

THE INTERNATIONAL VOICE OF THE IMPERIAL SOCIETY OF TEACHERS OF DANCING

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Dance

FEATURING

Brandon Lee Sears

Combining the West End
with ISTD teacher training

**Reasonable
adjustments**

Breaking down
barriers to dance





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“The teaching training has been invaluable. It feels good to be able to confidently teach across multiple disciplines and sectors of dance.”

Brandon Lee Sears, professional dancer, DDP graduate

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Brandon Lee Sears playing Jimmy Early
in *Dreamgirls the Musical UK Tour*
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“In the UK alone, dance generates £3.5 billion of social value per year.”

Welcome to issue 499, which celebrates the impact that our members have as dance ambassadors across the globe.

As an organisational member of the Sports and Recreation Alliance, I was delighted to contribute to their recent research into the Social Value of Dance. The report evidences the huge contribution of movement and dance, through the unique social value it creates. In the UK alone, dance generates £3.5 billion of social value per year and has been found to reach and retain young girls, older people, and disabled people better than other forms of activity. The report also demonstrates that dance reduces loneliness, enhances creativity and learning and improves sense of self-identity.

So, it is inspiring to read about all the ways that ISTD members are sharing the many benefits of dancing. On page 4 read about West End performer, Brandon Lee Sears, who recently gained an ISTD teaching qualification to support his ambition of inspiring others through the power of the performing arts. Whilst Helen Duffy, founder of PACE Youth Arts, talks about the impact that receiving an ISTD Broadening Access to Dance Award had on her work to empower at-risk children through free access to the arts (page 19). If these stories inspire you to reach out to new learners, see our top tips for how to secure new dance business (page 14) and our social media guide for effective ways to reach people and promote your business (page 20). You can also read about how we are improving access to our examinations with a revised Application for Reasonable Adjustment (ARA) process, which was trialled with an inspirational young dancer and her teacher (page 6).

I hope you will find this edition packed full of inspiration for the new school year, with lots of teaching tips in our faculty pages including practical guidance on how to assess when a student is ready for pointe work (page 26), top tips for warm ups (page 38) and unlocking learning opportunities and developing Modern Theatre teaching (page 48).

With my warmest wishes for a restful holiday period and every success for the new school year.

Ginny Brown
Chief Executive

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BRANDON LEE SEARS (DONKEY) IN SHREK THE MUSICAL UK AND IRELAND TOUR - PHOTOGRAPHY BY HUGO GLENDINNING



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The pregnant dancer

How can we acknowledge the challenges pregnant dancers face and begin to address the lack of support in our sector?

A day in the life of Brandon Lee Sears

Join us on a journey through the dynamic life of Brandon Lee Sears, a versatile performer, dedicated to inspiring others through the power of the performing arts.

Brandon can currently be seen starring as Donkey in *Shrek the Musical*, UK tour: www.shrektouruk.com

Follow Brandon on Instagram @ [brandonleesears](https://www.instagram.com/brandonleesears)



As well as performing in hit musicals, television, and film, Brandon is committed to sharing the transformative and empowering benefits of dance. He completes his ISTD Diploma in Dance Pedagogy (DDP) in 2023.

Can you tell us a bit about your current projects and what led to this point?

My current projects include playing donkey in *Shrek*, the UK tour. I'll be choreographing for Performers College in Birmingham, and I'm currently working with a primary school teaching

dance and working as a teaching assistant.

Several things led me to this point. I just finished playing Jimmy Early in the *Dreamgirls* UK tour. My husband and I are adopting soon, and I decided to take a teaching assistant position. I've always loved teaching, so I try to make sure I maintain workshops around the UK even when I'm working at a professional theatre contract.

What do you enjoy most about your daily life in dance?

Currently, I enjoy working in musical theatre and creating, using choreographic techniques, to find the best ways to tell stories through movement. I worked as a movement director and movement teacher when I led an MA course for actors at a drama school, and I fell in love with the nuanced ways in which movement can inform the actor in playing 'truth'.

What does a typical day look like for you?

Currently, a typical day begins with me waking up at 5:30am. I attend a fitness class and then head off to teach from 8am to 3:30pm. After that I travel home to work on my material for *Shrek*. I'm working with an acting coach and movement director for the role. I also write as I'm working on a book for performers about the habits of high performance that have helped my career.

What excites you most about your daily work?

I love a feeling and sense of connection and community, so working with people is important for me. I love to laugh and inspire others. I can also be critical, and I love to see the results of planning and changing to inform the creation of something.



Right Brandon
Lee Sears

You don't have to know it all to teach. You just need a passion for sharing and connecting with others.

Do you have a favourite ISTD class memory?

When I began the DDP, I was studying the practical musical theatre teaching course. However, I had a death in my family in the states. I needed to defer and when I came back to the course, I decided to learn the creative dance module. I fell in love with it, because it was such a different way of teaching from what I'd been used to. With creative dance, the teacher acts as a facilitator to help their students to learn concepts through moving and working creatively through techniques such as improvisation and composing. Technical elements are also involved and integrated into the learning.

How has your ISTD training helped you on a daily basis?

There is a saying from a book I once read: "teach what you want to learn." My ISTD journey enhanced not only my proficiency as an instructor but also fuelled the growth of my personal creativity. Both my professional practice and choreography underwent a remarkable transformation, empowering me to evolve as a versatile West End actor, singer, and dancer. The ability to craft my own curriculum within my professional endeavours served as a catalyst for my improvement in various artistic domains.

What excites, interests, and inspires you most about teaching?

I inspire others to overcome fear and self-doubt to tap into their potential for peak performance and exceptional success. This is my life calling and it fills me up inside to bring new ideas to others that might help them. I'm fascinated by the topic of human potential.

What would you like someone who's interested in doing similar work to know?

The road to achievement and growth is not easy, but if we can manage our emotions and behaviours enough to solve problems and overcome challenges, the sky is the limit. Nearly all things are possible.

Do you have tips for young dancers getting into the industry and teaching?

Start teaching immediately, and just teach what you know. You don't have to know it all to teach. You just need a passion for sharing and connecting with others.

Have you learned anything new since you started your current project?

I've learned that creation can be messy! I've also been able to apply much of the theory that I learned during my studies about grit, persistence, and mastering technique through deliberate practice, based on the research of Anders Eriksson.

Tell us about your qualifications?

I'd studied undergraduate degrees in voice, opera, and musical theatre, but none of them were teaching degrees. The ISTD helped me to develop teaching strategies to enable all age groups to improve. I believe many performers know how to teach advanced level because of the creativity behind creating choreography. That kind of teaching is coaching and facilitating. I wanted to become better at teaching new ideas to those who may not be familiar with dance or are at the beginner level.



Take your dance teaching career to new heights! If you've conquered Level 4 DDE, the Level 6 DDP is your essential next step as a qualified teacher. Visit our website istd.org/teach/ddp/ for more information.

Breaking down barriers to dance

After a successful experience with adapted examinations, remarkable young dancer Ava is already planning more.

Last year, ISTD member Catherine Parker (Starmakers Theatre School) and student Ava were advocates for our Find your Dance Space campaign, encouraging more people across the UK to start dancing with an ISTD qualified teacher. This year, they both took part in the pilot of our revised Application for Reasonable Adjustment (ARA) process, and Ava went on to receive a Distinction in her Grade 2 Tap exam.

We spoke to them both about their experience of the new process, and how they work together to adapt movement to suit Ava who is a single leg amputee.

In Catherine's words

Why did you decide to become involved in the ISTD ARA pilot project?

Inclusivity and diversity in dance are things that I am very passionate about. We have always prided ourselves on being a school that is suitable for all children, no matter their ability or additional need. If somebody wants to dance, I believe that they should have the opportunity to.

As someone who has health issues myself and submitted ARA forms for my own Licentiate exams, I feel it's an important process that is essential for making the examination a positive experience for both the candidate, teacher and examiner. As the examiner only has a short time with the candidate, I feel it is essential that they know as much as possible about the candidate and how they can enhance their experience.

How did you begin to approach bespoke adaptations to the syllabus content for Ava? What things did you need to take into consideration?

Despite having worked with many children with additional needs, including Down's Syndrome, Autism, Aspergers, Cerebral Palsy and many more, Ava is the first student I have taught with a prosthetic limb. Ava was a very competent and capable competition student before she lost her leg, so we have had to overcome the added psychological challenges and frustrations that Ava has encountered. Many of things she could do very easily before were now not possible due to her prosthetic limb.

Ava's journey has been a partnership involving Ava, her family, myself, her other teachers and her

**Ava's journey has
been a partnership
involving Ava, her
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her fellow students.**

fellow students. After her amputation, Ava returned to dance as soon as she was able, which at the time meant dancing on crutches before she even had her prosthetic leg. So, once she got her blade, and later her robotic leg, some things became easier from a balance point of view, but they also brought added challenges due the fact that a prosthetic limb doesn't always move as you want it to. As Ava is an above the knee amputee it is particularly difficult for her to bend.

The main things we must consider when teaching Ava, is that it takes her a lot longer to get on and off the floor, so we don't choreograph anything that has a lot of fast transitions from floor work to standing. We also have to adapt work so that she is balanced on her left leg rather than her prosthetic leg. In terms of teaching the syllabus, I teach Ava the same as her peers and then when they perform the exercise, I watch Ava to see which parts she is struggling with. I then consider if some of these struggles are just part of the learning process and will be achievable in time, or if they are not physically possible for her to execute. Together, we then work out an alternative option for her whilst keeping it as similar as possible to the other students so that she doesn't look different from them and is still performing the work as accurately as possible according to the syllabus.

How did you ensure that the adaptations you created met the demand of the qualification?

Such as keeping content as close to the original as possible, ensuring the right number of repetitions were performed.

Sometimes it is a simple solution, especially in tap, and it may just be that Ava needs to perform the exercise starting with her left leg each time rather than her right leg. We are unable to get a tap shoe on the prosthetic leg as the foot doesn't move independently so it's really quite difficult for her to get the sounds out.

Sometimes we take the exercise to the barre instead of the centre, or if it involves lots of turns or changes of weight, we slow down the speed of the exercise. If there is an exercise we know Ava can't complete to the requirements of the syllabus, the new process allows us to identify and suggest what changes can be made to make this possible for Ava and these will then hopefully be approved as being an equal replacement for the original exercises.

How did you know when Ava was ready to enter the exam, physically and psychologically?

For us it is more about knowing if Ava is psychologically ready. Ava is very much a perfectionist



Above Catherine Parker with student Ava Davidson

so is always aiming for the highest marks. Sometimes, with her physical limitations, as teachers we know that this is not always possible, no matter how hard Ava works – and she does work very hard.

Physically, with the correct adaptations Ava is always ready with the rest of her peers but it is very much the psychological side that Ava struggles with, as she is very hard on herself and struggles a lot with confidence and nerves, so we work really hard on this aspect of the exam.

How do you think your experience with entering Ava for an examination will support your approach to entering candidates via ARA in the future?

I will always be a big advocate for entering candidates via ARA and I am pleased this is now being promoted more widely. We don't know what lies ahead for Ava, but I do know that dance and her dance friends are a very big part of her life, and we will continue to do as much as possible to ensure Ava can still meet the same goals and milestones as her peers and fellow dancers.





Right Student
Ava Davidson

In Ava's words

How do you work with your teacher to adapt syllabus exercises?

During dance my learning is adjusted based around routines and exercises that I am capable of. I will always try all exercises and I always want to have a go at trying them all rather than sitting out and watching or missing out an exercise in the exam, as it's not fair on my friends if they do the hard exercises and I don't. I will always ask my teacher for extra support if I am struggling, and if it is something I find hard we can normally work out a way for me to do it by changing the leg it is on or perhaps not turning on a certain part.

What was most challenging about taking the examination on your blade?

The most challenging part is balancing. There are a lot of exercises on one leg, and it is very hard to balance on my blade. Some of my other prosthetic legs are better for balancing on but they are a lot harder to jump with – especially my robotic one, which I am using at the minute because my blade is too small – but it is so hard to jump with as it is so heavy. Sometimes I have to work twice as hard as everyone else, but I am definitely getting better at mastering my

balance and performing the exercises that are on one leg. It is also very hard to bend, and this can also be a challenge for me as I can only bend on one leg, so I sometimes look unbalanced with certain movements.

Were you pleased with what you achieved in your examination?

Yes. I was very shocked but very pleased with what I achieved. Everyone always tells me that the fact I am taking the exam is an achievement in itself, but I always want to aim for the top marks. There's no point in doing it if you're not going to aim for the top mark.

Do you hope to take more examinations in the future? And if so, what's next?

I will definitely be hoping to take more exams. I have more exams coming up, including my Grade 3 Tap exam in July. I took my first Acting Exam in March and got over 90 marks, so I am hoping to take more of them. We are also doing our school show next year and performing at Can You Dance.

What would you say to someone else who has a disability and wants to take a dance exam?

Believe in yourself because you can achieve anything!



Find out more about the ARA process via our website and how to apply for adjustments for your student/s: www.istd.org/faqs/when-do-i-apply-for-a-reasonable-adjustment

Watch Ava's story at www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/studentcasestudies



The pregnant dancer

How can we acknowledge the challenges pregnant dancers face and address the lack of support in our sector?



Chloe Hillyar
PhD candidate
at Queen's
University
Belfast

“
Falling pregnant can result in female dancers stepping away from dance due to the compounding challenges.

Following her last article in Dance issue 492, Chloe has embarked on a PhD to make policy recommendations that would better support pregnant freelance dancers working in the UK and Ireland. Today's article explores the compounding challenges freelance dancers face during pregnancy, and the need for comprehensive dance-specific guidelines that facilitate the continuation of the female dance career.

The Problem

Pregnancy constitutes a significant transition in the careers of many female dancers. Falling pregnant can result in female dancers stepping away from dance due to compounding challenges. When planning a family, dancers must consider the timing of rehearsals, performances and future auditions alongside the financial implications of taking time away since paid maternity leave is uncommon. The problem is particularly pronounced for self-employed dancers who will usually enter maternity leave without a job to come back to. Equally, female dancers face several barriers when returning to dance due to the reputational and financial repercussions induced by their absence. What's more, the fear of movement, pressure to return to pre-pregnancy fitness levels, and the high cost of childcare can incite an incongruence between the mother and dancer identities, leading to feelings of guilt and psychological distress within the context of a society that expects mothers to prioritise the care and responsibility of others above their own needs (De Vivo et al., 2022). All of these challenges have a compounding impact on pregnant dancers who feel that they must leave the dance profession in search for more secure, parent-friendly and financially viable work.

My research is particularly interested in the impact pregnancy has on a freelance dance career. Despite making up a significant majority of the UK and Ireland dance workforce,¹ freelance dancers are largely unprotected in the event of dance-limiting phenomena such as injury or pregnancy. Even more

Challenges faced by pregnant dancers:

- Taking maternity leave harms dance careers due to the lack of professional and financial security.
- Planning for a family requires careful consideration of rehearsal and performance schedules, auditions, and finances due to the lack of common paid maternity leave in the dance industry.
- Self-employed dancers face additional obstacles, including job insecurity and potential negative impacts on their reputation and finances upon returning to dance after pregnancy.
- The fear of movement, pressure to regain pre-pregnancy fitness levels, and high childcare costs create a conflict between the dancer and mother identities, leading to guilt and psychological distress.

concerning is the lack of adequate maternity support available in a sector that is predominantly female. Most freelance dance contracts do not offer paid maternity leave and their short-term nature means that they could lose work by virtue of being pregnant. This means that pregnant freelance dancers are likely to experience financial hardship during a time where their expenses are about to exponentially increase and may feel pressured to return to work prematurely after childbirth out of financial necessity irrespective of their maternal health.

Footnote

1. 70.59% (ODUK, 2020) and 67% (Durrer, McGrath and Campbell, 2022), respectively.

It is important to remember that pregnant women are much more capable and resilient than previously thought.



PHEOBIE PULLINGER

Lack of maternity support for freelance dancers:

- Freelance dancers in the UK and Ireland lack protection and support during pregnancy.
- Most freelance dance contracts do not provide paid maternity leave, causing financial difficulties for pregnant dancers.
- Guidelines for physical activity during pregnancy, particularly in the context of dance, are limited, creating uncertainty for dancers and their employers.
- Pregnant dancers may miss the health benefits of exercising while pregnant because they have fewer chances to keep dancing and find work.

In addition to the logistical challenges, the physiological implications inherent in pregnancy can limit physical activity ("PA") which may result in a loss of income and limited career prospects for pregnant dancers. Current guidelines make recommendations for moderate intensity PA only and equivocate on what is safe to engage with at higher intensities. Since dance covers such a broad spectrum of activities and intensity levels, current guidelines are an inadequate for pregnant dancers looking to maintain their professional practice. The absence of dance-specific guidelines also means that dancers and their employers are unsure about what is safe to engage with in a dance-work environment. Without evidence proving that not only is high intensity PA

safe but beneficial during pregnancy, pregnant dancers are perceived as less employable and may also miss out on the many health benefits inherent in prenatal PA as their dancing activity levels decline.

The Physiological

Whilst previously fit individuals may continue exercising during pregnancy, current guidelines do not account for the high levels of physical activity (PA) dancers may be looking to sustain (Wowdzia et al., 2021), nor do they make dance-specific recommendations for adaptations. The literature posits three particular concerns with regards to pregnant individuals exercising within the upper-limits of high intensity PA. It is important that professional dancers understand and consider these responses when training during pregnancy, so they can adequately assess the risk benefit of the activity they wish to engage in. The following will discuss the different ways in which acute bouts of PA can alter maternal and foetal responses and the naturally occurring adaptations that protect the foetus during maternal exercise.

A common concern is the potential for maternal exercise to redistribute blood away from the uterus and towards the working muscles of the mother (Kehler & Heinrich, 2015), potentially resulting in foetal hypoxia, restricted foetal growth, foetal hyperthermia, and potential birth defects (Kehler & Heinrich, 2015). However, the process of haemoconcentration (the increase of cells and solids in the blood) means that there is more



Get in touch

If you are interested in this area and would like to access the bibliography that accompanies this article, or if you have peer review comments to contribute, please contact Chloe Hillyar at chillyar01@qub.ac.uk



Physical implications of pregnancy on dance activity:

- Current exercise guidelines during pregnancy overlook the demands of dance.
- Mothers worry about things like blood flow redistribution, low blood sugar, and higher body temperature affecting the baby, but the body makes changes to keep the baby safe.
- Pregnant dancers can safely participate in higher intensity physical activity, but the lack of specific dance guidelines creates confusion and perceived risk.

blood available for the mother and foetus (Bø et al., 2016), thereby reducing the competition. Additionally, foetal blood has a higher affinity to oxygen which means that there is a facilitated oxygen transfer to the foetus from the blood that is not redistributed to the working muscles of the mother. The dual maternal-foetal adaptations result in a sufficient blood supply to the foetus (Mottola, 2022) even during maternal PA.

Another concern is the potential for hypoglycaemia. Maternal blood glucose is a major source of energy for the foetus, but it is also used by the mother's working skeletal muscles during maternal exercise (Mottola, 2022). The demand for blood glucose by both the mother and foetus could potentially put the mother at risk of developing hypoglycemia. However this is offset by the maternal muscles and placenta utilising alternate fuel source such as adipose reserves which are stored early on in pregnancy (Bø et al., 2016).

Lastly, the literature recommends pregnant individuals avoid exercising in hot or humid environments since it could raise their body temperature above 39°C which may result in negative birth outcomes (Smallcombe et al., 2019). However, pregnant individuals are very efficient at regulating their body temperature and may engage in exercise of various intensities whilst remaining below the critical core temperature threshold of 39°C (Revanelli et al., 2019). Exercise environments should remain ventilated and air conditioned, and PA should cease when the outside temperature exceeds 27°C (Quin et al., 2015).

It is important to remember that pregnant women are much more capable and resilient than previously thought. Socio-cultural trends that value caution over scientific evidence have fueled a tendency to emphasise contraindications rather than modifications. For many contraindications² there is no evidence to suggest that banning exercise in these women improves pregnancy outcomes (Meah et al., 2022); even in the context of relative contraindications, the potential benefits of PA often outweigh the potential risks. However, there are some activities that represent an increased physical risk. These activities should be translated into recognised dance-specific examples to clearly delineate which activities are safe for professional dancers.

Current guidelines advise pregnant women against participating in activities that have an increased risk of falling, sustaining high impact or high contact injuries, or those that limit oxygenation (WHO, 2020). Within a dance context, these activities translate as assisted lifts, contact improvisation or acrobatic and aerial work because they all have the potential to "bump the bump" (De Vivo et al., 2019). Additionally, pregnant populations are 2 to 3 times more likely to fall than non-pregnant

populations, with 50% of injuries being caused by falling (Bø, 2022). Therefore, asymmetrical, allegro and balancing activities may need to be stopped or adapted as pregnancy progresses.

The above illustrates some of the many pregnancy-induced changes that could determine the planning and conduct of dance-specific activity for pregnant dancers. By exploring the potential risks of maternal exercise and the maternal, placental and foetal adaptations that offset those risks, we can understand better the extent to which it is safe to exercise in the higher regions of PA intensities.

We need a more sustainable and inclusive environment for pregnant dancers.

Social and mental impact on pregnant dancers:

- Pregnancy brings non-physical changes that impact a dancer's career, including shifts in self-identity and conflicts between motherhood and being a dancer.
- Social and cultural pressures discourage pregnant women from exercising during pregnancy, even though it has proven benefits.
- Dancers may feel pressured to maintain a certain appearance during pregnancy, which can lead to noncompliance with necessary modifications.
- Support systems and policies must take into account the specific needs and concerns of pregnant dancers. They should provide assistance in preventing an unhealthy obsession with body aesthetics and instead prioritise the health benefits of exercise during pregnancy.

The Psychosocial

As with the physical changes, pregnancy induces a number of non-physical changes (Atkinson & Teychenne, 2022) which have the potential to influence a freelance dance career. Pregnancy often causes shifts in self-identity and the shift towards motherhood can often disrupt or diminish existing identities (Atkinson & Teychenne, 2022). It can be difficult accepting this transition or balancing their new and original identities; often there is a consequential desire to retain elements of their pre-pregnancy identity, which can manifest in different ways throughout pregnancy. For example, those who were previously active (such as dancers) may wish to continue performing at their pre-pregnancy levels throughout pregnancy. Equally, those who easily accept their new motherhood transition may be more susceptible to social prescriptions of mothering priorities, which often conflict with the physically elite dance lifestyle. The desire to protect and nurture the unborn child versus the desire to retain the dancer identity can lead to feelings of guilt and psychological distress. In many instances, pregnant individuals often forgo PA altogether irrespective of the well-established benefits³ due to socio-cultural influences stigmatising PA as a risk to the foetus.



“

The desire to protect and nurture the unborn child versus the desire to retain the dancer identity can lead to feelings of guilt and psychological distress.

The pregnancy aesthetic can also be a point of conflict for a dancer. Despite there being reports that pregnancy is a time when women feel excused from striving for the socially constructed ideal aesthetic of the female body, dancers often feel the opposite. They may spend the majority of their pregnancies trying to maintain their fitness and technique to offset the natural gestational weight gain and physiological changes. This could be because the dance environment accentuates peer comparison and thinness, thereby pressurising female dancers throughout their pregnancy to control the uncontrollable. Many dancers have the tendency to improve, perfect (Nordin-Bates et al., 2017) and work through discomfort (Quin et al., 2015) which means there is potential for noncompliance with medical advice prescribed during periods when physical modifications might be necessary (Krasnow et al., 1994).

Dancers often identify with their vocation which often results in them having entirely different values and priorities from those in mainstream careers. It is important to consider

the type of person who pursues dance when developing support mechanisms to ensure resulting policies do not inadvertently exacerbate maladaptive tendencies unique to the dancer mindset. For example, whilst many dancers have the ability to maintain strenuous training routines throughout their pregnancies, there is potential for this to be conflated with the societal pressure to 'get back in shape'. Emphasising the health benefits of prenatal exercise over aesthetic preferences is imperative to thwart the 'body is the brand' (Phan & Pham, 2023) narrative inherent in dance culture.

Conclusion

Dance and pregnancy impose extreme physical demands. Dancers undergo athlete-level training in pursuit of excellence (Redding, 2009), whilst pregnancy causes significant morphological changes that have the potential to limit physical activity (Szumilewicz et al., 2022). Understanding the science of the reproductive years, whilst recognising the challenges facing pregnant dancers, benefits the dance sector by reducing uncertainty, risk of injury and dancer drop-out.

If we are unanimous in believing that female health is a non-negotiable part of a dancer's career, we can afford female dancers the scope and flexibility to start a family during their performative years, which will facilitate a more sustainable and inclusive future for the dance ecology.

How can we overcome the challenges?

- We must reduce uncertainty and dancer drop-out and minimise injury risks.
- **Goal:** Create a more sustainable and inclusive environment for pregnant dancers, allowing them flexibility to start a family while pursuing their careers.

Helpful resources



Scan the QR code to visit **Dance Mama**, a useful information hub founded by ISTD guest speaker, Lucy McCrudden.

Signposting freelance dancers to their maternity entitlements such as maternity allowance, universal credit and more, can be a helpful way of ensuring the dancer knows where to seek financial support should they need it. www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave

Footnotes

2. The term contraindication describes a pre-existing or pregnancy-specific condition that prevents you from exercising safely (Meah et al., 2020).
3. Moderate intensity PA confers many benefits including a decreased risk of: pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, gestational hypertension, excessive weight gain, delivery complications, postnatal depression and fewer new-born complications (De Vivo et al., 2022).

Practical advice for teaching in schools



Funding for primary schools:

- Primary schools may have access to government funding for children's development (eg, PE and Sport Premium, Pupil Premium in England).
- You can propose that these funds cover extracurricular activities like dance costs.

Member resources:

- Our top 10 tips are derived from our school cheat sheets.
- Download and print the cheat sheets through the member portal.
- Once you have a well-defined package and relevant materials, you can use them as a blueprint when approaching other schools.
- Access support resources at www.istd.org/findyourdancespace

Our top 10 tips on how best to secure dance business as a dance teacher in primary and secondary schools.

We aim to demystify the process of securing regular dance teaching in primary or secondary schools and provide additional support to our members. As part of our Find Your Dance Space campaign, launched last year, our goal was to encourage more people to dance with ISTD qualified teachers while assisting our members in overcoming pandemic-related challenges and rebuilding their dance businesses.

To aid our members in this endeavour, we offered comprehensive business support resources. These included informative guides covering marketing strategies, social media approaches (see page 20 for more details), and brand development. We also

provided a marketing toolkit featuring downloadable and customisable materials such as social media posts, flyers, and letters. These resources aimed to help our members promote their businesses effectively and attract more individuals in their local communities to seek out ISTD qualified teachers.

Furthermore, we developed concise cheat sheets as part of our member support. These cheat sheets offer valuable advice on how ISTD approved dance teachers or schools can approach local primary and secondary schools to secure regular business. To summarise, here are our top 10 tips for successfully engaging with primary and secondary schools to establish ongoing teaching opportunities.

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When approaching the schools, it is important to maintain an open mind to the schools projects and achievements and how you can slot into their ethos and values. All schools are different in their own approach and as a dance artist/teacher we can use our flexibility in our work to create projects and partnerships that work for both and can be developed over time.

Katie Bell, Principal of Bell Dance Academy, Cornwall

Our top 10 tips for successfully engaging with primary and secondary schools to establish ongoing teaching opportunities.

1. Prioritise safety:

- When contacting a school, emphasise the importance of children's safety.
- Offer to undergo a DBS check if required, even if you already have one.
- Clarify that you should not be left alone with students unless you are a qualified schoolteacher.
- Specify that the class teacher should be present at all times, even if they are occupied with other tasks.

2. Approach schools strategically:

- Research local schools in the area.
- Identify nearby Academies within a Trust and seek recommendations as a respected dance teacher or school.

3. Offer a comprehensive package:

- Avoid overwhelming schools with multiple options.
- Present a well-thought-out package with clear costs.
- Express flexibility depending on funding opportunities at the school.

Membership

Discover our marketing toolkit! It provides advertising materials to promote your business to local schools. Gain access to editable letter templates, social assets, and flyers. Visit www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/marketing-toolkit

4. Incorporate the ISTD Syllabus:

- Include elements of the ISTD syllabus in your package.
- Tailor the genre to suit the school's age group, skill levels, and achievability.
- Remain adaptable.

5. Support professional development:

- Emphasise that you offer Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.
- Share best practices and allow teachers to observe your sessions.
- Consider establishing a formal CPD agreement over time.
- Offer classes as cover for teacher Planning, Preparation, and Assessment (PPA) time.

6. Explore extra-curricular activities:

- Promote before and after-school clubs to engage students outside of regular hours.
- Prepare for performances during assemblies or meet the school's requirements for keeping children active.

7. Foster creativity:

- Make classes enjoyable and engaging.
- Think creatively and adapt to school projects and events.
- Align dance lessons with the curriculum, such as themes related to space, animals, and the human body.

8. Demonstrate flexibility:

- Be willing to adapt to different teaching environments, including transitioning from indoor to outdoor spaces.
- Comply with health and safety requirements, conducting thorough risk assessments.

9. Simplify the process:

- Planning is essential. Keep your plans simple but have some extension tasks ready in case they are needed.
- Relieve the school from additional responsibilities.

10. Request class profiles:

- If possible, ask for a class profile to understand the students' needs better.
- Consider any necessary adjustments, such as accommodating students whose first language is not English.

Affinity partners

Exclusive member prices on quality products from our affinity partners. Enhance your studies, teaching, and business operations. Check out our featured business products now!



DanceBiz

Whether you are just starting out or have a well-established school, it's essential to find the right tools to help you manage your business. That's why we've partnered with Dance Biz. Dance Biz (from ThinkSmart Software) helps the busy teacher get precious time back by automating and streamlining admin. The cloud-based software package takes the hassle from administration by providing easy solutions for:

- Scheduling and class management and timetables
- Customer and student management
- Communications – SMS, emails, and feedback
- Staff management
- Invoicing and payments
- Reporting

Case study: Decote Dance, is a school with approximately 300 students offering several different genres of dance.

"We've been using ThinkSmart's products since 2013. The process from signing up to activating our account was simple and the support amazing. We had a demonstration, followed by a set up call. We know we can pick up the phone whenever we need it and the team can remote connect to our computer to guide us through any issues. The customer support team are amazing and nothing is ever a problem.

"The benefits of using this software were instant. We saved time – almost 10 hours a week! We love the features: multiple email filtering, event planner, website integration to help with bookings and payments, teacher app, there are so many features and that is what we love. We have looked at other providers, but none are as feature heavy as ThinkSmart."

As a member, you'll receive a 14-day free trial* PLUS your first month free – and ThinkSmart will also give you a special discount on text messaging, too. (* No payment details are needed. There are no set-up fees, hidden costs, or lock-in contracts.) Email today! info@thinksmartsoftware.co.uk



Dell Technologies UK is delighted to offer the ISTD a range of exclusive discounts on selected IT and other benefits to members. These include up to **20%**

discount off laptops, desktops, monitors, and accessories. Plus, additional discounts during promotional periods.

Membership 

Find out about our range of benefits from dancewear to Dell computers at www.istd.org/partners



An engaging year

We've seen our social channels grow over the last year, helping us reach even more people and share the great work of our dance teachers and students.

- **Instagram:** a **17%** surge in followers
- **Facebook:** a **13%** boost in followers
- **LinkedIn:** a remarkable **38%** rise in followers

The Society's e-newsletter achieved remarkable open rates (66.25%), surpassing the charity sector's average (26.6%), showcasing compelling content for members. The outstanding click-to-open rate indicated high engagement, and the impressive clickthrough rate (CTR) demonstrated members' keen interest to find out more about the news and events taking place.



Our campaign objectives were established to help drive business to our members, by raising dance's public profile, promoting inclusivity, and driving traffic to Find a Dance Teacher. Our campaign activity saw great engagement both with members and the public.

- **2025** business guide views
- **1039** toolkit visits by members
- Media coverage: **31** pieces, reach of **25M**
- Social media engagements: **1,643,038**
- **15%** Uplift in traffic to Find a Dance Teacher website

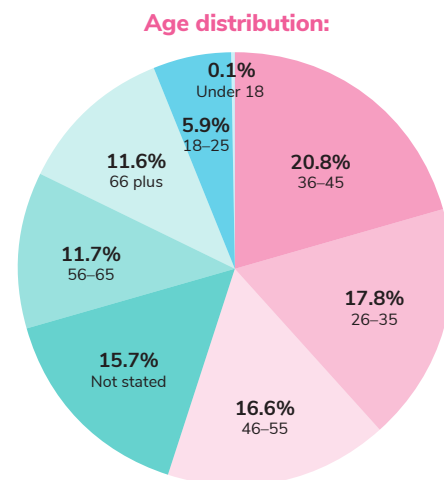
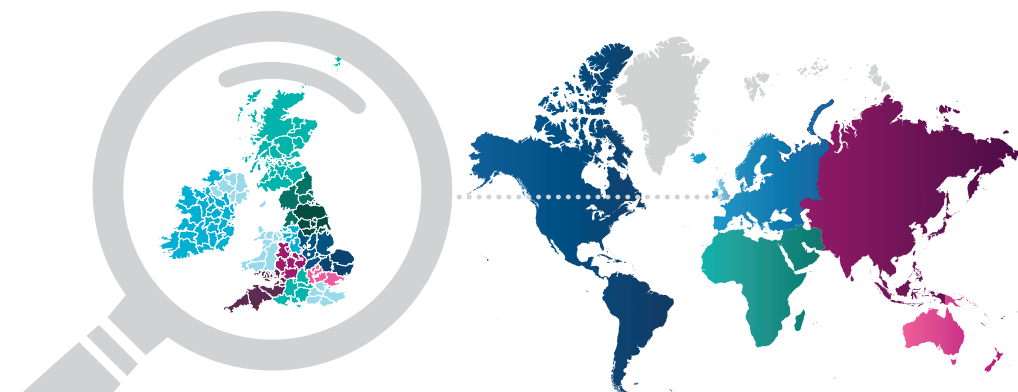
Help make sure we're reaching everyone, follow and share our posts on social media, sign up to our newsletters and if you've not yet updated your Find a Dance Teacher profile do this by logging into My ISTD.

Examination fees

A reminder that the examination fees for the period from 1 September – 31 August have been updated. For information on fees visit www.istd.org/examinations

Our exam fee period has been brought in-line with the academic year in the UK and most territories we operate in.

ISTD membership – a global overview



UK regional membership:

England – East Midlands	3.5%
England – Eastern Region	12.2%
England – London	5.9%
England – North East	0.7%
England – North West	7.1%
England – South East	24.2%
England – South West	8.6%
England – West Midlands	2.5%
England – Yorkshire and the Humber	2.6%
Northern Ireland	0.2%
Other UK Regions	1.1%
Scotland	2.2%
Wales	1.7%

International membership:

72% in the United Kingdom	10% in Europe
6% in Africa and Middle East	6% in North America
3% in Asia	2% in Australasia

Renewal rates:

91%
of our Full Teaching members have renewed in the first three months of our renewal campaign

87%
of all members have renewed in the first three months of our renewal campaign

If you haven't yet renewed, don't miss out on benefits. Speak to Membership today!

The data presented here reflects the latest available information and may not include every country or demographic. Membership statistics may vary over time.

Report sheets

Back in the spring, we introduced new functionality to QUEST. You can now print a report sheet or download and email a PDF copy directly to the student or parent/guardian. This allows you to store the report sheets electronically for your school records. Additionally, you can share the results with your students immediately after they have been released.

However, we've received a lot of feedback from our members on this development. Printed report sheets continue to be sent out. We want to understand the impact the proposed change on teachers, students and their parents/guardians, so over the course of the summer we will be reviewing the feedback from all parties and will feedback to members in the autumn term.

We recognise that there is a need for transition periods and adaptability in the approach. As young children still may prefer a printed report sheet, while older student may appreciate a digital record of their learning.



Report sheets – link to the survey:

If you'd like to share your experience please complete this survey: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ISTDTeacherSurvey



Broadening Access to Dance Award for PACE Youth Arts

Helen Duffy, founder of PACE Youth Arts, shares her journey of empowering at-risk children through free access to the arts and the impact of receiving the ISTD's Broadening Access to Dance Award.

In December 2021 I was the recipient of the Broadening Access to Dance Award and planned to use this funding to support my lockdown project, PACE Youth Arts. PACE (Perform Achieve Create Educate) is an outreach programme that offers free access to the arts for children at-risk.

Stages one and two of the grant were successfully used in the production of PACE Creative Camp in April 2022. For one week I hosted a group of students at Bird College, who generously support PACE with their state-of-the-art facilities. The week offered dance, singing, acting and music as well as crafts, mindfulness, and the student favourite – cooking club. All the activities are centred around developing confidence, self-esteem, trust, and relationships, as well as offering nutritional guidance and life skills, which these students otherwise might not have the opportunity to nurture.

We welcomed four guest teachers throughout the week, all outstanding industry professionals who taught the students a short piece to be performed on the final day. Throughout the week I encouraged the students to take responsibility for all aspects of their performance, including producing posters, programmes, tickets, organising refreshments and hosting their audience on the day. During this week I saw all the students grow not only in confidence, but in their social etiquette, performance technique and commitment. Older students transitioned from dominating the group to being kind leaders

for the younger members, children whose behaviour had suffered managed to grasp the rules we agreed on as a group, and by the end of the week had vastly improved their professional conduct.

The Creative Camp was such a success, that I knew it was necessary to create another opportunity for the students to look forward to, as well as to begin to create a sustainable future for the programme. I personally fundraised £1000 to host a summer camp and this, combined with the income from paying students, allowed me to host another full week of classes with a final performance. On running this second camp, I immediately recognised not only the benefit that PACE provides to its participants, but how essential it is that it is run regularly. Almost all the Creative Camp participants returned, along with several new students, all of whom are eager to come again.

The third phase of the grant was set to support an in-school programme, which would offer four shorter workshops within school time, for students who were not able to access the holiday programmes. This phase was much more difficult to get off the ground than anticipated, since schools were interested and positive about the programme, however reluctant to confirm and book with the extensive procedures that come with caring

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Activities focus on building confidence, self-esteem, trust, and relationships, while providing nutritional guidance and life skills to students who may otherwise lack such opportunities.





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The Broadening Access to Dance Award gave me insight into PACE's potential for at-risk children. Witnessing its positive impact, I'm fully committed to its ongoing development and success.



for SEN or at-risk children and the families involved. It is also, understandably, a leap of faith on their part, as PACE is very much still a small, independent programme, and struggles to compete with already established, larger funded charities. I fully believe that there is space in the curriculum for our programme but am also learning that if we want to run effectively, then at this time there needs to be more growth within PACE as a business to appeal to and access an already established school system.

PACE aims to become a registered Community Interest Company (CIC) for funding and programme expansion. However, it's crucial to prioritise one element at a time to ensure long-term sustainability. Overextending resources may jeopardize the programme's effectiveness.

The remaining bursary was approved to support our PACE programme in August 2023, enabling me to continue the training and activities that the students have previously enjoyed and gain momentum to open up the programme on a weekly basis in Autumn 2023. I need to maintain fundraising and the infinite cycle of seeking sponsorship and planning events to gain the funds we need to keep moving.

It is paramount to mention that the success of PACE thus far is also largely thanks to the support of our host and supporter, Bird College, who generously donate their extraordinary facilities to the programme. It is a privilege to be able to welcome PACE students to this space and a great source of inspiration for them as they glimpse the magical world of theatre, which they could one day be a part of. Thank you to Luis De Abreu and Bird College for believing in our tiny acorn. We strive to equalise access to the arts so that one day PACE students may seek to enter these spaces as professionals and have the confidence, ability, and opportunity to do so.

Through the successes and adversities of PACE this year, I've grown as an artist, teacher, and business owner. Our arts programme stands out for its exceptional training and focus on valuable life skills, filling a unique role in our community.

The Broadening Access to Dance Award has provided me with a clear understanding of the immense potential PACE holds in offering opportunities to at-risk children. Witnessing the positive impact it has had, I am fully dedicated to the continuous development and effort required to ensure its success.

PACE is very much still growing, I welcome any advice, questions or feedback surrounding PACE and welcome your support. If you would like to donate to PACE then you can do so at: www.gofundme.com/f/pace-arts-for-at-risk-children. And follow @PACEyoutharts on social media.



Social media with meaning

Social media can be a very effective way to reach people and promote your business. But it's important not to fall into the trap of posting just for the sake of it.



TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- Access the My ISTD platform and download the comprehensive social media guide for effective strategies: www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/business-guides
- Enhance the performance of your posts by incorporating videos and images, as they tend to generate better engagement compared to text-only posts.
- Actively engage with your audience by responding to comments on your content, fostering a sense of connection and interaction.
- Establish a consistent brand identity by using your logo as your profile picture. Avoid frequent rebranding, as it can lead to confusion among your audience.
- Increase the relevance of your content by aligning it with national celebrations and awareness dates, such as National Dance Week or National Fitness Day.
- Make your social media content inclusive and accessible, ensuring that it reaches a broader audience and promotes dance inclusivity. Explore this informative guide: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/inclusive-design-social-media>
- Showcase your professional credibility by incorporating the ISTD 'Registered Member' and 'Approved Dance Centre' logos into your social media images, highlighting your expertise in dance instruction.

START A CONVERSATION

When creating your social media posts think of how you'd speak to people in real life. Often companies on social media can fall into the habit of broadcasting information rather than having a conversation with their audience. You wouldn't walk into a room and start shouting about yourself so why do it on social media? Make it more about doing things that interest your audience than talking about yourself.

Marketing Support Guides

Watch our video tutorial for successful social media: www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/business-guides-video-tutorials

And if you haven't already looked at our Strategic marketing tips, we recommend you do this first as it will help you to plan your social media activity.

And don't forget our Canva tutorials and templates www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/marketing-toolkit-canva-links

Log in to My ISTD and download all your guides here: www.istd.org/findyourdancespace/business-guides



CHOOSING YOUR CHANNELS

Facebook

- Popular among 25–34-year-olds, with slightly more men than women
- As the largest social media platform, it should be a staple for most businesses
- Effective for reaching parents of potential students and people interested in dancing for fun and fitness
- Utilise Facebook tools such as paid ads, groups, and event invites

Instagram

- Mainly used by 18–34-year-olds, with an even split between men and women
- While younger users are migrating to TikTok, Instagram remains an effective way to reach a slightly younger audience
- Ideal for reaching parents of potential students and people interested in dancing for fun and fitness
- Leverage Instagram features such as Stories, multi-photo posts, collaborations, reels, and guides

TikTok

- Despite its young user base, TikTok is rapidly expanding and attracting older users
- Valuable for reaching potential students

YouTube

- Mainly used by 15–35-year-olds, with an even split between men and women
- YouTube provides a highly visual platform to share engaging video content with audiences
- Suitable for reaching both potential students and their parents

Whether you're a freelance dance teacher or a dance school, it's important to choose a business account over a personal account, especially on Facebook and Instagram. Setting up a personal account for your business can restrict your reach and violate the platform's terms of service. Opting for a business account provides access to insights, allowing you to track your content's performance and run paid ads.



IDEAS FOR ENGAGING CONTENT

Here are some ideas for creating engaging content across your platforms. Please ensure you have obtained parental consent before featuring students in your marketing materials/content.

- Consider your audience. Think about how you want your brand/business to be represented online and always be consistent through your tone of voice (language use) and design.
- Aim for a mix of funny, informative, and emotive posts to engage followers.
- Post regularly (two to three times a week across social platforms) and consistently to build your followership.
- Share videos and images from rehearsals or classes.
- Provide useful information about the benefits of dance.
- Showcase various dance moves, positions, tips, and instructional guides through pictures.
- Keep followers updated on classes and timetables.
- Offer exclusive preview videos of upcoming classes and sessions.
- Feature student stories about their dance journey.
- Share and repost your students' social media content showcasing their skills.
- Maintain consistent brand representation through standardised uniforms, hairstyles, positions and imagery.
- Congratulate students on their dance achievements and school successes.
- Provide virtual dance studio tours.
- Share and repost content from relevant organisations like ISTD.
- Interact and follow local dance businesses to help create a sense of local community
- Introduce your staff to followers, giving them a glimpse behind the scenes.
- Inspire followers with uplifting dance quotes.
- Share heartfelt testimonials from parents and children, captured on camera or in written quotes.
- Embrace weekly themes with hashtags like **#MondayMotivation**, **#ThrowbackThursday**, **#StretchSaturday**, and **#SundaySuccess**. We recommend posting weekly with one hashtag for consistency and changing the hashtag termly or quarterly for differentiation.



Registered Member



Approved Dance Centre

Above Log into My ISTD and download your logos to share the quality of your dance teaching skills



Advocating for dance across the globe

Our international representatives engage in meaningful conversations with teachers in their respective regions, emphasising the significant benefits of dance education.

Join our global dance communities

Our international representatives are ambassadors for the Society, providing local knowledge and expertise to members around the world. They host regular membership meetings to build local dance communities and connect schools, students, and other stakeholders who value dance education.

Through your international representative, you can support and collaborate with other teachers in your area. Sharing best practices and networking can be invaluable as you work together to expand dance in your region.

Creating communities

In addition to regular member meetings, you can join your regional ISTD Facebook group. These groups are open to both members and non-members, allowing you to share local news and updates. Our representatives will also promote ISTD CPD events, membership news, and offer guidance and advice to support the network.

Remember to utilise your member benefits by joining the member-only genre Facebook groups, where you can access exclusive faculty updates, syllabus content and have direct contact with our heads of faculty development and committees. www.facebook.com/ISTDdance/groups

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Australasia

Thanks to Jess Walker, recently retired as IR, for her support and hard work. **Are you interested in becoming our new IR for Australasia?** Email Membership@istd.org for details.

facebook.com/groups/istdaustralasia



Asia

Chua Zjen Fong

chua@istd.org

facebook.com/groups/istdasia





**Every child
with a desire
to learn,
perform, or
create dance
should be
given the
opportunity
to do so.**

The Americas

Astrid Sherman is seeking insights on dance education advocacy from ISTD teachers and studios in the Americas. If you are an ISTD teacher or studio in the Americas, Astrid invites you to share news about your initiatives addressing mental health, physical disability, or social disparity, including those supported through scholarships or funding sources.



Pia Bouman School: making dance accessible to all

Nagisa Inoue, a faculty member at the Pia Bouman School for Ballet and Creative Movement in Toronto, Canada, explains their inclusive philosophy. The school prioritises inclusivity and believes that every child with a desire to learn, perform, or create dance should have the opportunity to do so.

As a not-for-profit organisation, the Pia Bouman School emphasises accessibility. They have a bursary programme funded by the Government of Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Minstrel Foundation, Scotiabank, and private supporters. This programme enables students from all socio-economic backgrounds to engage in dance, regardless of financial constraints.

The school offers a comprehensive dance education through their ISTD National Dance programme. In addition to ballet, creative movement, and contemporary dance classes, students have the chance to explore and study various cultural dances. This enriching curriculum empowers young artists and equips them with the necessary training and inspiration to pursue their dance goals.

The Pia Bouman School for Ballet and Creative Movement breaks barriers in dance education with their dedicated bursary fund and unwavering support for aspiring dancers. To learn more about their inclusive approach, visit their website at www.piaboumanschool.org



Inclusion, diversity, and dance therapy webinar series with Dr David Outevsky

Join Dr David Outevsky, ISTD Associate in Dancesport and founder of Outevsky Bespoke Dance Education, for a webinar series on inclusion, diversity, and dance therapy. This enlightening series aims to enhance education and awareness in areas such as dancer health, dance history, and cultural understanding.

In the **Inclusion and Diversity** webinar, Dr Outevsky discusses important issues with industry professionals, including discrimination, stereotyping of roles, and the lack of black role models in classical dance. They also explore the colonial roots of ballroom dance and the industry's need to recognise its relevance and legacy. Watch the webinar here: <https://youtu.be/8gFu0oLFEbM>

In the **Dance and Disabilities** webinar, Dr Outevsky is joined by David Dowding, UCONN dance coach and co-director of the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College. They explore the challenges faced by seated dancers and older adults with conditions like osteoporosis and arthritis. Gain insights on effectively addressing these issues. Watch the webinar here: <https://youtu.be/zDATbLQdaO4>

In the **Dance Therapy** webinar, Dr Outevsky speaks with Srna Klotz, a volunteer mentor at S.H.E. Inspire and a specialist in dance therapy for Alzheimer's patients. They discuss the value of dance therapy and its growing presence across the United States. Watch the webinar here: https://youtu.be/uQNMew_uqOQ

These webinars offer valuable insights into inclusion, diversity, and dance therapy, fostering a deeper understanding of dancer health, history, and culture.

Top left Dancers from Pia Bouman School's ISTD National Dance programme

Top right Dr David Outevsky in action





Africa and the Middle East

Delia Sainsbury, in her conversation with four influential ISTD teachers, explores the transformative power of dance education in Africa and the Middle East. Dance education is undergoing positive changes in the region, with ISTD teachers playing a crucial role. These teachers, equipped with Associate and Associate Diploma qualifications, are now being widely employed in schools, marking significant advancements in dance education.

Minette de Klerk, an experienced ISTD teacher and examiner, teaches movement, dance, and drama to around 250 children each week. She introduces grade 3 students to theatre and stagecraft through an annual musical production, providing them with a unique opportunity to explore the performing arts.

The students' responses to why they enjoy their dance and drama lessons highlight the emotional expression, upliftment, and mental clarity that dance and drama provide. Joel Harding (8 years old) explained, "It helps us express our emotions." Liyasa Martinise (8 years old) shared, "It brings happiness when we feel sad." And Humayra Kajee (8 years old) revealed, "It helps clear your mind."

Fiona Brown, a renowned Cecchetti teacher, emphasises the transformative power of dance education in Gauteng. Dance improves focus, learning abilities, and self-confidence, positively impacting academic performance and career choices. Graduates from Fiona's programs have achieved success in various fields, demonstrating the broader community impact of dance education.

Roxanne Levy, the Director of Levy School of Dance and Drama, oversees the Matriculation Dance syllabus in the Western Cape. Dance offers profound benefits to learners, particularly in the post-pandemic era, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression while enhancing self-esteem and overall well-being. It also improves memory, concentration, and classroom behavior, shaping children's thinking and social interactions.

Kelly Chandrapaul, a versatile professional, emphasises the transferable life skills gained through dance education. Dance enhances physical development, social skills, and emotional expression. It also plays a vital role in cognitive development, improving thinking, reasoning, and literacy capabilities.

Overall, dance education encompasses physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development, enriching every aspect of students' lives.

Australasia

Jess Walker points out that social media has revolutionised dance, expanding its reach globally. Through platforms like TikTok, dancers can connect, share, and create new styles.

Internet dance, led by individuals or small groups, breaks free from traditional forms, promoting creativity and experimentation. These trends allow dancers worldwide to participate, adding their own twists and interpretations. TikTok's algorithms have popularised dances like the Renegade, giving rise to new talents and connections. Internet dance has even influenced pop culture, with artists incorporating popular moves into music videos and performances. This accessible and evolving style is here to stay, transforming the dance community. As the internet continues to evolve, it's exciting to see how online dance will shape the global dance scene and the impact future social media platforms will have.

Above Minette de Klerk's class in action



Asia



Shirena Hamzah, Principal of Dancesteps Studio in Kuala Lumpur and an ISTD teacher, explores the transformative power of dance education in developing essential employability skills in students.

As a dance teacher, I am grateful for the role dance plays in my life. Seeing children grow and succeed brings me immense joy.

However, what truly fuels

my passion for dance education is its impact on their soft skills and overall development.

Dance offers a safe space for young dancers to explore emotions and self-expression. It nurtures their organisational and planning abilities as they navigate the dance space with their peers. These skills extend beyond the studio, helping them become efficient in tasks like packing bags and managing time for homework and rehearsals.

Furthermore, dance improves memory through the complex mental processes involved in performances. Dancers must remember steps, posture, spacing, and coordination with others. Adaptability is also cultivated as students learn to collaborate, handle performance pressures, and adapt to different environments.

What inspires me most about dance education is its culture of support and unity. Dancers naturally uplift and motivate one another, fostering tolerance, respect, and acceptance. Witnessing their teamwork and perseverance is truly heart warming.

Throughout my 24 years of teaching students from diverse backgrounds, I have received feedback from former students who continue to appreciate the impact of dance in their lives. Whether they pursue a dance career or venture into other fields, they credit their success to their dance education.

Being able to contribute to their growth and development simply by teaching them how to dance is a privilege I deeply cherish.



Above Shirena Hamzah with her students
Top left and right Dancesteps Studio students

What inspires me most about dance education is its culture of support and unity.

Membership

International members, join your representatives for termly update meetings and explore the latest CPD offerings at www.istd.org/events. And don't forget to join your regional Facebook page to be part of our global dance community! (See page 22)

Cecchetti Classical Ballet



Missing the pointe?

Many teachers have probably been asked a similar question by a parent: “Why is my child not on pointe yet?” Lynsey Kidd, Artistic Director of Moorland International Ballet Academy, gives some insightful tips and hints relating to foot care en-pointe, and why rushing in is never a good idea.

Prioritising correct technique and carrying out an assessment of the strength of a dancer’s whole body, including the feet, is essential before introducing pointe shoes.

Throughout my teaching career, I have witnessed unfortunate instances where dancers have suffered avoidable foot damage because of prematurely wearing pointe shoes without possessing adequate foot strength or understanding how to effectively spread their toes.

The alignment of the foot when en-pointe impacts the level of friction experienced and plays a vital role in preventing potential foot injuries. By focusing on developing strong feet, promoting correct toe alignment, and ensuring dancers have a thorough understanding of proper technique, we can reduce the risk of harm and establish a solid foundation for safe and successful pointe work.

The shape of a dancer’s foot also has a direct impact on the amount of padding needed in pointe shoes. The variation in foot shape greatly influences weight distribution, comfort,

For all faculty events, please turn to pages 58–59 and visit our website.

Philippa McMeechan
Head of Faculty Development
for Cecchetti Classical Ballet
cecchetti@istd.org



Above Lynsey Kidd with young pointe students

and stability when dancing on pointe.

Properly fitting pointe shoes are essential for preventing injuries. Ill-fitting shoes can cause numerous foot problems including blisters, bunions, ingrown toenails, and even stress fractures. However, with the help of a professional fitter, these risks can be minimised significantly.

Some dancers find that their feet are naturally well-suited for pointe work and do not feel the need for additional padding, but ultimately it depends on the individual dancer's comfort, foot structure, and specific needs.

Over-padding pointe shoes is not recommended. Doing so reduces foot sensitivity, creates an unstable platform that strains the feet, and ultimately hampers the ability to properly point the toes.

The professional fitter, when assessing a student's individual needs, may recommend use of some of the following:

- **Toe pads:** these are typically made of gel, silicone, or fabric materials and are designed to cushion and protect the toes from friction and pressure. They can help prevent blisters and alleviate discomfort.

- **Toe caps:** these are like toe pads but cover the entire toe instead of just the tip. They provide additional protection and can be helpful for dancers who experience bruised toenails or corns.
- **Toe spacers:** these are usually made of silicone or foam and are designed to separate the toes and promote proper alignment. They can help relieve pressure on specific toes and prevent overlapping or rubbing.
- **Toe tape:** dancers often use adhesive tape, such as moleskin or athletic tape, to protect their toes and prevent blisters. It can be wrapped around toes or applied to problem areas to reduce friction and provide cushioning.
- **Gel or foam cushions:** these can be placed inside the pointe shoe to provide extra padding and reduce pressure on the ball of the foot. They help distribute weight more evenly and protect the foot from impact.
- **Heel grips or pads:** these can be inserted into the back of the shoe to provide additional cushioning and prevent blisters or discomfort at the heel.

- **Lambswool or toe wraps:** these are soft materials that can be used to create a protective barrier between the toes and the inside of the shoe. They can help reduce friction and prevent blisters.

The ideal foot shape for pointe work includes long and evenly aligned toes of a similar length, along with a gently curved arch that is formed by the metatarsal bones. Of course, everyone has a different foot shape, and with proper adjustments to padding, a healthy practice can be established as follows:

Toe length and shape: Dancers whose toes vary slightly in length may require additional padding to fill gaps or provide cushioning where the toes touch the shoe. Toe spacers or gel pads can be used to help create a more even distribution of weight and protect the toes from excessive pressure or friction.

**Prioritising
correct
technique and
carrying out an
assessment of
the strength of
a dancer's whole
body, including
the feet, is
essential before
introducing
pointe shoes.**





Above A Moorland pupil en pointe at Cecchetti Day 2022

Toe alignment: Dancers with certain toe alignment issues, such as overlapping toes or bunions, may require padding to help separate or realign the toes within the shoe. Bunion pads or toe separators can be used to alleviate discomfort and provide support in specific areas.

Metatarsal shape: The shape of the metatarsal bones can affect how weight is distributed across the foot. Dancers with high arches or prominent metatarsal heads may require additional padding or cushions in the metatarsal area to provide comfort and support. Gel pads or metatarsal pads can be used to alleviate pressure and reduce the risk of metatarsal stress fractures.

All dancers' feet are unique and finding the right combination of products may require some experimentation but taking the time to get this right will support healthy pointework practice.

Top teaching tips

Committee member
Alison Jenner shares some
of her tried and tested
teaching strategies.

- When teaching, try to avoid overloading the class with too many spoken details, corrections and instructions. Try to focus on specific areas and make comments relevant.
- Always try to say each child's name at least once in a class and ensure there has been a balance of comments throughout. Each child should feel special and that they are recognised for their contribution to class.
- I find it beneficial to do a two or even three-week rolling lesson with past content. Repetition helps in so many ways, and you will ensure that anyone who has missed one lesson will not miss valuable work.
- Encourage students to know and use the French vocabulary names of movements and steps. If you use them regularly when you are teaching then it will become second nature.
- Use a variety of music with different time signatures in class. Ahead of exams, set work can be done to unset music before reverting to set and can be beneficial and challenging for the students.

New teacher training in Costa Rica

Experienced dance teacher, Wendy Jimenez FISTD, shares her passion for sharing the Cecchetti method in Costa Rica.



Growing up in Costa Rica, kids were more interested in doing outdoor activities, as it is known as 'the country of the eternal spring'. However, at the age of 11, my parents took me

to Flor de Montalban's ballet studio; and she made me do in my first class: a series of chaînés across the floor. That afternoon, I fell in love with ballet.

I travelled to Mexico for my first competition, but soon after this experience my parents decided to move to a more remote area of Costa Rica. I had to stop dancing for several years, until I could take myself to classes.



The nuances of the style are more relevant today than ever.

Subsequently, I decided to go back and enter Academia Superior de Ballet under Fury Darlington's direction and danced for her company. About a year later, I auditioned and was accepted into the Teachers Training Programme at Canada's National Ballet School in Toronto.

In my first year, I encountered Cecchetti for the first time in Glen Gilmore's class. I had the honour to be teacher assistant to Mavis Staines (Director of the School) and learned that Cecchetti's principles were used to establish the technique in the professional school – my interest in teaching the method grew. I graduated from the programme and obtained my Professional Teachers Diploma, RAD RTS, ISTD National and Cecchetti Associate.

I started teaching Cecchetti in Toronto for two years before moving to Tokyo, where I dedicated the next 12 years to teaching and furthering my education under British instructors like Gillian Hurst FISTD. With her mentorship, I achieved my Fellowship Cecchetti with ISTD in the summer of 2022.

Before relocating to Singapore, I knew it was time to take the method back home to increase the level and competitiveness of classical ballet. During Covid, I reached out to a few ballet teachers in Costa Rica and began teaching Cecchetti ballet online for the first time in a Latin American country.

The nuances of the style are more relevant today than ever. The method helps a dancer internalise a security of the body that makes their quality of movement, use of weight, and musicality seamless and effortless. Ultimately, when the audience attends a ballet performance, they seek to be transported from their 'mundane' daily routines into a magical and extraordinary world. I firmly believe that this technique serves as a powerful tool for dancers, teachers and choreographers to excel, distinguish themselves and to inspire the public.

In February 2023, the ISTD held its first examinations in Costa Rica. I am thrilled! I want my fellow compatriots to have more and better opportunities than I ever had. And I must say that wherever my ship sails, everyone on board will discover Maestro Cecchetti's work.

Exam review updates for teachers

The recent changes to Cecchetti Classical Ballet graded examinations include:

- Numbers of candidates allowed in the exams
- Length of exams
- Updates to gender terminology throughout the syllabi

It is very important that all teachers familiarise themselves with the updated information, which can be found in the Syllabus Outline on the ISTD website here:

www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines



Examination procedure updates:

Our committee has recently reviewed the theory and basic steps questioning in the grades. Please ensure you visit page 22 of the Syllabus Outline document on the website for these updates.

Below Wendy Jimenez with some of her students



WENDY JIMENEZ

Classical Greek Dance

CELEBRATING
100
years
OF CLASSICAL GREEK DANCE



Celebrating memorable events

Join Fiona Sheehan, principal of Mayhew School of Dancing and committee member of the Classical Greek Faculty, in celebrating unforgettable events throughout the years.

Two physical education events at the Royal Albert Hall in 1932 and 1999

According to the July 1932 issue of *The Link*, the newsletter of the Classical Greek Dance Association, 24 pupils from Channing School, Highgate, participated in the Demonstration of Physical Education on 21 May 1932. Helen Wingrave, a pioneer in National and Classical Greek Dance, ISTD examiner, and committee member, led these pupils. The programme showcased physical exercise like gymnastics and games, including the revived Greek Dance, allowing Miss Wingrave's pupils to demonstrate their skills.

Sonia Bond, a former Classical Greek Chair and ISTD examiner, remembers the Classical Greek Dance Association Faculty being invited to the PE Spectacular in 1999. The event marked the 100th anniversary of the Physical Education Association. A total of 12 dance schools and 200 performers were brought together by the committee. Cynthia Carr, a former Classical Greek examiner and committee member, choreographed the performance, showcasing the history of Classical Greek Dance and its connection to the PE Association. The stage featured students recreating old photographs of dancers in Hyde Park. The arena then lit up with groups dressed in Olympic colours, and a young man leapt through the centre of the dancers to light the Olympic torch. This was an ambitious undertaking and left a lasting impression as a truly memorable occasion.

A special meeting with Ruby Ginner

Cynthia Carr, a former Classical Greek examiner and committee member, vividly recalls her experience: "I was directing the ISTD annual conference in Harrogate in 1968 when Miss Ruby Ginner graced us as a special guest in the Greek section. At the kind invitation of Doris McBride, a Classical Greek pioneer and ISTD examiner who was scheduled to teach the class, I had the privilege of meeting Miss Ginner the evening before the conference. Her grace and warmth left a lasting impression on me as we discussed the development of her revolutionary ideas.

"During our conversation, Miss Ginner explained the unique challenges she faced in choreographing classical dramas. She emphasized that such performances demanded movements that went beyond the existing dance disciplines. To overcome this hurdle, she turned to the British Museum, where she found the inspiration and materials to lay the foundation for her ground breaking work. With her extensive knowledge of physical exercise and boundless inspiration, Miss Ginner crafted the entire repertoire of movements and expressions that are integral to Classical Greek Dance."

Memorable festivals and congresses

Juliet Locks, an ISTD Classical Greek examiner, reflects on her cherished memories, including the bi-annual Classical Greek Festival heats and prestigious finals. These events have always been highly anticipated by our enthusiastic students.

One standout moment for Juliet was when she and Sonia Bond, both teachers and examiners in Cecchetti Classical Ballet and Classical Greek Dance, had the privilege of giving a lecture at an ISTD congress. Their presentation, titled 'How Classical Greek Dance enhances classical ballet training,' showcased the significant value of this dance genre in enriching the training of ballet students.

Recollections of the spectacular 75th anniversary celebrations

Kay Ball, our Lead Examiner for Classical Greek Dance, and a former committee Chair, fondly recalls the vibrant festivities of the Festival Finals: "It was a truly wonderful day filled with celebrations. The event featured captivating photographic displays showcasing cherished moments from previous years. Moreover, the day was made even more memorable with a splendid lunch, accompanied by a fabulous cake and champagne. Friends of the faculty, including past Ginner Mawer dancers and former Classical Greek examiners, joined in the festivities, engaging in heartfelt reminiscences and sharing their profound affection for this beautiful genre."

Reliving the unforgettable Millennium Performance

Sonia Bond, a former Classical Greek Chair and ISTD examiner, fondly recounts a remarkable performance that took place on 16 July 2000 at the Bloomsbury Theatre, celebrating the Millennium and showcasing the beauty and significance of Classical Greek Dance. The programme featured winning groups from the festival, representing schools from across the country. Additionally, a boys' group from The Royal Ballet School graced the stage, and a specially commissioned student ballet with the

theme 'Artemis,' choreographed by Cynthia Carr, captivated the audience.

Notably, a large group of dancers, accompanied by their teachers, including June Grunberg and Jean Beckley, both former Classical Greek examiners, and Patricia Clancy, a Classical Greek teacher, travelled all the way from South Africa to deliver a spectacular performance, leaving everyone thoroughly entertained.

Celebrating 100 years of Classical Greek Dance

5 November 2023, Laban Theatre, London.

The Classical Greek Dance Faculty turned 100 in 2023. To mark our centenary, we will be holding a special day of celebration on 5 November at the Laban Theatre, London, to pay homage to our past and to showcase the versatility and relevance of our work today.

The day will include workshops for children and students, teacher networking events, presentations and a final gala performance. Visit [istd.org/events](https://www.istd.org/events) for more information.

Right Student ballet Artemis, 1999 performers



Classical Indian Dance



Blending mind, movement, and aesthetic expression

Pushkala Gopal MBE, FISTD, unveils the artistry of Bharatanatyam.



Bharatanatyam, or most classical Indian dance styles, are forms where inner experience is communicated artistically and aesthetically through mind and movement. Ideal training embraces

aspects of aural learning through word led concepts, rhythmic and musical response. Visual learning is stimulated through demonstrated practice and control over body and mind and initiated through repetitive, even ritualistic endeavour, to bring a style or a way of Natya which challenges the widely accepted translation 'dance' into the psyche, not just the body.

New pupils

A fresh Natya student is a gift to the teacher. When this happens, I often find that creating an awareness of stillness in the pupil is one of the most challenging tasks at hand. Being a still body is a part of it, holding pauses amidst recitation of rhythms is another, understanding how one finger can move in a still palm is yet another, the list goes on, yet this is an essential factor that allows the start or the finish of the movement to be unmistakable. In contrast, if I have failed to leave a new pupil thinking 'I love to dance' or 'I never want to miss my dance classes' then somewhere I have not connected a cord between them and the art form, as the enjoyment of movement, is paramount to achieving this.

Our young Primary and Grade 1

AVINASH PASRICHA (LEFT PHOTO CREDIT)

HUDSON PICTURES



Above Company: Srishti Yuva Culture. Choreographer: Nina Rajarani MBE

pupils are excited about the discovery of movement and do not care about the initial falls. At these early stages, encouraging the sense of fun and finding this in oneself as a teacher, is essential. Using positive language and compliments for all pupils in your class will leave the group with eagerness to return and try again and allow each pupil to take home their achievements as the day's reward, which helps to mitigate the challenges that sessions invariably present.

Higher grade students

As pupils venture through to the higher grades, they become more self-aware, especially as a pre-teen and teenager. There is a need for a deeper sense of safety and trust with their teacher as well as in their relationship with the terra and themselves in this shared activity with their peer group, which is crucial for the development

of the dancer and personality.

With this age group, I have often found that a taught movement, if demonstrated with an intentional fault by the teacher, helps the group to understand that when you experience these faults in the carriage of a particular sequence, it is a positive step and then the method is addressed, without connecting the to the pupil.

It is important to remember to have a happy and positive atmosphere in class and allow pupils to practice and perform presentations of work in small groups of twos or threes to enable unobtrusive peer learning.

Vocational and professional dancers

For pupils at the pre-vocational and professional levels, they have already been drawn by the magnetic pull of dance, and I want you to consider how a teacher's input changes at this level.

Each dancer's unique differences require personalised attention and consistent corrective measures. To excel in examinations at these levels, candidates need individualised routes and processes.

Producing videos of sequences in class can be a valuable teaching aid and help the more experienced dancers to improve their own skills. They can see the faults alongside guided teacher instructions and take corrective measures. As a consequence, this affords today's dancers the ability to utilise these visual aids as 'homework' and reflect upon them, with an appreciable difference in the outcomes of camera facilitated work.

Ancillary skills

In all of our regulated qualifications, developing the ancillary skills, although seen as a necessary evil by some teachers, is key to creating a dancer with holistic technique.





HUDSON PICTURES

Above Dancers: Marcina Arnold, Maria Scialdone, Leslie Frackowiak, Sauraya Amin and Vishesh Mehta. Choreography: Sushma Mehta

How many teachers use the tala sequences as something that is planted in the subconscious as an aural memory well before the dance (Nritya) sequence is taught, I wonder?

In my experience, when the mind has to process rhythmic complexities at the same time as learning a new movement sequence, it is harder than learning the rhythmic pattern just sitting down and then using it to underpin the movement.

Traditional and current teaching practices

Way back in the early eighties, my mentor David Henshaw looked in on one of my Bharatanatyam classes. He had a criticism and a solution. He queried: "Do you realise that the warm up you are putting the students through is asking them to go down to floor level on their toes with knees turned out and perform small floor jumps several times? This could cause injuries or make them dysfunctional as dancers?" I was shocked.

This is what my teachers and those before them had always practised! He suggested: "Why can't they lie on their backs and try the 'Aramandi' – knee bent plie?" This suggestion, I remember, raised a guffaw of disbelief when first discussed with teachers, as respect for a teacher would not historically allow Indian dance pupils to lie in front of the teacher, legs raised, even if the objective was to master 'Aramandi'!

Over time, with growing and shared experience from our peers in the inclusive dance world, we have a committed awareness to the development of physical health and the safety aspect of dance, in which we have come a long way.

Through our Safe Dance Practice routines (based on Yoga) for each grade, these allow the dancer's body, at any level and age to understand and develop their own knowledge and awareness of their body and of dance safety, which is required for any dancer and teacher for longevity and a sustained career.

An experienced teacher would, of course, focus on both the warm up and the cool down routines, drawing from the modes of stretching, mobilising, and raising or lowering of the heartbeat, creating dancers who are supple and strong.

However, Style specific work is truly essential for the individual material covered in each class or for any long-term issues that each body may have. Needless to say, that strength training, which was achieved traditionally by dancing for several hours a day, has now been supported by other physical activities – be it Yoga, Kalari, gym work, or swimming, all of which augment the making of a professional and safe dancer.

HUDSON PICTURES



Abhinaya

Through the narrative or expressive aspect known as Abhinaya, I believe pupils should convey thoughts and feelings in a narrative sequence using gestures, movement, and facial expressions. Each repetition should subtly alter the expression, reflecting true spontaneity. This goes beyond superficially conveying an inner quality through visual gestures.

Feeling and expression, from early stages, is key to achieving Abhinaya skills. Exploration of a wide range of emotions in class, of which only a part would make its way to a final examination presentation, is crucial for a pupil to have access to an inner fund of emotional experience and vocabulary and to be drawn on spontaneously when called upon to do so.

Natya

In Natya performances, especially those with live music, many elements happen whilst on stage that can be unexpected, needing intuitive solutions.

A deep understanding of classical form, whether expressed through music or vice versa, allows the dancer to experience freedom and enjoy spontaneous moments. This awakening of the inner dancer and performer fosters self-improvement and a sense of shared joy in the energy of dance and performing for an audience. Through this training and exploration, successful exam candidates and engaging performers emerge naturally.

Left Dancer: Sonia Chandaria Tillu. Choreography: Sujata Banerjee MBE

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Contemporary Dance



Exploring contemporary dance in Greece

Angeliki Andrinopoulou and Christina Fotinaki, co-founders of DanceTexture, talk unleashing the potential of the ISTD's contemporary syllabus.

Contemporary dance is an ever-evolving art form that pushes the boundaries of movement and expression. In Greece, the dance scene has seen a remarkable surge in contemporary dance's popularity, as aspiring dancers embrace its freedom, creativity, and versatility. One influential curriculum that we believe will make its mark is the ISTD's contemporary syllabus.

Contemporary dance in Greece has flourished in recent years, with numerous talented artists and companies shaping the landscape. It encompasses a diverse range of styles and techniques, blending elements from ballet, modern dance, improvisation, and cultural influences. Contemporary dance in Greece reflects the country's rich history, heritage, and cultural identity while also embracing contemporary trends and global perspectives.

The ISTD contemporary syllabus provides a structured and comprehensive framework for studying contemporary dance. Created by the well-known dancer, choreographer, philosopher, and former Artistic Director of the Rambert School, Dr Ross McKim, this syllabus is informed by Eastern concepts of subtle energy and draws influence from choreographers Graham, Hawkins and Cohan.

This syllabus aims to nurture dancers' technical proficiency, artistic expression, and creativity, offering a progressive curriculum that caters to dancers of all ages and abilities, from beginners to advanced levels. The focus on movement qualities such as flow,

weight, and momentum, encourages dancers to explore their own individual style within the framework of the syllabus.

One of the key benefits of studying the ISTD contemporary syllabus for students who learn other dance genres is the development of a broader skill set and artistic perspective. Studying contemporary dance through the ISTD syllabus provides students of other styles with an opportunity to expand their movement vocabulary and develop a more nuanced understanding of movement qualities and dynamics.

Delivering the ISTD contemporary syllabus alongside other dance genres had a profound impact on our students, enriching their overall dance education.

Contemporary dance in Greece has experienced a surge in popularity. The implementation of the ISTD recognised syllabus not only benefits students who study contemporary dance but also has a notable impact on dance schools' businesses, enhancing their offerings and attracting a broader clientele.

By incorporating the ISTD Contemporary syllabus into their curriculum, dance schools in Greece, and around the world, can tap into a growing demand for contemporary dance education.

The syllabus offers a competitive advantage for dance schools, differentiating them from other establishments that may not offer contemporary dance training. This unique selling point can attract students who are specifically interested in contemporary dance and may be willing to enrol in a dance school solely because of its inclusion in the syllabus.

Moreover, the popularity of contemporary dance, fuelled by the ISTD syllabus, can create new opportunities for dance schools. They may organise showcases, performances, and competitions centred around contemporary dance, providing platforms for their students to showcase their skills and attracting audiences and participants from across the region. These events can generate ticket sales, sponsorship opportunities, and increased visibility for the dance school, bolstering its financial sustainability.

“Studying the ISTD contemporary syllabus has greatly supported my training in other dance genres. I find that the fluidity and expressiveness of contemporary dance have influenced the way I approach ballet and jazz, adding a new layer of artistry to my performances.”

Dimitris (age 22)

“Studying the ISTD contemporary syllabus has been a refreshing experience. It has helped me break free from the strict structures of classical ballet and embrace a more fluid and organic movement style. This newfound freedom has enriched my performances in ballet, allowing me to bring a unique quality to my movements.”

Anna (age 15)

Through the syllabus, students have discovered the freedom to explore their own artistic voice and the power to communicate emotions without uttering a single word.

The syllabus acts as a bridge, linking their training in other dance genres with a newfound understanding and appreciation for diverse movement qualities. It has given students the tools to infuse their ballet, jazz, or hip-hop routines with an extra layer of emotion and nuance.

Contemporary dance is a reminder that dance is not just about perfect lines and flawless execution; it is about embracing our flaws, embracing vulnerability, and embracing the beauty of our shared human experience.

As students continue to grow and evolve as dancers, the impact of the ISTD contemporary syllabus will serve as a reminder of the transformative power of dance, the joy of self-expression, and the unyielding spirit that fuels their artistic endeavours.

Unveiling the advantages of ISTD's contemporary syllabus:

1. Versatility and artistic expression:

Contemporary dance encourages students to explore new movement possibilities by integrating elements from other genres such as ballet or jazz. Students develop a broader range of movement qualities, enabling them to express themselves more authentically and artistically.

2. Technical and physical development:

The ISTD contemporary syllabus emphasizes the development of technical skills, strength, flexibility, and coordination. The intricate floor work, fluidity, and weight shifts inherent in contemporary dance enhance dancers' body awareness and control, leading to improved performance in other styles.

3. Creative and choreographic skills:

Contemporary dance nurtures students' creativity through improvisation, exploration of dynamics, and the creation of original choreography, students gain a deeper understanding of movement composition and develop their own artistic voice.

4. Musicity and interpretation:

Contemporary dance often incorporates diverse musical genres and rhythms, challenging students to develop a heightened sense of musicality and interpretation.



Up-coming CPD workshops:
1–4 Sep 2023 in Athens, Greece
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Visit www.istd.org/events

To learn more about ISTD Contemporary dance, visit: www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres/contemporary

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A Gold Star warm-up

Disco Freestyle and Rock n Roll committee member, Michelle Arnell, shares her top tips for warm-ups.



When entering candidates for examinations, a warm-up is required for all levels from Gold Star and above. This must be demonstrated at the start of the examination.

Depending on the genre of the examination (eg Disco Freestyle or Street/Hip Hop), your warm-up routine should correspond to the correct style, and consist of a wide varied range of movements.

The warm-up routine should be up to three minutes and the candidate needs to work effectively through the three components demonstrating a suitable range of movements for mobility, a pulse raiser and a short static stretch.

Whilst teaching the warm-up, find a suitable music track that is relevant to the style of the examination being taken. It could be worth blending the music starting with a medium track before

**Make the
warm-up a
performance,
just like the
rest of the
dances in your
examination.**



moving into a more up-tempo song for the pulse raiser and finally something slower for the stretch sequence.

You could plan to split the three minutes equally between each component, which would give a good balance whilst demonstrating each section.

Remember, your warm-up is still a dance routine

As well as including all the required elements correctly, don't forget that exciting choreography can add to the routine, making it more interesting for the dancer as well as the examiner. Make the warm-up a performance, just like the rest of the dances in your examination.

Thinking ahead to the dances that will follow your warm-up, make sure that all the joints and muscles that will be used in your routines are covered in your warm-up. You cannot use every possible movement and stretch in a three minute routine but do show a good range.

Combining more than one movement at a time would allow you to show more movements in the three minute time allowance, for example, Basic Taps to R and L combined with shoulder rolls.

When moving onto the stretch sequence, make sure the candidate is aware of the correct technique of each stretch demonstrated. All stretches should be held for at least eight seconds, ensuring fluid movement from one stretch to the next. The demonstration should include all the major muscle groups and

some stretches may be combined (for example, lower calf and triceps). Make sure all stretches are demonstrated on both sides; if demonstrating a hamstring stretch on the right leg, it should also be done on the left.

When looking for suitable stretches for your examinations, refer to the DFR glossary or the DFR graded examinations technical specification for additional guidance.

Important things to encourage your students to think about when they are performing:

- Posture, control, tone and placement
- Alignment and finishing off lines and shapes
- Using the core
- Eyeline
- Transitions
- Mobilisation of all major muscle groups and joints
- Using the full natural range of movement



Dance Exchange 2023 Sunday 17 September 2023 at the Elgiva Theatre, Chesham

Join us for a full day of CPD workshops, updates, and inspiring lectures. Disco, Street Dance, and Rock n Roll await! Limited tickets available. Book now at www.istd.org/events/dance-exchange-2023

Imperial Classical Ballet



Celebrating excellence in ballet

Prodigious talent was on show at our Junior and Senior Ballet Awards.

In planning this event, the Imperial Classical Ballet Faculty combined two previous competitions: the Senior Ballet Awards, designed to take place over two days and the one-day Junior Ballet Awards. We used all we had learnt through running online events to create an inclusive three-pronged hybrid structure, which allowed entry to all who wanted to take part.

Four new categories of class work were created: Grades 1 and 2, Grades 3 and 4, Grades 5, 6 and Intermediate Foundation, and Intermediate and Advanced 1 and we were generously sponsored by Freed of London, who awarded first prize winners in each category, both UK and International, £200 to spend on dancewear.

Online UK and international heats

This section was open to all. We were very pleased to receive so many entries, with a total of 520 dancers taking part of whom 116 were international. It's exciting that entries came in not only from the UK but also Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Vietnam. This clearly demonstrates the value of connecting and sharing online in bringing our global community closer together. The online heats were judged by two adjudicators per level, before a final, adjudicated by Francesca Filpi and Lorraine Swain.



Above right and right Students at the 2023 Junior and Senior Ballet Awards





Live UK finals

The keenly anticipated UK finals took place on Saturday 15 April at Central School of Ballet in London. 110 UK finalists danced on the day, adjudicated by three guest judges including Vivienne Saxton, Desire Sammai and Andrew Wilson. Classes in all four categories were expertly delivered by guest teachers Sadie Morgan, Fleur Jones, Lisa Aldridge and James Butcher, with inspiring piano accompaniment from Kate Dickson.

Sincere congratulations are due not only to the deserving winners but to all the finalists and their teachers for their impressive achievement.

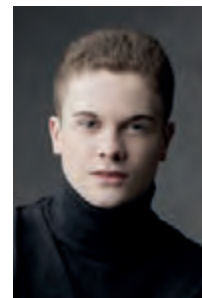
A lot of planning, preparation and hard work went into the whole event and especially the live finals. It was a very successful day which ran smoothly with an army of volunteers and artistic staff in support. Grateful thanks to all who gave their time and skills so generously. [Keep an eye out for information about our 2024 Awards.](https://www.istd.org/discover/news/junior-and-senior-ballet-awards-2023)

The winners and participating schools were published online after the event. For full details, visit:
UK results: www.istd.org/discover/news/junior-and-senior-ballet-awards-2023
International results: www.istd.org/discover/news/junior-and-senior-ballet-awards-2023-international-results



Six questions with Rhys Antoni Yeomans

Rhys reflects on his journey from Billy Elliot to First Artist at English National Ballet



10 years ago, we interviewed a 14-year-old Rhys Antoni Yeomans (Dance magazine, issue 464), fresh from starring in the West End production of *Billy Elliot the Musical*.

A decade later, we catch up with Rhys to discuss his position as a First Artist at ENB, when he first began dancing and his history with ISTD.

Are you grateful that you had dance lessons as a child?

I was extremely grateful to have started dance class from a young age, because I was such a fidget and could never sit still. I think the first moment I knew I wanted to dance was when I went to see the show *Billy Elliot the Musical* at the age of 10 in the West End, and I immediately fell in love with dance.

From watching the show, I was completely mesmerised how a young boy from up North (and of a similar age to me at the time) was so determined to follow his dream of becoming a ballet dancer, even though he faced adversity and it not being the 'normal' thing to do as a young lad – the show inspired me so much that I asked my mum if I could audition for the part. I did just that and was offered a place in the Training School of *Billy Elliott*, which was a very intense boot camp (seven days a week) learning tap, ballet, singing and gymnastics, but I stuck with it – eventually becoming *Billy Elliot* for two years in the West End – dream achieved!

Who delivered your ISTD training?

I studied ISTD dance at my local dance school, Centre Pointe, in Manchester.

Caroline Wright is the principal of the school. When I moved to London to perform as Billy Elliot, Lorraine Swain was my ISTD teacher, provided by the production. She told me I was special and that I have the potential to have a great ballet career.

What dance has done for you?

Dance has really given me a purpose in life both personally and professionally, I honestly don't know what I'd do or be without it. I'm definitely quite a shy and quiet person and I feel that when I dance, I am able to really express my true self, which I think is such a beautiful factor.

What would you say to aspiring dancers today?

Don't be too hard on yourself! This industry is a very competitive one and you must try not to compare yourself to anyone else. You are special, unique and a one-of-a-kind individual, so keep pushing for the future you want to achieve – you will do it.

**Dance has
really given
me a purpose
in life both
personally and
professionally.**

Please tell us a bit about your role as a First Artist at ENB?

Being a First Artist with English National Ballet means I'm starting to do a lot more soloist work and making that jump out of the group to being on my own. Being promoted last year, after the daunting two years we had due to Covid, which really had an impact on our artistic world, really gave me the push and recognition I needed in order to carry on and one day achieve my goal of becoming a soloist.

What are your hopes for the future?

I still have to pinch myself that I'm part of such an incredible company (English National Ballet) with lots of inspiring and talented artists, that I really do look up to. My hopes for the future would be to keep moving up the ranks and dancing as much diverse repertoire as I can. I'd love to really challenge and push my dancing abilities to the limit and feel fulfilled.

Rhys's upcoming performances with ENB in Autumn 2023 will be the following: *Our Voices*, 21–30 September, Sadler's Wells; *Akram Khan's Giselle*, 19–21 October, Manchester Palace Theatre and 26–28 October, Bristol Hippodrome; *Nutcracker*, 14 December–7 January 2024, London Coliseum.

Above Rhys Antoni Yeomans in *Jolly Folly* by Arielle Smith, part of ENB's Reunion

Left Students and prize winners at the 2023 Junior and Senior Ballet Awards



Exam review updates for teachers

The recent changes to Imperial Classical Ballet graded examinations include:

- Numbers of candidates allowed in the exams
- Length of exams
- Updates to gender terminology throughout the syllabi

It is very important that all teachers familiarise themselves with the updated information, which can be found in the Syllabus Outline on the ISTD website here:

www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines

Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence



Inaugural bursary winners

Head of Faculty Development Malcolm Hill talks to Freida and Zoe, recipients of the Anne Lingard and Margaret Connon bursaries.

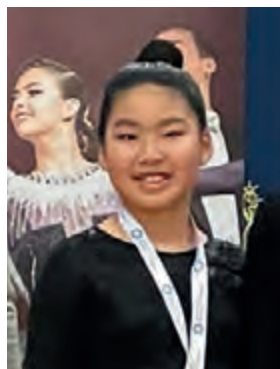
Our annual Dancesport Bursary Awards recognise and reward talented young dancers and their teachers. These individuals are selected based on their participation in competitions throughout the year. Winners receive financial awards that can be used for further personal dance training. Teachers of the winning competitors also receive a bursary fund for their school. This fund is specifically designed to support development opportunities, community activities, or students in financial need.

Malcolm: Firstly, congratulations to both of you on being our first-ever Bursary winners. Freida, you have won the Anne Lingard Bursary, and Zoe, you have won the Margaret Connon Bursary. How long have you been dancing, and what motivated you to start?

Zoe: I have been dancing for a year and a half, and it has significantly boosted my confidence.

Frieda: I have been dancing for six years since I was around seven years old. I started dancing with my friend because I wanted to engage in more physical activity.

Malcolm: Starting with a friend is a great way to begin, as it can be intimidating to go alone. Dancing is an excellent form of exercise! Regarding your dancing, what level are you currently at, and



Left Freida Dowling

Far left Zoe (Yuyao Liu)

how are your exams progressing?

Frieda: I am at the Bronze level in Disco and the Social Dance Test in Ballroom.

Zoe: Currently, I am at the Social level, and I aim to reach Pre Bronze by the end of the year.

Malcolm: So you both are still in the early stages of Ballroom and Latin. Do you focus solely on Ballroom and Latin, or do you also explore other styles? And which style is your favourite?

Zoe: I also participate in Disco, but Ballroom and Latin are my favourites.

Frieda: I also dance at school.

Malcolm: What aspects of the Medallist Series competitions do you enjoy?

Frieda: I enjoy receiving a medal, as it makes me feel proud of my achievements.

Malcolm: It's rewarding to bring something home – there's nothing better! Winning a medal gives you a sense of accomplishment and the feeling of outperforming others. It boosts your confidence and reinforces what you learn in lessons.

Zoe: Sometimes, we also get to take home sweets!

Malcolm: How did you react when you found out that you had won the bursary award?

Zoe: I was surprised and happy because I have only been in England for four years, so I was genuinely excited.

Frieda: I was also very excited and surprised since I was unaware of the bursary.

Malcolm: What are your plans for the money/bursary? How do you intend to use it?

Frieda: I might use it for private lessons.

Malcolm: That's great! It opens up new opportunities for you. Apart from dancing, do you have any other interests?

Zoe: I enjoy playing netball (goal attack, wing attack) and reading.

Frieda: I participate in drama club and enjoy reading as well.

Malcolm: Oh, and Zoe, I heard you play the drums. That's a fantastic skill for developing rhythm! Lastly, how frequently do you attend your lessons/classes each week?

Frieda: Twice a week.

Zoe: Three times a week.

Malcolm: Thank you for your time, and congratulations again! I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming competitions in the future!



Glenn Richard Boyce and Cäroly Janes

We talk to rising stars in the ballroom dance world.

Meet Glenn Richard Boyce and Cäroly Janes, the dynamic duo currently making waves in the amateur ballroom dance scene. With Glenn's impressive background as a former ISTD medallist competition winner and Cäroly's dance education in Estonia, their partnership is a perfect fusion of talent and international influence. In this exclusive interview, they share their experiences with ISTD medal tests, their proudest achievements, favourite figures in the ballroom dance syllabus, and their ambitions for the future. Get ready to be inspired by their dedication, passion, and unwavering pursuit of excellence.

How did the ISTD Medal examinations help you as a younger dancer?

Glenn: The ISTD system helped our teachers to construct a training regime for me and my partner(s) and helped build camaraderie among the young dancers at Nice 'n' Easy. This provided our group with a very sound introduction to the syllabi and a route for developing

We like to train everyday as we really enjoy the process of improving and developing our dancing.



and progressing in a controlled manner through Juvenile, Junior etc. The Medal exams and related competitions gave us recognition of our achievements and goals which spurred us on to keep practicing and improving.

Cäroly: Learning to dance in Estonia at Leevi, Glenn's Grandmother's school, we had frequent visits from teachers and pupils from Nice 'n' Easy, our 'sister' school in England. This interaction gave me an introduction to British teaching methods and, of course, led to my partnership with Glenn.

You have lots of achievements, but which one means the most to you?

Glenn: To have won the British National Trophy formerly awarded to my grandparents and my parents.

Cäroly: Our most recent win at the British Open Championships. This event is the most coveted by all aspiring young dancers.

Which figure in the syllabus from each Ballroom dance is your favourite?

Glenn's top choices are Nat Pivots (Waltz), Contra Checks (Tango), Natural Turns (Viennese), and Three Step (Foxtrot). Cäroly's preferred dances include the Fallaway (Waltz), Four Step (Tango), Reverse Turns (Viennese), and Feather Step (Foxtrot). They both enjoy the Quickstep Quick Open Reverse (QOR) and also Latin American dance.

What is a typical day like when you are training?

Without giving away any secrets, we like to train everyday as we really enjoy the process of improving and developing our dancing. Our training varies depending on the day, but we like to practice all aspects of our performance, as a

holistic approach is necessary in order to develop our dancing to the next level.

How do you mentally prepare for competitions?

We find that practice is the key for mental preparation, as it gives great confidence for when comes to performing at the competition.

How does travelling all over the world affect you?

We enjoy the challenges presented by competing in different countries and making friends with similar goals as ourselves. So, we intend to continue travelling wherever and whenever the opportunity arises.

What is the next aim/ambition for your career?

To win the International Championship in October.

Above Glenn Richard Boyce and Cäroly Janes

Medallist Series 2023–24

Jenny Ackland of Revelation School of Dance reviews the Dorset event.

The Medallist Series 2023–24 event, held on 14 May at QE School in Wimborne, Dorset, was a delightful and inclusive experience. As a new school, we appreciated the warm atmosphere created by the ISTD team. The competition provided a wonderful opportunity for our beginners to enter the world of competitive dancing, with A and B finals for newcomers adding a special touch. The parent and child event was a standout moment, evoking cherished memories and witnessing enthusiastic participation.

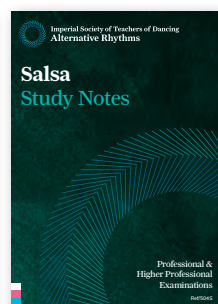
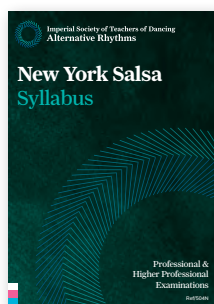
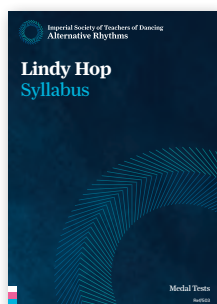
ISTD teachers and students are invited to our **Medallist Weekend on 2–3 September 2023** at New Hall, Winchester College Campus, 34 College Walk, Winchester SO23 9NF



Above Winners and participants of the 2023–2024 Medallist Series event

Check out our new Alternative Rhythms-dedicated shop page:

shop.istd.org/shop/alternative-rhythms



Modern Theatre



Quality Inclusion Innovation Passion Integrity

Insights for modern theatre teaching success

Unlocking learning opportunities and developing modern theatre teaching.

In our Modern Theatre syllabi, we embrace the rich heritage of musical theatre and dance, providing a diverse array of learning experiences. As dancers explore their unique physical expression, they simultaneously cultivate intellectual, mental, and emotional skills. And as teachers, we are entrusted with the task of fostering both technical proficiency and performance abilities in dancers spanning different ages, backgrounds, and learning preferences.

It is vital for us to hold true to our ISTD values of **quality, inclusion, innovation, passion, and integrity** to empower dancers to effectively communicate movement with expression and artistry, irrespective of their recreational or professional aspirations.

Key principles for teachers:

To achieve these goals, certain key factors and values should be integrated into our teaching journey and classes. These principles will contribute to the development of well-rounded, expressive dancers and individuals:

1. Create an encouraging and open learning environment that welcomes questions.
2. Demonstrate effective and constructive communication skills.
3. Maintain a positive attitude and work ethic.
4. Encourage self-expression and foster creativity in all students.
5. Embrace the importance of daring to fail, as it is integral to growth and character development for both dancers and teachers.
6. Stay updated on dance teaching methodologies and safe practices.
7. Invest in self-development to ensure longevity in the field.
8. Remain adaptable to changes within the dance industry.

9. Establish connections and build a dance network, which is especially crucial for teachers to tap into peer and mentor guidance.

10. Prioritise work-life balance to prevent burnout.

Teaching dance is a multifaceted art that requires a delicate balance between technical precision and artistic expression. In the article overleaf, we gain valuable insights from four esteemed dance educators. They reflect on their teaching experiences and share invaluable strategies for fostering growth and development in their students. From prioritising key aspects such as posture, parallel, and performance to delving into the nuances of music and encouraging artistic exploration, these reflections shed light on the transformative power of dance education. As we embark on this journey with them, we are reminded that teaching is not just about imparting knowledge; it is about inspiring students to become artists, fostering a profound connection with the art form, and leaving a lasting impact on their lives.



Insights from experienced ISTD teachers

Reflections on teaching from Valerie Jones, FISTD:

Dancers learn best by dancing. Our Modern Theatre Syllabus offers a comprehensive system of artistic and technical excellence, guiding dancers from early years to vocational levels. Before seeking external resources, explore the wealth of training exercises within the syllabus itself. Exhaust those options first, then selectively consider supplementary training from outside the studio.

Instructional insights from Penny Meekings, FISTD:

- 1. Set clear class goals:** Have expectations for what you want your students to achieve by the end of each term/lesson. Recognise that students evolve and face new experiences each week, so be observant of their body language and communication. Respond with empathy and adapt the class focus when necessary.
- 2. Share the plan:** Motivate your students without creating undue pressure by sharing the class plan in a passive

manner. Avoid causing anxiety and allow them to embrace the programme of work.

3. Address faults strategically: When observing student faults, focus on addressing the root of the problem rather than correcting the consequence. Consider factors such as motivation level, understanding of alignment, personal physical capabilities, and any compensatory movements. Use carefully prepared training exercises alongside the prescribed exercises to build the necessary foundations.

4. Language matters: Use positive statements and imagery to foster a constructive learning environment. Instead of negative commands, offer suggestions that connect the mind and body, such as visualising lengthening or feeling the space between the vertebrae.

5. Embrace individuality: Recognise that teaching and learning outcomes vary for each dancer. Embrace these differences and avoid seeking shortcuts. Training dancers to be well-aligned, strong, and injury-free requires time and dedication. Appreciate the journey instead of rushing to reach the finish line. Celebrate the uniqueness of each dancer.

Top tip: Understand your students' goals and aspirations. Challenge high achievers while providing a pressure-free

environment for recreational dancers. Let everyone experience the joy of dance and cultivate friendships among like-minded students.

Teaching tips from Sadie Morgan, FISTD:

When assessing my Grade pupils, I prioritise three key aspects: **Posture**, **Parallel**, and **Performance**. I constantly remind them of these elements at the start of most exercises. To reinforce these aspects, incorporating additional stretching and strengthening exercises will complement the syllabus exercises and enhance their development.

In today's dance landscape, many students explore other styles such as ballet, which can contribute to their understanding of related movements in the Modern Theatre syllabus. For example, a side kick to a grand battement à la seconde requires a turned-out supporting leg for both movements. The technique for parallel tendu and turned-out tendu involves the same foot alignment and floor pressure.

While it's crucial to focus on technique and the three Ps during class, we mustn't overlook the importance of connecting with music and our inner expressiveness. I make an effort to dedicate time with my students to sit



**Remember,
progress takes
time. Teaching
is more like
a marathon
than a sprint.**

and listen to the music. We explore recognising instruments, phrases, accents, and the overall style and atmosphere of the music. This helps dancers develop a deeper connection with the music and become both artists and technicians. Remember, progress takes time. Teaching is more like a marathon than a sprint.

Studio reflections from Lyn Richardson, FISTD:

Engaging in discussions and asking questions with your students can greatly enhance both the physical and artistic aspects of their Modern Theatre work. Encourage them to consider where

movements originate, how the body and limbs move in relation to each other, and the purpose behind each step and exercise. This process deepens their understanding of the physical elements and nurtures their artistic growth.

In cultivating artistry, music plays a crucial role. It's essential to appreciate the subtle nuances, dynamics, and layers of the music. Remember, as a dancer, you are an actress without words. The Modern Theatre syllabus aligns musical phrasing with choreography, allowing dancers to tap into their own artistry. This internal journey manifests through movement, creating a profound connection between the dancer and the audience.

Always bear in mind that dance has a profound impact on the audience. As human beings, we possess inherent artistic and creative abilities, whether showcased on a screen or in live performances. Take what you've learned, apply it, and continue to question and evolve on this journey. Teaching is an incredibly rewarding profession as it allows you to make a lasting difference in the lives of your students. Remember, when your students surpass you, you have succeeded, as they become a testament to your influence and legacy.

Exam review updates for teachers

The recent changes to Modern Theatre graded examinations include:

- Numbers of candidates allowed in the exams
- Length of exams
- Updates to gender terminology throughout the syllabi

It is very important that all teachers familiarise themselves with the updated information, which can be found in the Syllabus Outline on the ISTD website here:

www.istd.org/examinations/theatre-dance-syllabus-outlines

National Dance



For all faculty events, please turn to pages 58–59 and visit our website.

Pippa Cobbing
Head of Faculty Development for Imperial
Classical Ballet, Greek and National
national@istd.org

Join us in celebrating the vibrant world of national dance at the prestigious Grandison Clark Awards 2023.

Announcing the prestigious National Dance Grandison Clark Awards 2023

Mark your calendars for
Sunday 26 November at
Merchant Taylor's School,
Crosby (near Liverpool).

The Faculty is thrilled to announce the return of a much-loved focal point for our passionate and committed community of national dance teachers. We are delighted to confirm that the Grandison Clark Awards will take place this autumn as a live event.

In order to promote greater accessibility and inclusivity, our future plans involve expanding the event to various regions across the UK.

Join us in celebrating this vibrant and joyful dance genre, whilst meeting and networking with like-minded dance teachers!

Celebrating the rich diversity of folk dance drawn from all corners of the world, alongside the talent and commitment of the teachers who achieve such high standards of excellence in this dance genre, we are pleased to welcome entries from all who wish to participate.

Building on what we have learnt from holding the National Faculty

Awards online during the pandemic, we are pleased that the return of the Grandison Clark Awards will feature the option for either live or recorded entries, to be adjudicated side by side on the day. This will enable worldwide participation, allowing both UK and international competitors an equal opportunity to take part. In this way we are looking forward to the prospect of showcasing national dance worldwide at its finest.

This year, as well as a full range of solos, duets, trios, quartets and group dance categories, we are excited to confirm the introduction of junior and senior class performance awards. These will allow all teachers to enter and participate, including those with no prior knowledge of national dance.

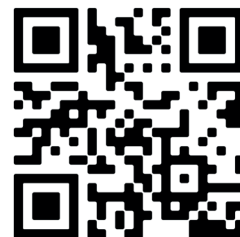
Full information on categories, entry fees, submission deadlines, spectator tickets and more is available in the event booking information.

Booking goes live on our website on Monday 28 August and closes on Monday 16 October.

We look forward to receiving your entries and to seeing you there!



Scan below QR code for more Grandison Clark Awards 2023 information.



Tap Dance



Dance for 'every body'

Claire Tabraham LISTD, Founder and Director of Eastbourne Dance Space, talks creating spaces for everybody.



I recently saw a quote on social media that I love: "Dance enables you to find yourself and lose yourself at the same time." I think many dancers can relate to that, and it's one of the reasons why dance is so

valuable to adults – offering escapism of the best kind and an opportunity for expression. The cognitive, physical and mental health benefits are enormous. Yet dancing as an adult can be daunting, with barriers including age, body shape, past dance experiences, gender, what to wear, fear of the unknown, levels of fitness or flexibility... the list goes on.

At Eastbourne Dance Space, we are proud to offer dance classes to adults of all ages, abilities, body types, genders and walks of life, where people can progress, grow in confidence and nurture new friendships. Some of our dancers never had the luxury of attending dance classes as a child, whilst others



Eastbourne Dance Space's (EDS) hybrid Dance for Parkinson's class (Above left) and their Improvers Jazz class performing (Above right)

are returning to dance after a long break. All are assured of a warm welcome and an encouraging place to learn.

Since the studio launched in 2015, we have put on shows, taught on Zoom to dancers locally and abroad, and expanded our timetable and teaching team, reaching many more dancers each week. Teaching adults is very rewarding but also takes skill – teachers need to be able to differentiate, adjusting plans and choreography quickly depending on participants. The ability to give alternative translations of movements is paramount for safe dance practice.

Tap is a hugely popular part of our timetable at EDS. We were thrilled when we shared a rehearsal snippet from our last show on social media – the tap number was to Dolly Parton's *Nine to Five* and the video was 'liked' by Dolly's official Instagram page. We took that as high praise!

Another important part of my work is my hybrid Dance for Parkinson's classes, which people attend in person or on Zoom from all over the country. I qualified as a practitioner through People Dancing and take social referrals from NHS Parkinson's Nurses. Participants are amazed at the fluidity of movement that they are able to achieve in class, and they carry these benefits, plus the social connections that they make, into their daily lives.

EDS is run on a not-for-profit basis as a community dance studio, and tries to keep classes affordable, with many attending several classes

a week. There are no uniform requirements, some choosing to wear leotards, others opting for gym wear. We offer performance opportunities in a professional theatre, ensuring that costumes are carefully chosen to suit all our performers. The resulting teamwork and camaraderie is priceless, and we have inspired more people from our sell-out audiences to get dancing.

We have developed a strong sense of community through dancing collectively, enabling people to find resilience and artistry. We cheer each other on and promote positivity in the amazing things our bodies can achieve, despite the 'hang-ups' that can haunt us as adults.

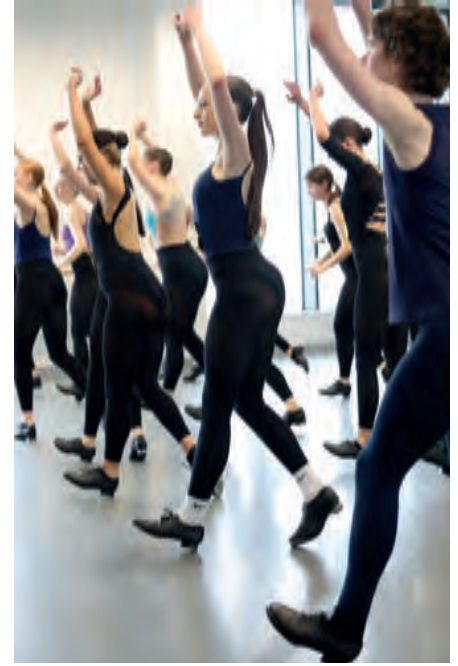
Dance really can be for 'every body', and by offering specialist adult classes that are welcoming and inclusive, it is absolutely possible to get more people experiencing the joy and benefits of dance.

In addition to Eastbourne Dance Space, Claire also runs an ISTD dance school for children, teaches ISTD syllabi to supplement GCSE and A Level dance training at a local school, and recently developed her teaching practice by achieving Licentiate status. Claire first contributed to *Dance* magazine in issue 484 (pages 31–32) when she'd just participated in BBC Radio 4's *Listening Project*, talking about the benefits of dance.

Top tips for creating an inclusive and engaging adult dance class experience:

- It takes courage for adults to come to something new – be welcoming and encouraging.
- Get teachers on board who share your values and ethos.
- Be creative in your music choices – include something for everyone that will inspire and uplift.
- Have a selection of second-hand tap shoes available for beginners to borrow. It helps new dancers to understand the percussive nature of tap and gets them excited about owning their own pair!
- Name your classes carefully, so that people know that they will be in the correct class for them.
- Manage people's expectations – we often say to beginners that it will probably take them at least a term to feel comfortable. That way, if they're still struggling after a few classes, there is the incentive to keep going!
- Encourage dancers to ask questions – we find adults really want to know why they are doing a movement, which muscles they are using to achieve a line – but be prepared to demonstrate multiple times.
- Keep learning and developing yourself as a teacher.
- Above all, make it fun!





Tap Fest? It was more of a tap feast!

Carole Moseley, Tap Faculty committee member, whets our appetites for Tap Fest 2023.

When it comes to dance there are no language barriers. No matter where you are in the world, or what genre you work in, dance speaks louder than words.

On 6 November 2022, tap dancers across the UK united at Preston College for Tap Fest, the first live tap event since before the pandemic. It was a remarkable occasion where teachers and students from all regions came together, transcending any notion of a North-South divide.

From the moment the doors opened at 9.30am it was clear that this was going to be a highlight of the year for students and teachers alike. Chatting with excitement and enthusiasm in school groups, everyone lined up to register their attendance and collect their numbers.

Tap workshops to inspire students of all ages

For the students, two groups had been arranged and both were fully attended with 40 pupils per class. One for pupils in grade 3 to grade 5, the other for those in grade 6 through to advanced 2. All classes gave everyone challenges to work on, as well as fun and interest in the work taught.

After a quick warm-up in the waiting area, the junior class had a full-on fun session with Jessica Jo Marshall. The warm-up challenged students to step out of their comfort zone without being too difficult. Next, they learned new steps and moves. The class was engaging, evident from the tapping feet, bobbing heads, and attentive eyes. Jessica Jo made sure everyone could see and hear her instructions, and the class ended with cheers and applause.

After a short break, Liam Swatteridge took over the second class. With a quick warm-up, he led the students through engaging combinations. Liam's ability to gain their confidence and attention, along with the fun sequences he provided, left everyone smiling and cheering.

The seniors had Liam for their first class. It was set at a level so that

everyone from grade 6 to advanced 2 was challenged but comfortable and able to work on moves new to them. 'Firecracker' was no doubt taken back to many dance schools! Liam then had the challenge of choosing two pupils – one from each class – to attend the Bird College summer school 2023. Both students will enjoy this years' experience, knowing that their feet tapped them to success.

Graeme Henderson, who had performed in 42nd Street, delivered a captivating theatrical masterclass in tap dancing. His guidance not only challenged all the students but also infused their performances with heartfelt emotion. By the end of these transformative classes, the students were not only refreshed but also eager to take their tap shoes back to their dance schools and share the sounds of joy and happiness, inspired by their experience.

Empowering teachers with inspirational workshops

Twenty-three teachers attended and were not left out. They had two separate classes working on steps and sequences that would no doubt be taken back to their own schools and adapted into new ideas for dances in

Look out for further details online for Tap Fest 2023.



In 2023, Tap Fest will take place on Sunday 15 October at Bird College, Sidcup. Join students and teachers for a morning of fabulous footwork and inspiring ideas in our workshops. Plus in the afternoon and evening we will hold our annual competition, which this year returns to its historical name, the 'Star Tap Awards'. Don't miss out! Book your tickets and secure your place early. For more information, visit www.istd.org/events

examinations, competitions and shows.

The first class was led by Graeme who immediately relaxed the teachers with a brief introduction about himself, who he has worked with and where he gets his inspiration from. Starting with a shuffle warm up that worked the whole leg, he followed with a traditional routine that was smooth in style. There was a lovely moment of calmness within the sequence that highlighted the fact that even in tap you can capture the atmosphere without making a sound.

With a contrasting style to Graeme, the second class was led by Jessica Jo. An exhilarating mixture of close work steps and drills that focussed on the change of rhythm and accents, adding extra beats along the way, giving an interesting twist to similar steps found in the new intermediate tap syllabus. All teachers finished with a feeling of enthused excitement, wanting to get back to their schools and get pupils tapping.

Tap Bursary Awards

In the afternoon, we held the 2022 Tap Bursary Awards competition, where students showcased their solos for adjudication. The participants were divided into junior and senior categories,

and prizes were sponsored by IDS (International Dance Supplies).

Join Tap Fest 2023 with Star Tap Awards – reserve your spot today!

To secure your place at Tap Fest 2023, incorporating Star Tap Awards, please refer to the information box on this page.

"Attending the ISTD Tap Fest was an incredible experience for us, as local dance events are scarce in our north-eastern area. Working with and learning from other choreographers and teachers was fascinating and inspiring. Watching talented tappers in our classes and the competition later in the afternoon was a great opportunity. We hope more events like this are held up north to make them accessible for passionate dancers like us. Thank you, ISTD and Tap Fest."

Scarlett Hutton and Emilia Grimes

"It was exciting to attend our first live ISTD event since Covid lockdowns. There was an impressive turn out of students and teachers and a buzzing atmosphere. Thank you ISTD Tap, more Tap Fest on Tour, please!"

Teachers from the north

Above left and far left Teachers and students participating in Tap Fest 2022

Exam review updates for teachers

The recent changes to Tap graded examinations include:

- Numbers of candidates allowed in the exams
- Length of exams

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What's on

Dates for your diary

 For more information on our events and courses visit www.istd.org/events



Membership 

Bursaries

Apply now for our Sue Passmore and Broadening Access to Dance Awards (up to £2000 per award)

The Sue Passmore Award is aimed at members who gained their first teaching qualification within the last five years, while the Broadening Access to Dance Award is for members who have held their Society teaching qualification for more than five years.

Both awards are designed to fund creative and innovative approaches to broadening access to dance. Upon completion, recipients will share the outcome of their project with members.

Helen Duffy, founder of PACE Youth Arts, shares her journey of empowering at-risk children and the impact of receiving the ISTD's Broadening Access to Dance Award on **page 18**.

Applications are welcome from UK and international members.

Applications open: 12pm BST on 10 August 2023
Applications close: 12pm GMT on 9 November 2023

Find out more at www.istd.org/fundingopportunities



Invest in your CPD

1–4 Sep 2023 Contemporary – Intermediate Foundation and Intermediate (Athens, Greece)

7–10 Sep 2023 Contemporary – Intermediate Foundation and Intermediate (Nicosia, Cyprus)

7–8 Sep 2023 Imperial Classical Ballet – Intermediate vocabulary analysis and artistry in the variations (Online)

24 Sep 2023 Modern Theatre – Grades 5 and 6 musical theatre progressions

and amalgamations (Wakefield, UK)

Oct 2023 (Date TBC) All In! Teacher training – this workshop is designed to widen the skills of dance practitioners and offer practical tips for incorporating inclusive practice into the ballet class and creative process (online)

1 Oct 2023 Modern Theatre – New Grades 4 and grade 5 floor sequences with progressions (Derbyshire, UK)



Imperial Society of
Teachers of Dancing

Graduation Ceremony 2024

Tuesday 13 February 2024
The Royal Geographical Society



To book visit www.istd.org/events

21 Oct 2023 Modern Theatre – New Grades 4 and grade 5 floor sequences with progressions (Bari, Italy)

22 Oct 2023 Modern Theatre – Grade 4 Modern (Bari, Italy)

23–27 Oct 2023 Half term CPD courses. Course content will be confirmed in due course (Online and London, UK)

4 Nov 2023 Modern Theatre – Grade 4 Modern (Cesena, Italy)

5 Nov 2023 Modern Theatre – Grade 5 Modern (Cesena, Italy)

13 Feb 2024 ISTD Graduation Ceremony 2024, The Royal Geographical Society, London

ISTD Academy is now open

17 Sep 2023 Level 6 Diploma in Dance Pedagogy running. Interested in applying for this or other teaching courses? Please contact the Programme Manager ndickmann@istdacademy.org

Become an ISTD Trustee

We are seeking two Board members to shape the future of the ISTD through high-quality governance. Would you like to collaborate closely with the CEO and Board to develop ISTD strategy? Do you have a strong commitment to dance participation and safeguarding the Society's reputation? We are particularly interested in receiving applications from current members of the ISTD. To find out more visit

www.istd.org/discover/news/become-an-istd-trustee

Applications close: 1 September 2023

Our events Sep–Dec 2023

Check www.istd.org/events for the most up-to-date information on all our events.

Cecchetti Classical Ballet

19 Nov 2023 Cecchetti Classical Ballet Mabel Ryan Awards, Elmhurst, Birmingham

3 Dec 2023 Cecchetti Classical Ballet Malta Awards, The Dance Workshop, Pieta, Malta

Classical Greek Dance

5 Nov 2023 Classical Greek Dance Centenary Celebration, Laban Theatre, London

Disco Freestyle, Rock n Roll

10 Sep 2023 DFR Area Competition, Staines

17 Sep 2023 DFR Dance Exchange 2023, The Elgiva Theatre, Saint Mary's Way, Chesham

8 Oct 2023 DFR Grand Finals Day, Guildford Spectrum

Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence

2–3 Sep 2023 Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence Medallist Weekend, including Medallist Series 2023/24 on 3 Sep, both days at New Hall, Winchester College

22 Oct 2023 Latin American, Modern Ballroom and Sequence Medallist Series event competition – Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted

National Dance

26 Nov 2023 National Faculty Grandison Clark Awards, Merchant Taylors School, Crosby nr Liverpool

Tap Dance

15 Oct 2023 Tap Fest 2023 incorporating Star Tap Awards, Bird College, Alma Road Sidcup

The ISTD Annual General Meeting will take place at 11am on Wednesday 22 November 2023, at 22-26 Paul Street, London EC2A 4QE and online.



Join the conversation on social media

➤ **Bringing you some of our recent highlights. Get involved and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.**
@istddance #ISTDdance

Australia CPD tour with ISTD Lead Lecturer for Modern Theatre, Tereza Theodoulou

The Australasia ISTD community came together to learn and upskill on their teaching strategies with plenty of networking and sharing of good practice.

Where will our lecturers be inspiring dance teachers next. Find your local course at www.istd.org/events



▶ 12.1K

Imperial Classical Ballet Junior and Senior Ballet Awards

Many congratulations to all the finalists who took part at our live awards at the Central School of Ballet in London, kindly sponsored by Freed of London. Thank you to all 520 dancers who entered the ICB Junior and Senior Awards 2023, both UK and international.



▶ 13.1K

Spring Programme 2023

We enjoyed a full week of training and networking at Sadler's Wells and ISTD HQ in London, before continuing online for week two of our programme.

"I haven't had the opportunity to dance like that in a beautiful studio for so long – what a treat", said a Spring Programme delegate



▶ 11.6K

International Dance Day 2023

To learn more about each of our 13 different dance genres please visit www.istd.org/dance/dance-genres



▶ 16.5K

Worldwide Wednesday

We have started a social media feature for our international dance schools showcasing your offerings on and off the dancefloor. Remember to tag us in your posts, videos, reels, and more. We're excited to see our global teachers and students learning, dancing, and celebrating exam results. Share your **#ISTDdance** moments with us!



Degrees and Diplomas

BA (hons) Musical Theatre and Dance
BA (Hons) Acting for Stage Screen and Digital Media
MA Performing Arts
Trinity Diploma Professional Performing Arts
Diploma in Musical Theatre and Dance
Elite Associates Programme - age 12+

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APPLICATIONS
OPEN



ITALIA CONTI DANCE COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE

BA (HONS) DANCE VALIDATED BY UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

TRINITY LEVEL 6 DIPLOMA IN PROFESSIONAL DANCE AWARDED BY TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON

CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION - INTRODUCTION TO DANCE VALIDATED BY UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

PART-TIME

ISTD DIPLOMA IN DANCE EDUCATION - LEVEL 4 (DDE) CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

PROFESSIONAL ARTS PRACTICE (BA TOP-UP) ONLINE

BACK 2 BALLET MON 4 SEPT - WED 6 SEPT 2023 // WED 3 JAN - FRI 5 JAN 2024

PRE VOCATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL MON 24 - FRI 28 JULY 2023



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.ITALIACONTI.COM
OR SCAN THE QR**

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