over them in the dressing rooms, and the panic of getting changed and making sure your hair looks ok, and having the right stuff in your dressing room, and someone's forgotten something and we have to try and rush up and down [...] to try and find a spare [Emma: Yeah], and all of the silly things that you're just, because you're nervous and you're so like excited, make it 10 times better!

The sense of enjoyment that Charlotte experienced when she was backstage in her dressing room was clearly related to feelings of excitement and nervousness that she and her friends experienced in anticipation of their imminent performance on stage. Her use of the phrase 'nervous excitement' highlights how these two emotions were interdependent. Thus, Charlotte's animated description indicates that the dressing rooms backstage represented a unique space-time where feelings of excitement and nerves were intensified.

During the performance, young people were expected to remain in their dressing rooms and then walk to the wings when it was nearly time to perform their dance on stage. Whilst senior students were responsible for getting themselves to the correct wing (i.e. stage right or stage left) at the correct time, junior students were escorted by adult chaperones (parent helpers) from their dressing rooms to the wings. Matilda (13) explained:

When they [the chaperones] say, "Oh you can go down [to the stage]", you're just kind of like a panic scream, kind of like, "Ahhhh my God"". It's just so much fun [Emma: Yeah]. Yeah. And you're walking down [towards the stage] [...] and you can just hear the music going on [Emma: Yeah] as you're getting closer. It's just, oh it's so nice!

Matilda's comments indicate the sense of excitement and nerves that she felt as the experience of performing on stage became temporally and spatially closer, and that these feelings contributed to the sense of enjoyment that she experienced as a result of participating in the show.

Several young people said that the experience of standing in the wings waiting to perform was the time when these feelings of excitement and nervousness became most acute. For example:

I love that bit [standing in the wings]. That's my favourite bit [...]. It's really exciting! [...] Just knowing that we're about to go on stage. (Rosie, 17)

When the lights go down, it's like [breathes heavily in and out]. "Ok, right, ok, I've forgotten the whole dance!". [Emma: *Laughs*] "And my leotard's too big, and my make-up's smudged

because I just scratched my eyes". [...] It's quite.. nerve-wracking and exciting altogether [Emma: Yeah]. I love it. But it's like, it's just awesome. I love it. And then you see your friends in the wings [on the other side of the stage]. You're like, "Hello", from the other side [...]. It's so much fun! (Abigail, 10)

It's just.. I wanna get out there. I just wanna do it, I just wanna. And then part of me is s-, a bit scared and then part of me is.. just.. excited. And then part of me is just like trying to make sure no-one else is scared and cos it might go wrong! (Katie, 14)

I think when the lights go down, I'm like "Ohh, it's actually happening now!" [...]. When you're in the wing, it's like.. I don't know how to explain it, it's like every-, it's like the final moment where it's actually going to happen, because you've spent like months and months practising [...]. I think I'm like really excited, but I'm a bit kind of like, "Oh my Gosh, this is it!". (Jasmine, 15)

These comments raise a number of points in relation to the emotional experience of waiting in the wings to go on stage. First, the feelings of excitement and nervousness were experienced simultaneously; for example, Abigail explained, 'It's quite like nerve-wracking and exciting altogether'. Second, these feelings were enjoyable; Rosie said that the feeling of waiting in the wings was her 'favourite bit' of taking part in the show, and Abigail explained '[I]t's just awesome. I love it'. Third, these feelings of excitement and nervousness were related to the risk involved in performing to an audience. As Stinson (1990: 17) explains, '[t]he consequences of failure are greater in a performing situation, but the resulting sense of risk can be a bonus when one is successful'. Fourth, these feelings were experienced not only individually, but collectively. This is highlighted in Katie's comments when she explained, 'part of me is just trying to make sure no-one else is scared'; Katie was not only aware of her own emotions, but that her friends were experiencing similar feelings.

Finally, the experience of performing on stage was often enjoyable and exciting. This is illustrated in the following extract from my field diary describing my experience of the final night of the show:

It's the final evening of the show [...]. It's nearly time for the finale. I run round to the voms. Imogen, my partner, is waiting for me. We're both so excited! [...] I can't believe this is it! The last time we get to dance this on stage! [...] The music starts and the lights go up. A sudden rush of nerves! [...] Then we're on! I love this dance so much! I'm so excited to be performing on stage, and that my family are watching in the audience. [...] I absolutely go for it, throwing myself into every movement! I smile all the way through. [...] I get the 'drunken sailor' wrong as usual, but it doesn't matter! Me and Imogen just laugh. [...] The audience

are on top form this evening! We get a massive clap and lots of 'wooing'! What a buzz! [...] But I also feel a sense of sadness – this is the last time we get to dance this together. (Fieldwork notes, Dance show)

This extract from my fieldwork diary highlights the complex array of emotions that I experienced as I performed this dance on stage for the final time: the feelings of excitement and nervousness associated with performing in front of an audience; the sense of enjoyment associated with physical movement and exertion (see Section 6.3.1); the fun and enjoyment of dancing with my partner (see Section 6.3.2); the sense of pride at what we had achieved (see Section 6.2.4); and the sense of sadness about performing this dance for the final time. These feelings combined to produce an experience that was highly enjoyable.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I addressed the fourth research question by arguing that the emotional embodied experiences involved with dancing were an important motivation for young people's participation in dance, and by exploring how these experiences were felt and narrated. I focused in particular on young people's experiences of escape and emotional release, achievement and enjoyment.

In Section 6.1, I drew on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school to argue that many young people enjoyed participating in dance because it provided them with an escape from everyday life (e.g., family life, school, homework, exam revision), functioning both as a physical space to which they could escape and an activity that absorbed and distracted them. I further argued that some young people actively used dance in this way as a mechanism for managing stress in their everyday lives. In relation to Chapter 4, Section 4.1, I suggested that for many young people dance occupied a contradictory position as both a central part of and way to escape from everyday life. In addition, I argued that for many young people dancing provided an emotional release, a way of expressing their emotions through movement rather than words. Several participants indicated that this sense of release was connected to the physicality of dancing and the feeling that they could 'dance out' their emotions. I argued that some dance teachers were aware of the importance of dance as an escape and an emotional release, and encouraged young people to make use of dance in this way.

In Section 6.2, I argued that the sense of achievement that young people experienced as a result of participating in dance was an important reason for their participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. I focused on the feeling of achievement associated with: the process of learning to dance during lessons; the process of choreographing dance; the experience of practising, taking and passing a

dance exam; and the experience of performing dance to an audience. I argued that the process of achieving in dance was understood and experienced in a number of different ways, having various meanings (e.g., learning and perfecting a movement or exercise, creating an original solo or group composition, practising for, taking and passing dance exams, performing dance to an audience), forms of recognition (e.g., as an internal feeling or as external praise from the dance teacher or other class members, a mark or certificate awarded by an examiner, or applause from an audience), spaces (e.g., in the body and in spaces such as the dance studio, the exam room and the theatre) and times (e.g., 'in the moment' or over several weeks or months) in which it happened, and involving various emotional and embodied feelings such as stress, worry, nervousness, frustration, exhaustion, excitement, thrill, enjoyment, success, pride, satisfaction, and a sense of bodily control and bodily pleasure.

In Section 6.3, I argued that many young people took part in dance lessons, rehearsals and performances because they were intrinsically enjoyable. In particular, I highlighted three key aspects of the experience of participating in dance that young people often found enjoyable. First, I argued that the experience of physically dancing or moving could be enjoyable, sometimes resulting in a sense of bodily liberation, freedom and empowerment that was pleasurable at a visceral level. Second, I asserted that dancing could be enjoyable because it enabled young people to 'have a laugh' with their friends (e.g., being silly with each other, going wrong together) which made the experience of learning to dance fun. Third, I focused specifically on young people's experiences of participating in the dance school show, from rehearsing in the dance studio, to arriving at the theatre, being backstage in the dressing rooms, waiting in the wings and finally performing on stage. I argued that the experience of participating in the dance show was enjoyable because it was so exciting, although also nerve-wracking, illustrating how young people's emotional feelings changed over space and time from rehearsal to performance.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

<u>7.0 Introduction</u>

This thesis aimed to investigate young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances, drawing on qualitative research conducted with 10-25 year olds at a dance school, secondary school and dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings in the UK. In this concluding chapter, I begin by summarising the key research findings in relation to the research questions in Section 7.1. In Section 7.2, I highlight the main contributions of the thesis to the geographical literature and consider its wider significance. Finally, in Section 7.3, I make some suggestions for further geographical research on young people's experiences of participation in dance.

<u>7.1 Summary of Research Findings</u>

In this section, I summarise the key research findings in relation to the research questions outlined in the introductory chapter.

<u>1. What is the space of dance within young people's everyday lives and imagined futures?</u>

This first research question was the focus of the first section of Chapter 4. In terms of young people's everyday lives, many participants had participated in dance for a number of years and now took part in several hours of dance each week. Dance had an important space within many young people's everyday lives (e.g., as part of their after-school routine), but also within their lives more broadly (i.e. becoming part of their sense of identity). At the dance school and dance group, many young people faced challenges in terms of managing their participation in dance activities alongside other parts of their everyday lives (e.g., school homework, GCSE or A-level exam revision, other extracurricular clubs), but had strategies for making space for dance in their everyday lives (e.g., using dance classes as a 'break' from GCSE exam revision). Dance also had an important space in young people's imagined futures. In the short-term, many young people planned to continue to participate in dance at the dance school, secondary school or dance group, for instance studying A-level Dance in the Sixth Form, performing in the next dance show or taking further dance exams. In the longer-term, many participants hoped to continue to dance recreationally, for example at university, and dreamt of doing so in their later adult lives (and some even imagined that their potential children might participate in dance classes). A few young people also wanted to study Dance as a subject at university or to further their dance training at a vocational dance college, aiming to pursue a career as a dancer performing on stage (e.g., in the West End, on a cruise ship), a choreographer or a dance teacher. However, others felt that they would not succeed in, or did not want to enter, the 'harsh'

professional dance world. Whilst recreational dance had a space in their everyday lives and imagined futures, many young dancers felt that there was no space for them in the professional dance world.

2. How are young people's motivations for and experiences of participation in dance informed by their knowledges and understandings of their bodies?

The second research question was addressed in the second part of Chapter 4, which focused on young people's experiences, knowledges and understandings of their physical embodiment drawing on research conducted at the dance school and secondary school. Participation in dance resulted in physical changes to young people's bodies and involved the negotiation of perceptions about what a dancer's body 'should' look/be like in terms of gender, body shape and body size. First, many young people described their bodies as having experienced a process of bodily change, in particular becoming stronger and more flexible. This process of bodily change was gradual, but marked by specific memorable bodily achievements (e.g., doing 'the splits' for the first time). Second, and relatedly, many boys understood strength to be a particularly important physical characteristic for them to develop as a male dancer. Some boys used strength to challenge the social stigma (i.e. the idea that dance is a 'feminine' activity) associated with being a young male dancer, and teachers at the secondary school encouraged boys to participate in dance by engaging them in a 'masculine' style of dance that was focused on strength and athleticism. Third, most girls did not feel it was necessary to be a particular body shape or size to be a dancer at the dance school or secondary school, and did not feel any direct pressure from dance teachers or other students to be a particular body shape or size. However, some girls did feel some indirect pressures associated with the dance class environment, for example the use of mirrors in the dance studio which increased their awareness of their body shape and size and provided a possible opportunity for self-scrutiny.

3. How significant are the relationships that young people form with each other and their dance teachers in motivating them to participate in dance, and how are these relationships formed?

The third research question was discussed in Chapter 5. The friendships that young people made with other students and the relationships they formed with their dance teachers were often an important reason for young people's participation in, and enjoyment of, dance, and were frequently described as being particularly close. There were a number of processes that were important in the formation and maintenance of close relationships.

First, the longevity of relationships contributed to their closeness. Young people had often been friends for years and had taken part in many hours of dance classes, rehearsals, performances and exams together. This meant that young people had got to know each other well, and had many

shared experiences and memories of dancing together, which strengthened friendships through establishing a sense of shared journey and history. Many young people had also been taught by their dance teachers for a number of years and often spent several hours in (sometimes very small) classes with them each week. The longevity and intensity of student-teacher relationships were crucial factors in establishing close and strong bonds.

Second, close relationships were developed through practices of talking, helping, supporting and caring. Friendships were strengthened as young people talked, helped and supported each other practically and emotionally during dance classes and shows (e.g., talking about dancing as well as their everyday lives, helping each other to learn choreography, supporting each other with nerves before a performance). This enabled young people to get to know each other and contributed to the development of feelings of trust and care. Young people also built relationships with their dance teachers through talking to them informally about their everyday lives (e.g., school, exams, family, holidays). As a result, many young people felt that their dance teachers were interested in their everyday lives and cared about them, and that they could go to their dance teachers for help with problems that they encountered. Some even described their dance teachers as being like 'second mums'.

Third, close relationships were formed through the body. Friendships between young people were developed in particular by: watching, copying and learning from each other's dancing bodies; moving in synchronicity; becoming familiar with how each other's bodies moved and touching each other's (sweaty) bodies; and being exposed to each other's bodies. These processes resulted in a sense of bodily trust, unity and intimacy between young people which developed, solidified and deepened friendships, and in so doing took them beyond the level of friendships formed in other contexts. Close relationships between young people and their dance teachers were also formed through the body, specifically: through young people watching, copying and learning from the dance teacher's body; the dance teacher watching young people's bodies; the dance teacher getting to know young people's bodily capabilities and habits; and physical bodily contact and touch. This resulted in a sense of bodily unity, familiarity and intimacy between young people and their dance teachers beyond that experienced in relationships with other teachers.

The fourth research question is explored in Chapter 6. The emotional embodied experiences involved with dancing were an important reason for young people's participation in dance, in particular feelings of escape, emotional release, achievement and enjoyment.

Many young people enjoyed participating in dance because it provided them with an escape from everyday life (e.g., family life, school, homework, exam revision), functioning both as a physical space to which they could escape and an activity that absorbed and distracted them. Some young people actively used dance in this way as a mechanism for managing stress in their everyday lives. Thus, dance occupied a dual and contradictory position for many young people as an important part of, and way to escape from, everyday life. Dancing also provided an emotional release for many young people, enabling them to express their emotions through movement rather than words. This sense of release was connected to the physicality of dancing and the feeling of physically 'getting rid' of their emotions. Some dance teachers were aware of the role of dance as an escape and an emotional release and encouraged young people to make use of dance in this way.

The sense of achievement that young people felt as a result of learning to dance, choreographing dance, taking a dance exam and performing dance to an audience was also an important reason for their ongoing participation in, and enjoyment of, dance. The process of achieving was understood and experienced in a number of different ways, having various meanings (e.g., learning and perfecting a movement or exercise, creating an original solo or group composition, practising for, taking and passing dance exams, performing dance to an audience), forms of recognition (e.g., an internal feeling, or external praise from the dance teacher, other class members, a dance examiner or an audience), and spaces (e.g., in the body and in spaces such as the dance studio, the exam room and the theatre) and times (e.g., 'in the moment' or over several weeks or months) in which it happened, and involving various emotional and embodied feelings such as stress, worry, nervousness, frustration, exhaustion, excitement, thrill, enjoyment, success, pride, satisfaction, and a sense of bodily control and bodily pleasure.

Finally, many young people took part in dance lessons, rehearsals and performances because they were intrinsically enjoyable. First, the experience of physically dancing or moving could be enjoyable, resulting in a sense of bodily liberation, freedom and empowerment that was pleasurable at a visceral level. Second, dancing was often enjoyable because it enabled young people to 'have a laugh' with their friends (e.g., being silly with each other, going wrong together) which made the

experience of learning to dance fun. Third, at the dance school, young people explained that the experience of rehearsing and performing in the dance school show was enjoyable because it was exciting, but it was also nerve-wracking.

7.2 Key Contributions of the Research

In this section, I draw together ideas explored throughout this thesis in order to highlight the main contributions of the research in terms of spaces, concepts and methods to the geographical literature, in particular to work in children's geographies and the geographies of dance. The thesis has sought to bridge the gap between these two bodies of literature, drawing on insights from both areas of research in order to explore young people's embodied, emotional and social experiences of participation in dance. Whilst this thesis can be situated within and seeks to contribute to the geographical literature, throughout the empirical chapters I have engaged with work from outside the discipline of geography (in particular, work in dance education). Therefore, the thesis develops the geographical literature by bringing it into conversation with work from other disciplinary contexts.

The research makes a broader contribution, and has a wider significance, in terms of providing insight into young people's everyday lives in contemporary Britain. The research offers a series of snapshots into young people's lives, including: their experiences of education and learning inside and outside of school; their experiences of participation in extracurricular activities; their time management strategies; their future plans, hopes and dreams; their understandings of their developing bodies; their negotiations of gendered expectations; their relationships with teachers; their friendships and the value placed upon these; their management of everyday stress; their feelings such as achievement and success; and their experiences of enjoyment and fun. I am not arguing that the thesis 'speaks for everyone' (it draws on the experiences of a small number of young people situated in specific geographical, political, economic and social contexts); nevertheless, it does provide insight into various issues that are important for some young people living in Britain in the 21st Century.

7.2.1 Spaces

This thesis makes a spatial contribution to the children's geographies literature by exploring young people's experiences of participation in dance classes, rehearsals, exams and performances within the contexts of a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings. These settings have not yet received sustained attention from children's geographers. In this respect, the research contributes to two key areas of literature within the sub-

discipline. First, the research extends work in children's geographies (and in the wider discipline) on spaces of education and learning by exploring young people's experiences of learning to dance (including pedagogical techniques, the embodied and emotional experiences involved with learning, and relationships formed between students and teachers) within the space of the dance class. The research conducted at the secondary school during GCSE and A-level Dance classes extends existing work on 'formal' spaces of education which has focused on school spaces such as classrooms, playgrounds and dining rooms, but has not extended as far as the school dance studio. The research at the dance school and dance group also contributes to emergent work on 'informal' (Mills and Kraftl, 2014) and 'extracurricular' (Holloway et al., 2010) spaces of education. Thus, the research responds to calls for geographers to broaden their 'spatial lens, in terms of what 'count' as educational spaces' (Holloway et al., 2010: 583). Second, and relatedly, this research contributes to emergent work in children's geographies on the space and place of extracurricular activities (e.g., sports clubs, music lessons) within children's and young people's everyday lives in the Global North (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014; Karsten, 2015). The thesis makes an original contribution to this nascent literature by providing a detailed account of young people's experiences of participation in dance activities in extracurricular settings from their own perspectives, investigating both their motivations for, and experiences of, involvement. The research gives an insight into how extracurricular dance activities are situated within young people's present everyday lives and their imagined futures, the importance of the relationships that young people form with each other and their dance teachers, and the emotional experiences involved with dancing.

This thesis also makes a spatial contribution to the geographies of dance literature by exploring dance in three spatial settings (a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings) that have not yet been attended to. These settings differ from those that have already been explored in a number of significant ways. For example, this research was conducted at three fieldsites exclusively facilitating children and young people's participation in dance, as opposed to settings involving adults that have so far been the focus of research in the geographies of dance literature. As such, this research brings the geographies of dance literature into conversation with work in children's geographies on education and learning, extracurricular activities, bodies, emotions and friendship. In addition, this research extends the geographical literature on dance by focusing on the experiences of dancers in formal and structured dance lessons led by a dance teacher, rather than informal and social dance practices that have tended to receive most attention (e.g., Malbon, 1999; Misgav and Johnston, 2014; Saldanha, 2005, 2007; Tan, 2013, 2014). This research also adds to the geographical literature on dance by focusing on settings where dance is learnt from an exam syllabus or in preparation for a dance exam (RAD

and ISTD exam syllabi at the dance school, AQA GCSE and A-level Dance exam syllabi at the secondary school), a method of learning to dance that has not yet been investigated by geographers. Therefore, this research offers a contribution to the geographies of dance literature by exploring young people's experiences of dance in spatial settings characterised by different modes of engagement and participation in dance than have been previously explored.

<u>7.2.2 Concepts</u>

This thesis makes several conceptual contributions to the geographical literature. First, the research contributes to work in children's geographies on bodies and embodiment, responding to calls for children's geographers to attend to the 'bodily details of children's lives' (Horton and Kraftl, 2006b: 79). The research extends this literature through a consideration of young people's experiences of participation in dance as a bodily practice, in particular: the ways in which becoming a dancer resulted in physical changes to the materiality of their bodies (e.g., increased muscular strength and flexibility); how young people negotiated perceptions and expectations about what their bodies 'should' do/look like (in terms of gender, body size and shape); the role of the body in forming friendships and student-teacher relationships; and the embodied experiences involved with participating in dance. The research contributes to work in geographies of education and learning on embodiment (Cook and Hemming, 2011) through its attention to young people's experiences of the embodied process of learning in a context where 'the body' is both the 'tool' and 'object' of that learning.

Second, and relatedly, the research contributes to literature in children's geographies on emotion, through a consideration of the ways in which 'emotions matter in the spatialities of children's lives' (Blazek and Windram-Geddes, 2013: 1). The research provides a detailed account of some of the emotional embodied experiences and feelings involved with dancing and their significance in terms of motivating young people to participate in dance, highlighting the importance of: dancing as an escape from everyday stresses (e.g., homework, exam revision); dancing as a form of emotional release enabling young people to express themselves with their bodies (i.e. through movement, rather than words); feelings of achievement associated with learning to dance, choreographing, passing an exam and performing; and feelings of enjoyment, particularly as a result of the physical experience of moving, 'having a laugh' with friends, and preparing for and performing in a dance show. The research adds to recent work focusing on children's emotional geographies of physical activity, sport and exercise by suggesting that the emotional experiences involved with dancing were considerably more important than the benefits of exercise in motivating young people to participate in dance, and by investigating the actual emotional experiences and feelings involved with moving

(Hemming, 2007; Windram-Geddes, 2013). The research also responds to Evans' (2008: 1675) call for 'a 'youthful' geography that engages with young people's experiences around issues of 'fun', exuberance, and the excitement of new opportunities and possibilities'. In doing so, the research contributes to work on the emotional geographies of education and learning (Kenway and Youdell, 2011) by exploring the emotional experiences involved with learning to dance.

Third, the thesis contributes to recent work on friendship in children's geographies and the wider discipline of human geography, through a discussion of how friendships are formed between young people and their importance in motivating young people to participate in dance. In particular, the research develops existing literature in children's geographies that has highlighted the significance of children's and young people's bodies in friendship formation (e.g., Dyson, 2010) by emphasising the bodily processes involved in the formation of close friendships between young people (e.g., watching, copying and learning from each other's bodies, moving in synchronicity, becoming familiar with how each other's bodies move, touching each other's bodies, being exposed to each other's bodies). In doing so, the thesis draws into dialogue geographical work on friendship and the body. The research also contributes to literature in children's geographies that has emphasised the role of support and trust in children and young people's peer relations (e.g., van Blerk, 2005), by drawing attention to the importance of practices such as helping, supporting and caring (both practically and emotionally) in friendship formation. The thesis also makes an original contribution to literature in the wider social sciences that has demonstrated how friendships are important in motivating young people to participate in sports and the arts (e.g., Aujla et al., 2014; Fredricks et al., 2002; Patrick et al., 1999; Weiss and Smith, 2001) by considering the mechanisms through which friendships form and the reasons why such friendships are so close. Furthermore, I contribute to work on the geographies of dance that has focused on the relationships between dancing bodies, but not yet focused specifically on the formation of friendships. For example, I extend Cant's (2012) work on Argentine Tango dancing by arguing that the level of physical unity and intimacy involved in dancing with a partner created a sense of togetherness that strengthened friendships between dancers.

7.2.3 Methods

The research also contributes methodologically to the geographical literature. First, in terms of research approach, this thesis contributes to the geographies of dance literature by focusing on young people's experiences of dancing, rather than attempting to read meanings off bodies/performances. Second, the research makes an original contribution in terms of the research methods used. The research highlights the potential of using video reflection interviews to 'get at' young people's embodied, emotional, kinaesthetic and sensory experiences of dancing (e.g., the

feeling of bodily pleasure associated with getting a movement under control), as well as highlighting some advantages (e.g., GoPro cameras generating excitement amongst participants about taking part in the research) and problems (e.g., participants not being able to dance 'flat out' whilst wearing the GoPro cameras) involved with using this research method (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3). By using this method the thesis responds to calls for children's geographers to consider a wider range of methods suitable for researching young people's bodies and embodiment (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2010) and highlights their potential for researching children's emotional/affective geographies in related fields. It also responds to suggestions that geographers of education should discuss the methods suitable for researching the emotional/affective in spaces of education (Kenway and Youdell, 2011). In addition, the research demonstrates the utility of autoethnography as a research method in terms of accessing embodied experiences, illustrating what can be gained when children's geographers pay more attention to their own bodies in the research process (Colls and Hörschelmann, 2009; Horton and Kraftl, 2006b). Therefore, in relation to the geographies of dance literature, the research responds to Veal's (2016: 222) suggestion that 'there is scope for geographers to pay closer attention to the pragmatics, promise and problems of specific methodological approaches for doing dance research'. The methodological insights generated may also be relevant to future geographical work beyond children's geographies and the geographies of dance, in particular for research on moving bodies or other movement practices. Third, the research demonstrates the value of using a multi-sited approach to researching young people's experiences of dance. The thesis highlights similarities and differences in young people's experiences of participation in dance in different settings, presenting a nuanced account of young people's everyday lived and embodied experiences.

7.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This research has provided a valuable insight into the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance. However, it was inevitably limited by the timescale of the PhD and the resources available. In this section, I identify some potential directions for further geographical research that could provide additional knowledge and understanding of children and young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance. These suggestions are not exhaustive, but are instead indicative of some possible areas for future exploration.

First, there is scope to conduct further research investigating young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance in different settings. This research focused on young people's participation in Ballet, Tap, Modern, Jazz and Contemporary dance classes, rehearsals, performances and exams at a dance school, a secondary school and a dance group for young people with Down's

syndrome and their siblings. There is potential to conduct research on young people's experiences of participation in dance in a number of other settings (e.g., school PE lessons, community outreach projects, university dance societies, vocational dance schools), activities (e.g., competitions, festivals) and styles (e.g., Latin American, Irish, Hip-hop, South Asian, Bollywood). This would provide insight into a wider range of young people's motivations for, and experiences of, participation in dance in a range of contexts involving different spatialities, temporalities, pedagogies, socialities, bodily relations, materialities and cultural histories.

Second, it would be valuable to conduct research on this topic with a wider range of young people. This research focused on the experiences of young people aged 10-25, however it would be interesting to conduct research with younger children. Also, whilst this research involved young people with Down's syndrome, it would be interesting to consider the experiences of children and young people with other special educational needs or disabilities. There is also scope for a more explicit engagement with the importance of (other) aspects of social identity such as gender, class, religion, ethnicity, (dis)ability and socio-economic background in shaping young people's participation in, and experiences of, dance. Furthermore, whilst recognising that children and young people are competent social actors whose voices should be heard in research, it is important to acknowledge that their agency is often influenced by others including their parents and carers (Smith and Ansell, 2009; Thomson, 2008; van Blerk et al., 2009); therefore, it would be useful for future research to consider in more detail the experiences and perspectives of parents and carers who may play a pivotal role in facilitating children and young people's participation in dance. Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson (2014) highlight that children and young people's participation in extracurricular activities, such as dance, may have implications for family life; therefore, research in this area could make an important contribution to work on the geographies of parenting and families.

Third, there is potential to conduct research on young people's experiences of participation in dance in other geographical locations in the UK and in other countries across the Global North and South. This could generate insights into the experiences of children and young people living in different political, economic and socio-cultural contexts, and highlight similarities and differences in their motivations and experiences of participation in dance. For example, relating directly to the research that I conducted at the dance school, future research could investigate the experiences of young people taking part in RAD or ISTD syllabus classes and exams in other countries; the RAD reports that 167,597 candidates were entered for an exam worldwide in 2015/16 (Royal Academy of Dance, 2016) and the ISTD states that it conducts 250,000 assessments annually in 40 different countries

(Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, 2017a, 2017b). Research could also consider young people's participation in dance in more divergent contexts; for example, recent news articles have drawn attention to children and young people attending Ballet classes in slums in Kibera, Kenya (Lerneryd, 2017) and in Morro do Adeus, Brazil (Bernas, 2015). This seems especially important considering concerns from some children's geographers that not enough attention has been given to the lives of children and young people in the Global South (Dyson, 2008; Kesby et al., 2006).

Finally, there is potential to conduct research on this topic using different research methods. This thesis utilised participant observation, autoethnography, semi-structured interviews and video reflection interviews to investigate young people's lived and embodied experiences of participation in dance. However, other qualitative methods could also be useful. For example, in order to generate a more detailed understanding of children's and young people's experiences of participation in dance and how it is situated within their everyday lives, participants could be asked to keep a daily or weekly 'dance diary' reflecting on their experiences, thoughts and feelings about dance classes for several weeks or months. Other qualitative research methods could also be developed with the specific intention of accessing young people's embodied emotional, affective, sensory and kinaesthetic dance experiences. There is also scope to use quantitative methods; for example, a large-scale survey of children and young people attending lessons at dance schools in the UK could be useful in identifying wider patterns in participation motives and experiences. Furthermore, it could be interesting to conduct either qualitative or quantitative longitudinal research on this topic. In Chapter 4, I argued that dance had an important space in young people's imagined future lives; it would be interesting to conduct research following children and young people over time to see how dance is situated at different stages (e.g., primary school, secondary school, at university or work) and alongside other aspects of their lives (e.g., school, work, other clubs and activities). This could lead to a more in-depth understanding of reasons for initial and continued participation, and changes in motivations and experiences over time which would be useful in considering why some children 'stick at' dance and others 'drop out'. Such methodological engagements would provide a further response to Veal's (2016) call for geographers to explore the potential of different methodological approaches for researching dance.

To conclude, there are several possible directions for future research on the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance. This thesis provides a starting point from which further theoretical, conceptual and methodological research in this area can develop. Further research has the potential to make additional important contributions to children's geographies and the geographies of dance, and more broadly to understanding the lives of children and young people

in the contemporary world. It is the hope of this thesis that the geographies of young people's experiences of participation in dance remains on the research agenda in years to come.

Invitation Letter, Information Sheet and Consent Form for Young People at The Southern School of Dance

Invitation Letter

Research Project about Young People's Experiences of Participation in Dance

Dear _____,

My name is Emma Kindell. I am a PhD student at Durham University. Before I went to university, I was a student at The Southern School of Dance from [year to year].

This year, I am carrying out a research project about young people's experiences of participation in dance. I am looking for 15 young people, aged 10-18, to take part in the research. I am writing to you because I would like you to be one of the 15 young people involved in my project.

I have attached an information sheet for you, with more details about the research project and what it will involve. If you are happy to take part in the research, please could you sign the attached consent form and return it to [name of dance teacher] as soon as possible.

If you are under 16, I also need your parent/guardian to sign a consent form.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phoning [mobile phone number] or emailing [email address]. You can also talk to [name of dance teacher] about the project.

Best wishes,

Emma

Information Sheet

Research Project about Young People's Experiences of Participation in Dance

> *You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if you have any questions or if you would like any further information about the research.*

What is the aim of the research?

The aim of the research is to find out about young people's experiences of participation in dance. The research aims to find out why young people participate in dance and what young people get out of dancing.

Why have you been invited to take part in the research?

You have been invited to take part in the research because I would like to find out about your experiences of participation in dance. You are one of 15 young people, aged 10-18, at The Southern School of Dance who have been invited to take part in the research.

Do you have to take part in the research?

No. Participation in the research is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen if you decide to take part in the research?

If you decide to take part in the research:

- I will watch some of your dance classes periodically over the course of the year (September 2014 – July 2015).
- I will conduct three interviews with you over the course of the year (September 2014 – July 2015). During each interview, I will ask you to talk about your experiences of dance, why you take part in dance lessons and what you get out of dancing. Each interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes and will take place before or after one of your dance classes. I will record the interview using an audio recorder to help me remember what you say. You can decide to stop the interview at any point and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to.
- I will also video record you dancing during some of your dance classes. I will ask you to watch and talk about the video recording during one of your interviews.

Will the information I tell you be kept confidential and anonymous?

Yes. Any information that you tell me will be kept confidential. Your name will be removed from the information that you tell me so that it is anonymous. Anonymised quotations from your interviews may be used in publications relating to the research.

What will happen to the video recordings of me?

Video recordings of you may be used in publications relating to the research. No other use will be made of the video recordings without your permission.

What will the research findings be used for?

The research findings will be used in my PhD thesis. The research findings may also be published in academic journal articles and presented at academic conferences. You are welcome to see a copy of the PhD thesis or academic journal articles before they are published. I will give you a summary of the research findings after the research has been completed.

Who is the research being conducted by?

The research is being conducted by Emma Kindell, who is a PhD student at Durham University. Before going to university, I went to dance classes at The Southern School of Dance from [year to year]. I also helped backstage at [name of dance show] and [name of dance show]. Last summer, I conducted my Masters Dissertation research at The Southern School of Dance.

Who can you contact if you have any questions about the research?

If you have any questions or would like any further information about the research, you can contact me by phoning [mobile phone number] or emailing [email address]. You can also contact my PhD supervisors, Dr Rachel Colls [email address] and Professor Sarah Atkinson [email address], who work at Durham University. You can also talk to [name of dance teacher] about the research.

What happens next?

If you are happy to take part in the research, please sign the attached consent form and return it to [name of dance teacher] as soon as possible. If you are under 16, I will also need your parent/guardian to sign a consent form.

<div align="center">**Thank you!**</div>

Participant Consent Form

Research about Young People's Experiences of Participation in Dance

Please Tick Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason.

☐

3. I agree to take part in the research.

☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Please return this consent form to [name of dance teacher] as soon as possible.

Thank you!

Invitation Letter and Consent Form

Image of researcher	Hello! My name is Emma.
Image of Durham University	I am studying at Durham University.
Image of DS Dance Logo	As part of my studies, I am carrying out a research project at DS Dance.
Image of two people dancing	The research project is about why young people enjoy dancing.
Image of two people talking	I would like to interview you about why you enjoy dancing.
Image of a clock face	The interview will last for about 10 minutes.
Image of a calendar	The interview will happen during one of your dance lessons.

Image of a dictaphone	I will record the interview, to help me remember what you say.
Image of a person doing a 'thumbs up'	If you would like, a parent or student helper can come to your interview with you.
Image of a person saying 'shh'	Our talk will be private. I will not tell anyone else what you say.
Image of a person indicating 'stop'	You can ask for the interview to stop at any time.
Image of a 'thumbs up' and a 'thumbs downs'	It is up to you whether to take part in the interview. You can say yes or no.
Image of a person holding a pen	If you are happy for me to interview you, please write your name in the box below.

I, _____, agree to be interviewed.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for First Interview at The Southern School of Dance

Introduction

- Thank you for agreeing to take part in my research and for returning your consent form(s).

- Reminder... My name is Emma. I am a PhD student at Durham University. My PhD research is about young people's experiences of participation in dance. I am conducting my PhD research at The Southern School of Dance from September 2014 – July 2015. You are one of 15 students aged 10-18 at The Southern School of Dance who are taking part in the research.

- Today is the first of three interviews. I'll do the second interview after Christmas and the third after Easter (during lead up to the show).

- The interview today will last for 30-45 minutes. I'll ask you questions about your experiences of dance and your reasons for participating. There are no right or wrong answers. I'm just interested in your opinions and ideas. If I ask you a question and you're not sure what I mean, just tell me and I will try to explain. You don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. I will record the interview using a dictaphone [confirm this is ok]. If you would like to stop the recording at any point, then you can press stop on the dictaphone [here] or just ask me. If you'd like to stop the interview altogether, just let me know. Everything you tell me is confidential – I'm not going to tell your dance teachers or other students what you say. When I write up my research, I will use quotations from your interview but I won't use your real name so nobody will be able to identify you.

- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Questions

1. **How did you first get into dance?**
   - Age when first started?
   - Reason for starting (parents/siblings/friends/something you wanted to do)?
   - If siblings dance, do you dance/talk about dance at home?
   - Always/just danced at The Southern School of Dance? Dance anywhere else?
   - How much dance do you do now? Styles? Hours per week? Teaching?
   - What's your earliest dance memory? Can you tell me about it?

2. Do you enjoy dancing? Why/why not?

- Friends? Could you describe your relationship? Known for a long time? Meet up outside of dance classes? Dancing friends compared to school friends? Physical closeness?
- Teachers? Could you describe your relationship?
- Exercise? Fitness? Physical challenge?
- Sense of achievement? From performing, exams, learning a skill?
- Self-expression? Creativity?
- Intellectual? (e.g. learning vocabulary/steps)
- Exams? Shows?
- Music?
- Habit? Addiction?
- Break from school work/revision?
- Movement itself?
- Favourite style of dance? Why?
- Being part of 'dance world'? Names of dance steps, how to do a bun etc.?
- Do you go to watch dance at the theatre? Do you watch dance on TV? Books?

3. What are the main reasons you come to dancing?

- Same as above? Or other reasons?
- Identity/feel like dancer/can't imagine not dancing?
- Pressure from parents/other adults? Or always own choice?
- Feeling of dancing?
- Why have you stuck at dancing for so long?

4. Could you describe to me how dancing makes you feel?

- Can you give me an example? Could talk about particular style/movement/exercise/dance?
- Happy?
- Lost in movement/completely focused on own body?
- Everyone moving together? Moving with other people?
- Music?
- Feel different before or after class?

5. Do you have a favourite dance moment(s) or memory(ies)?

- Something you're particularly proud of? Something you particularly enjoyed?

6. **Do you have a dance hero/idol? Why?**

7. **Do you have any other hobbies? Do you play any sports? Or learn a musical instrument? How does dancing fit in/compare?**
   - Competitiveness?
   - Team sports vs. individual?
   - Musicality?

8. **Are you taking any exams this term? (Or have you taken any recently?)**
   - Can you tell me about the process of preparing for the exam?
   - Extra lessons?
   - How are you feeling about it?
   - Goal to achieve particular qualifications?
   - What exams have you passed already?

9. **Are you looking forward to the show?**
   - What are you looking forward to most? Why?
   - Do you know what dances you are doing? Have you started rehearsing?
   - Compared to exams/syllabus work?

10. **Do you think you will continue to dance in the future?**
    - Why/not?
    - When you leave The Southern School of Dance?
    - Ever considered dance career/teaching dance in the future? Why/not is this something you would like to pursue? Career length/poor pay/competitive? How do you know if you're good enough to make it in the dance world? What qualities do you need to be a successful dancer?
    - University? What subjects are you (going to be) taking?
    - Job?

11. **Is there anything you don't like about dance?**
    - Pressure of exams?
    - Takes up too much time? Fitting in with school? Other hobbies? Other family members?

- Particular body shape? Mirrors? Self-conscious? Can you describe the ideal dancer's body? How does your body compare?
- Competitiveness?
- Injury?

12. Could you choose three words to describe what dance means to you?

13. Anything else you'd like to add/tell me?
- Reasons for participating?
- Why enjoy dance?
- What get out of dance?

14. Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix C: Example Video Reflection Interview Guide

Video Reflection Interview Guide for The Southern School of Dance

Introduction

- Thank you (again!) for taking part in the research.

- This is the second of three interviews. The final interview will be after the Easter holidays.

- The interview today will last for about [length of time].

- First, I'm going to get you to watch back the video footage and talk about it.

- Second, I'm going to ask you a couple of questions about what you thought of using the GoPros and watching the footage back.

- If it's ok with you, I'll record the interview using my dictaphone [confirm this is ok]. If you would like to stop the recording at any point, then you can press stop on the dictaphone [here] or just ask me. If you'd like to stop the interview altogether, just let me know.

- Everything you tell me is confidential – I'm not going to tell your dance teachers or other students what you say. When I write up my research, I will use quotations from your interview, but I won't use your real name.

- Do you have any questions?

Part 1: Watching the video

- I'd like you to talk me through the video footage, section by section. You can pause the video whenever you want to, and you can also replay bits.

- I might also stop the footage and ask you a question about a particular section.

- Possible things you could talk to me about – go through prompt sheet.

- You can talk about some, all or none of these questions!

- There are no right or wrong answers! I'm just interested in your thoughts/ideas.

Part 2: GoPro questions

- What did you think of using the GoPros? Did you enjoy using them?

- Have you used a GoPro before? When/where/why?

- Were there any problems with wearing the GoPro?

- Did it affect your dancing? Did you think about the GoPro while you were dancing?

- What did you think of the footage?

- What could you see/not see? Did you like the camera angle? Why/not?

- How did watching the footage back make you feel?

- How did it feel to talk about the footage?

Thank you!

Participant Prompt Sheet

- Can you describe the movements you were doing? What were your arms, legs, head etc. doing?

- What muscles could you feel working or stretching?

- Were you out of breath, dizzy...?

- How did you feel when you were dancing? How did the movements make you feel?

- Do you like the movements/exercise/dance? Why/not?

- Was this dance/exercise easy or difficult? Why/not?

- What were you thinking about when you were dancing?

- What is your favourite part of the exercise/dance and why?

- What quality/feeling/style did the movements have (e.g. fast, slow, sharp, relaxed)?

- Do you like the music? Why/not?

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