AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INTRAORGANISIONAL CLIMATE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF DANCE COMPANIES INVOLVING PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the intraorganisational climate of dance companies involving people with learning disabilities through two qualitative case studies. Emphasis is placed on how group cohesion and leadership can contribute to the development, stability and continuity of such companies. The literature is subdivided into two chapters. The first, '*Contextualising Dance for People with Disabilities',* places the research in a broader context drawing on theoretical models and definitions of disability, followed by a detailed exploration of disability arts. It then moves into the history and philosophy of Community Dance, as the research is situated within this arena. The second chapter, '*Theorising Group Cohesion and Leadership',* explores specific theories of group cohesion and leadership. Carron et al.'s (2005 and 2008) conceptual frameworks related to group cohesion, and Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) theory of 'situational leadership' were explored in depth to underpin the ensuing study.

An interpretive paradigm formed the basis for the study, using qualitative research methods. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted; six questionnaires, in-depth observations and a variety of documentation were collated and triangulated. The data provided a broad range of perspectives, offering reliable rich data investigating the development and sustainability of dance companies involving people with learning difficulties. Hearing the voices of the dancers' with learning difficulties throughout was seen as paramount to the research. However, this proved to be a significant challenge.

The findings illustrated that at the heart of the successful dance company exists distributed and situational leadership. These styles result in the establishment of rituals, norms, distinctive roles and modes of communication and nurture an essential collective sense of identity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PWD – People with disabilities

PWLD – People with Learning difficulties

SLD – Severe Learning difficulties

DDA- Disability Discrimination Act

DED – Disability Equality Act

DES – Disability Equality Scheme

ICF – International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health

SEN – Special Educational Needs

ACE – Arts Council England

DCMS – Department for Culture, Medial and Sport

FCD – Foundation for Community Dance

WHO – World and Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Disability within the dance world is a subject of challenge and debate. Equality of opportunity for people with disabilities (PWD) to create, perform and appreciate dance remains an issue (Brew, 2009). My experience as an artist who has been involved closely with a dance company of people with learning difficulties (PWLD) for nine years supports the necessity to speak out about the marginalisation of young PWD who want to dance. Why are there so few dance companies in existence in this area and how might this problem be addressed? Such companies are often developed with a view to increasing participation and enhancing opportunities for this marginalised group. Despite the challenges of funding, resourcing and the aesthetic expectations of audiences in dance, the companies that survive often share great passion and deep-rooted values contributing hugely to the company success (FCD, 2002). The aim of this study is focused on how group cohesion and leadership can contribute to the development, stability and continuity of dance companies involving PWLD.

My experience is that work of this nature is highly rewarding both personally and professionally. Thus, rather than exploring issues of access and equality, through this study I have chosen to investigate and celebrate the success of established companies. This is with the aim of increasing understanding into the optimum intraorganisational climates that contribute to the development of such groups and their sustainability. The findings may be used to motivate and support groups or committed artists that are passionate about working with PWLD (FCD, 2002). The research involved two interpretive case studies.

The assumption for this research was that a positive and highly cohesive climate was necessary for community dance companies involving PWLD to survive, their sustainability as a successful unit of people being due to many factors with a focus on leadership.

The literature was subdivided into, *'Contextualising Dance for People with Disability'* and *'Theorising Group Cohesion and Leadership'.* The first chapter, *'Contextualising Dance for People with Disability',* aims to place the research in the broader context drawing on theoretical models and definitions of disability, followed by a detailed exploration of disability arts. It then moves onto the history and philosophy of Community Dance, as the research is situated within this arena. Chapter three, *'Theorising Group Cohesion and Leadership',* explores specific theories of group cohesion and leadership to narrow a broad literature base on group and team endeavours. Carron et al.'s (2005 and 2008) frameworks related to group cohesion and Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) theories of conceptual frameworks for 'situational leadership' were explored in depth to underpin the ensuing study. As a result of exploring the underpinning literature the following research questions emerged:

1. *Why and how were the two case study companies first founded?*

2. *What factors contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?*

3. *How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of group cohesion in the two case study companies?*

Chapter four outlines the principles underpinning the choice of qualitative methodology. An interpretative paradigm forms the basis for this research. The research is also on the steps towards the participatory and emancipatory paradigms since it probes the experiences

of marginalized groups in exploring dance companies for PWLD. Essentially it is interpretive, that is, it focuses on the voices and behaviours of those involved with developing, leading and participating in case study company environments. The research methods included:

- Semi Structured open-ended Interviews
- Open-ended Questionnaires
- Observations
- Documentation

Semi-structured open-ended interviews were conducted with the two director's, learning director (Company B), the lead facilitators (Company A), and three dancers from each dance company. Due to the difficulty gaining access to the parents in Company A, it was decided to use questionnaires. There would always be the option to contact any parent if further data was required. It was decided to treat both companies equally for consistency; therefore three parents completed the questionnaire per company.

Observations were a key method to the data collection particularly regarding the research question focusing on leadership. To structure the observations two frameworks used, the first, Weinberg and Gould's (2008) investigating what makes a special team; looking at: Norms, distinctive roles, collective identity and modes of communication. The second framework was Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) model looking at situational leadership, which included four styles of leadership: Delegating, coaching, mentoring and directing. Examples of these can be found in appendix C & D. One final observation framework (Carron et al., 2005) was used in the first observational session, to gain an overall picture of the companies and how they compare to one another in structure, for example, number of dancers, age and gender (see appendix C & D).

The final research method was documentation. This varied from, each of the company's year plans to feedback notes from the dancers following the sessions. The year plans were a useful insight and allowed data triangulation particularly regarding the development and sustainability of the companies. The plans demonstrated how visionary leadership gives the companies a real focus and direction within the field of dance and disability.

In chapter five, '*Presentation of Results and Discussion',* the results are collated and analysed under emergent themes related to foreshadowed issues within the preceding chapters. Both the semi-structured interviews and the open-ended questionnaires were thematical analysised using theoretical frameworks to deduce the data and be able to see any similarities and differences within the two case studies. The four sources of data were triangulated to increase the reliability and accuracy of the data.

The results clearly demonstrated that dance companies of this nature are formed within and in response to their socio-political context. It became evident that certain leadership qualities and attributes were key in the development and sustainability of the Companies. It was essential that the leader had the ability to create and communicate a vision, this being developed as a result of strong distributed and situational leadership. A collective identity was also key, achieved through the establishment of rituals, norms, distinctive roles and modes of communication. It was also important to recognise that although the focus was predominantly on behavioural factors (inside the studio), strategic factors (outside the studio) were also fundamental to the research.

Chapter six concludes the findings, reflects on the strengths and limitations of the study, offers recommendations to policy-makers and practitioners and offers suggestions for further research. The orginality of the study lies in its focus on successful long established dance companies involving PWLD, and the efforts made by the researcher to include and centre the voices of the dancers alongside those of their leaders, practitioners and parents. Uniquiness is also represented by the application of sports models to a dance context.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUALISING DANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

2.1 Structure of the chapter

Disability and the arts will be the initial focus of this chapter. Theoretical models and definitions of disability will be discussed before moving to a more detailed emphasis on disability arts. Disability dance, within the policy context is a social and political agenda item and the implications of this will be considered. Funding will be discussed, as there is a greater political commitment for inclusivity in legal frameworks such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Arts Council funding policy. However on the back of this, is the current economic climate, which has seen huge funding cuts to the Arts including dance and disability. The policy context is critical to the continuity of such companies, but only contextualising literature rather than the focus of the research. The history and philosophy of community dance will be considered; as these comprise the academic domains the research is located. The community dance movement is inextricably connected with policy changes towards more inclusive dance provision and sensitivity to disability issues nationally (Charnley, 2011).

It could be argued that, in society, disabled people are often marginalised from birth: *'people with disabilities have been an oppressed and repressed group'* (Davis, 2006, pxv). People are all too often disabled by the abuse of power and therefore by society itself (Jones, 2010). In recent years disability has become a *'newly emergent and increasingly important field of enquiry';* and raises many challenges and debates (Barnes, Oliver & Barton, 2002, p1). This is rarely explored in dance and hence the need for the current study.

2.2 Use of Language

There is considerable debate around appropriate language and terminology in the field of disability (Fitzgerald, 2009 and Thomas & Smith, 2009). Throughout this study, the term '*dancer/s with learning difficulties*' will be used instead of '*disabled dancer',* as from the researcher's perspective the dancer/ person will be acknowledged prior to the learning difficulties. The focus is specifically on dance companies involving PWLD and not physical disabilities. Fitzgerald (2009) however explains that how authors 'speak' about disability is very much a personal preference. The term 'learning difficulties' is used, as it was originally promulgated by '**People First;** *a self advocacy organisation run by people with learning disabilities'* (Bailey, 2002, p76). This term was chosen to highlight that although someone may find it difficult to learn, it does not mean that his/her intellectual impairment stops him/ her learning altogether.

2.3 Theoretical Models of Disability

Arguably, dance companies for PWLD exist within and have inevitably been shaped by the broader context of disability. There have been prolific discussions about differing models of disability and their relationship to disability politics, policy and services. In addition to this the accuracy of their meaning in relation to the experiences that PWD encounter in their everyday lives has been long debated (Oliver, 2009). It is vital, therefore to have an understanding and appreciation of the shifting sociological models of disability and to investigate some of the most important related developments in disability policy and practice. Change resulting from perseverance challenged mainstream social perceptions and behaviour and there is now a broad

corpus of literature that discusses contentious definitions and theoretical perspectives on disability (Goodley, 2011; Oliver, 2009; Swain & French, 2008 and Thomas & Smith, 2009).

Oliver (2009, p43) prefers to understand disability in terms of two models: the 'individual' (sometimes known as the medical model) and the 'social', the models being the way of *'translating ideas into practice'*:

> *The individual model was that of personal tragedy, while the idea behind the Social model was that of externally imposed restriction.*
>
> (Oliver, 2009, p43)

Oliver (1996, 2009) states how the individual model has dominated disability policy and service provision for far too long. It led to the medicalisation of disability (the medical model), which positioned the problem with the person, not society, defining the person by their illness or medical condition (Thomas & Smith, 2009). This has prevented adequate services being delivered to PWD, positioning them as 'other' and separating them from mainstream life chances. It is the assumption that it is the individual person with a disability who must adapt to mainstream society (Shakespeare, 2006). The medical model traditionally focused attention on personal deficits, rather than assets or abilities and has been much criticised in the literature post 1990 (Oliver, 1990 & 2009; Swain & French, 2008 and Thomas & Smith, 2009). In summary the first 'medical' model pathologised PWD, often leading to separate lives in asylums, hospitals or schools. Swain & French (2008) argue that at times, the medical model still *'remains dominant in professional policy, practice and provision'*.

In the1990's political campaigns, led by disabled activists, began challenging the medically informed assumptions about disability (Swain & French, 2000 and Thomas & Smith, 2009).

They argued that disability *'should be understood not as a medical or biological problem but as a social construct'* (Thomas & Smith, 2009 and Jones, 2010). Disability studies grew in the UK and the social and affirmative models superseded the medical model. These aimed to influence the way in which society treated PWD, and bring them closer to mainstream opportunities. The social model, described by Olkin (2009, p12 cited in Goodley, 2011), held equality at its core and was a 'paradigmatic leap' providing new light on disability. Challenges in implementation still remain. However, Barnes, Oliver & Barton (2002), Oliver (2009), and Shakespeare (2006), amongst others, support the move from the medical model to the social model of disability.

Social model scholars *'turned attention away from a preoccupation with people's impairments to a focus on the causes of exclusion through social, economic, political, cultural…and psychological barriers'* (Goodley, 2011, p11). In relation to dance the barriers that needed challenging included the rights to participate in classes, to gain access into buildings, transport and to participate in a highly 'body centred'/ judgmental arena. Beckett (2012) concurs this emphasising that *'the environment is very significant…you can disable people by not providing the right creative space… nothing is ever perfect, but it has to feel right for the group you are working with'*. Much could be achieved by making buildings, transport, healthcare, education and communications more accessible and importantly, the current study pursues increased understanding of how the arts and cultural experiences can be more inclusive.

Building on the social model, Swain & French (2000, p569) contend that a new model of disability, the Affirmative Model, has emerged, and is expressed most clearly by the *'Disability Arts Movement'*:

The affirmative model is about disabled people challenging presumptions about themselves and their lives in terms of not only how they differ from what is average or normal, but also about the assertion, on disabled people's terms, of human embodiment, lifestyles, quality of life and identity.

(Swain & French, 2008, p185)

Debates and new models will continue to evolve. Recently the World Health Organisation (WHO) produced *'a biopsychosocial approach that is a synthesis of the individual and social models'* (Barnes & Mercer, 2010, p42). Known as the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) it aims to find a logical and rational view of different perspectives of health from a biological, individual and social perspective (Barnes & Mercer, 2010).

2.4 Disability and the arts

The Social Model of disability provides the socio-political underpinning of the work by organisations/ bodies such as the Arts Council of England (ACE) who have general and specific duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), an extension of the DDA 1995 (also known as the Disability Equality Duty - DED). The DDA was the first legislation in the UK addressing the issues of discrimination against PWD and *'its implications have far reaching consequences for arts providers'* (ACE, 2004, p7). However, the new Equality Act 2010 replaces all nine separate pieces of legislation and brings them into one single Act. The Government Equalities Office (2010, p2) states:

It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply. It also strengthens the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

Many disability activists and campaigners argue that this bill will now dilute disabled people's rights, making the DDA void and abolishing the DED.

Responding to the DED - the Arts Council of England (ACE) recognises more work needs to be done to reduce barriers in the arts for PWD. To address access problems the ACE devised a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan, the first in 2007-10, followed by one in 2010-13. The Chief Executive of the ACE states:

> *Disability equality is vital in achieving our aim of Great Art for Everyone. Ensuring that the arts are inclusive of and accessible to disabled people will, in turn, make the arts more accessible and have wider benefits for everyone. It will also ensure that disabled artists achieve the prominence they deserve within the arts community.*
>
> (ACE 2010a, p3)

The above represents a significant challenge for ACE. The recent 2011 ACE National Portfolio funding cuts saw both winners and losers in this field, examples being Stop Gap Dance Company who saw a funding increase of 71% and a withdrawal of funding for Blue Eyed Soul a dance company for disabled and non-disabled artists. In reaction their Artistic Director Rachel Freeman, stated:

> *Whilst we understand the need to reduce spending we are mystified at the axing of many exceptional arts organisations. I believe the Arts Council's action represents a step backwards for inclusive arts and once more creates a barrier for disabled people taking part in the arts and culture of the UK*
>
> (Freeman, Accessed June 2011)

The funding issues to which Freeman refers represent a significant and but not the sole challenge faced by those wishing to participate in disability dance. Often professionals in the arts and education sectors are simply unaware of how they discriminate and this may be deep rooted and related to aesthetic norms and cultural notions of the 'ideal body':

> *In the current UK dance scene it seems that a preoccupation with the idealized human form…it continues to privilege the image of the slim, non-disabled dancer at the expense of anybody disabled or non disabled that deviates from this norm.*
>
> (Charnley, 2011, p25)

This issue, in tandem with the funding pressures faced by arts providers, can only contribute to the lack of training opportunities available and this is seen as a major obstacle to increased access and subsequent widespread changes in perception (Charnley, 2011 and Gould, 2002).

'Many people with a learning disability do not have access to quality further education and training' (MENCAP, Accessed May 2011) with only 1 in 3 adults taking part in any education or training. Speaking more broadly, Barnes & Mercer (2010) state that the number of disabled students going into further education has begun to increase. However, they contend that there is *'little allowance for student preferences in their education and skills training'* (Barnes & Mercer, 2010, p106). Where the student preferences are for dance based learning, it is here that companies such as those being researched are able to provide opportunities for talented students to engage with their chosen art-form (Broomhead, 1998). The need for this kind of provision is particularly pertinent with the number of PWD choosing to participate in the arts, particularly in Dance increasing (Bartlett, 2002).

2.5 Community dance context: territory / purpose / process;

This research is situated in the community dance realm where practitioners' debates are key to understanding the context of the groups investigated. Community dance developed some thirty years ago through the initiatives of practicing artists, who inspired others using dance as a vehicle for personal and social development (Bartlett, 1998; FCD, 2002 and DCMS, 2004).

The Foundation for Community Dance organisation (FCD) was established in 1986 to raise the profile and to be the national voice of community dance. They define community dance as:

...it creates opportunities for people to access quality experiences in dance irrespective of where they live, their age, gender, sexuality, race, disability, educational attainment or economic circumstances

(Amans, 2010, p5).

Community dance comprises of professional artists who share a set of working principles, embracing a set of values that:

- *Places people, their aspirations, rights and choices at the centre of our understanding about the place and role of the arts in their lives.*

- *Recognises the power and contribution of dance in transforming and empowering the lives of individuals and their communities.*

- *Respects and values the diversity of form and practice in dance, the diversity of contexts in which dance happens, and the diversity of reasons that lead people to be involved in dance activity.* (Bartlett, 1996, p15)

Peppiatt (1996, p3) produced a conceptual framework for community dance, in order to help

'to distinguish its special place in the dance profession and all the arts'. It includes five

features distinguishing the place of community dance within the whole dance profession;

Territory, purpose, process, diversity, economy; and illustrates four core areas:

    i.   Art
   ii.   Education
  iii.   Politics
  iv.   Society.

Territory

Purpose

Process

Diversity

Economy

Core Areas:
Art
Education
Politics
Society
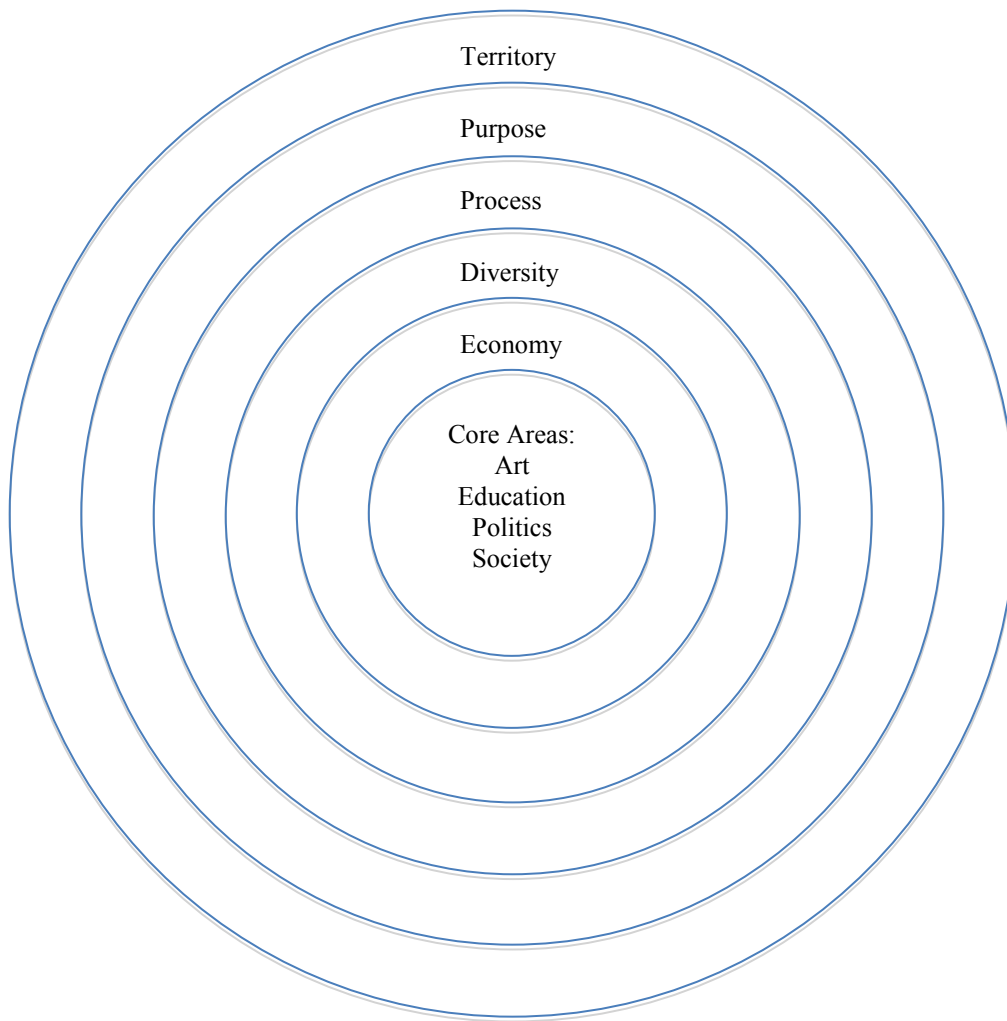
Figure 1: Thinking Aloud: Foundations for Community Dance (Peppiatt, 1996, p3)

The model illustrates that community dance broadens the arts **economy** without the incentive

of making profits. Its' **diversity** welcomes all to participate; its' **process** is concerned with

choice, ownership, empowerment and emphasis on process rather than product. The **purpose**

of community dance is to increase access to dance, and finally, **territory** being placed in the

heart of the community (Peppiatt, 1996). The ACE supports this notion of community dance

with strategic objectives aimed at increasing access and opportunity for marginalised groups

(ACE, 2011a, p7). There is a necessity for Dance Companies, to meet these funding requirements. The centre of the model offers four core interrelated areas, each explored below.

2.5i Art - the dance aesthetic debate

Thomson (1996) explores the link between community dance practice and "art", challenging for a "community dance aesthetic". This is a complex area and, he argues:

> *Community dance should be a context in which the boundaries of dance as art are being pushed; in which practitioners are constantly questioning the received aesthetics of the mainstream or of tradition, and constantly reformulating a "community dance aesthetic".*
>
> (Thomson, 1996, p9)

PWD are often undervalued for the contribution they can make to the arts, especially as they are able to push unique art boundaries (Williams, 2003 & FCD, 2002). Brew (2009) believes this diversity is the key to growth in the arts:

> *I have the strong belief and hope that through my work as a disabled dancer, choreographer and teacher that it will make a change to preconceived ideas and traditional perceptions of what a dancer is.*
>
> (Brew, 2009, p10)

In the context of community dance and disability it is, arguably, performances or public 'sharings' of work that offer platforms for the work to challenge 'preconceived ideas'. Hale (2001, p32) explains the wider benefits of performance: *'it (the audience) has gelled the company together right from its humble beginnings'*. However, she concludes with a cautionary note saying that labeling dance can be *'a surreptitious form of segregation'*. It could be argued that Hale's statement above, reflects the debate surrounding the shift away from 'separate' schools, where the advantages for and against can be equally powerful, depending on 'needs' and aims.

2.5ii Education – the inclusion and mainstreaming agenda

Inclusion policies within schools can be traced back many years. In the mid-1990's (through the *1993 and 1996 Education Acts*, the *Code of Practice* and the *1996 DDA*) the inclusion of those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) alongside mainstream peers, became a *'key cornerstone of government legislation and policy'*, aiming to pursue a more inclusive education system (Thomas & Smith, 2009, p99-100). However it continues to involve the need to identify and challenge barriers to inclusive conditions, relations and practices (Barton, 2009), to avoid problems such as *'perceived failure of government and policy-makers to provide adequate resources to realize… objectives'* (Smith, 2009, p33). Segregated versus mainstream education debates remain contentious and are as relevant in dance companies.

Jasper (1996) proposes that the context of Community Dance leads to a particular approach to informal education. She conceives the aims as, *'the creation of social cohesion through the sense of being involved in a group endeavor'.* In a short space of time Community Dance has become accepted within the education system, demonstrating its success in providing a rigorous and distinctive approach to dance education. Slowly opportunities for PWD are growing, although often much maligned perhaps the political imperatives are having an impact.

2.5iii Politics – the legal and economic context

Bartlett (1996) asserts that inevitably all Community Dance based initiatives exist within and are influenced by the political environment. In the UK the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) *'provides funding for the arts in England, sets arts policy and supports arts based initiatives, often in partnership with other government departments' (*DCMS, 2011a*).*

DCMS funding is distributed through the ACE, who make funding decisions at arms length from the government. In the present climate the ACE's budget will be reduced by 11.8% and the government has asked that the budget for the National Portfolio is not cut more than 15% in real terms over the next four years (DCMS, 2011b).

2.5iv Society – the theoretical context of disability and dance

Community dance has its own ethos within the wider arena of dance. It is people centred, emphasises process as opposed to product; and the approach is adapted to the specific needs of individual groups. Community dance uses the process of exploration, discovery and development, with '*collective commitment to process and outcome and a true sense of ownership'* (Akroyd, 1996, p17*).* This notion of collective commitment, achieved through effective partnership working, aligns with a core element seen to be key to good practice. Stenton (2010, p9) stresses, '*collaboration is the key, and the total sum greater than the individual parts'.* Collaboration is key within the ACE (2010b, p40), recently stressing:

> *We (ACE) will ask for greater collaboration among the organisations and artists we fund so that they can work collectively to increase the impact of the arts. We will empower arts leaders   to become leaders in civil society.*

This chapter has captured and contextualised the background to this research exploring challenges and debates within several contested areas. Moving forward with this study, in line with the values of community dance and disability arts, this research will aim to centre the voices of the dancers with disabilities, in design and data collection, supporting Allen's (2005, p31) statement:

> *Disability arts is driven by pride, beauty and the celebration of difference, giving disabled people a voice, whilst also ensuring that their voice is not valorised at the margins.*

CHAPTER THREE

THEORISING GROUP COHESION AND LEADERSHIP

The theories of group dynamics are highly complex and multi faceted with potential to inform and underpin this research. The focus on community dance and opportunities for young PWLD to engage in sustainable company provision focused the literature search around two concepts: 'group cohesion' and 'leadership'. The ensuing chapter begins with definitional challenges, and particularly the work of Weinberg & Gould's (2007) on group characteristics in sports teams. The group cohesion literature selected as central to the study uses Carron et al's 2005 and 2008 models of key influential characteristics of group cohesion. There is a plethora of theories regarding leadership (Situational, Transformational, Great Man and Distributed are but a few) so here focus is built around Hersey and Blanchard (1988) theories of conceptual frameworks for 'situational leadership' which acknowledge the importance of employing different styles depending on the environment, situation and the maturity level of the followers (Bolden, 2004). More broadly the literature review also draws from interrelated theories of cohesion and leadership leading to clarification of the three research questions for the study and the synthesis model of cohesion and leadership literature that underpins the research process and analysis.

3.1 Group dynamics and definition issues

Dance Animateurs have developed many community dance groups since the policy was first implemented, of which many have folded: for example the Plymouth based Integrated Dance Company. Groups may form spontaneously, to fulfil an objective, or they may develop a

shared identity, due to being treated in a homogeneous way by others, (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Hogg & Vaughan, 2005). The two case study companies under investigation have already gone through several stages of development. To provide explanatory depth, it is important to capture critical interpretations of their history and their intraorganisational climate through interviews and documentary analysis. However, before moving to the theoretical perspectives and conceptual frameworks employed, it is necessary to define terms.

The role of groups and teams in society is highly complex. The literature presents conflicting definitions and identifies many different types (Cartwright & Zander, 1968; Hogg & Vaughan, 2005 and Myers, 2008). Carron (1993, p120) states, *'groups are dynamic, not static; they exhibit life and vitality, interaction, and activity'* Forsyth (1999, p5) defines a group as: '*Two or more interdependent individuals who influence one another through social interaction'*.

A team can be described as a special type of group with four characteristics: ***'collective sense of identity, distinctive roles, structured modes of communication and norms'*** (Weinberg & Gould, 2007, p161). All teams are groups: however not all groups are teams. Carron et al. (2005) and Weinberg & Gould (2007) agree, that a group of individuals interacting with each other to achieve shared objectives is classified as a team. From personal experience these four characteristics are all significant to the development and success of SEN dance companies and are initiated and developed through leadership. These characteristics will be useful when looking for a thematic analytical direction for this research. Lavallee, Kremer, Moran & Williams (2004) however, classified groups in relation to five characteristics namely: interaction, structure, cohesiveness, social identity and goals. Cartwright & Zander (1968, p39)

contend that: '*little is to be gained in arguing over the definition, because each author will emphasise the attributes of a group that are crucial to his/her research'*.

3.2 Cohesion theories

Carron (1982) advanced a conceptual model of factors that were thought to influence perception of cohesion. The factors were classified as environmental, personal, team and leadership. A more recent development is Carron et al.'s (2005) linear conceptual framework consisting of **inputs, throughputs and outputs** (see figure 2). I**nputs** include *member attributes* and the nature of the *group environment*. **Throughputs**, *the group structure, group cohesion* and *group processes*, with **outputs** being the *individual* and *team outcomes*.

INPUTS   THROUGHPUTS   OUTPUTS
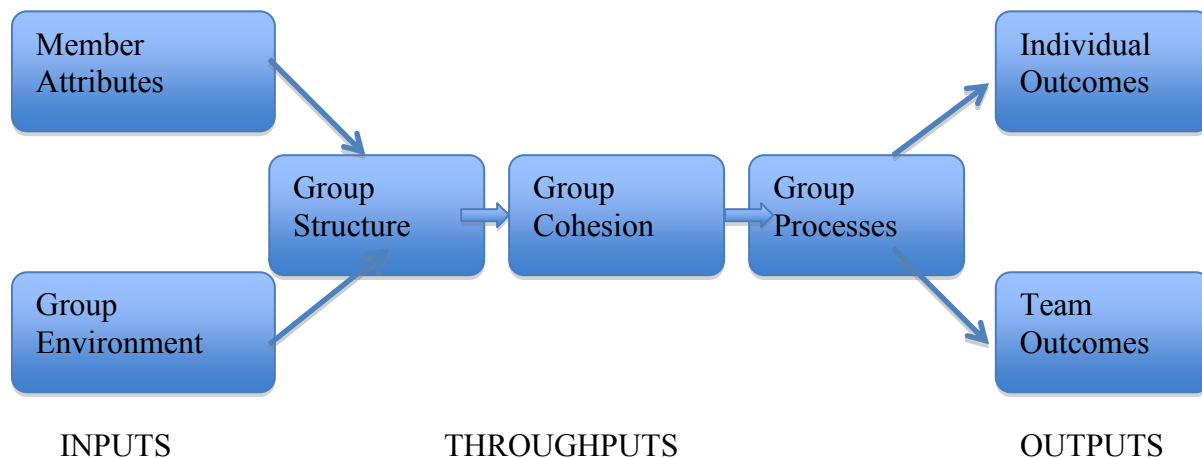
Figure 2: Carron et al.'s (2005) conceptual framework for the study of sports teams

Due to limited research in dance, the researcher applied the sport model, giving the study originality and direction. This framework was initially useful for the researcher to compare the overall context of each company (Appendix C & D). The model serves to illustrate the extensive depth and interrelatedness of group dynamics and cohesion. It makes it evident that

within this study; it is unrealistic to investigate all concepts. Therefore group cohesion and

leadership became the focus for developing an original and pertinent model for this study.

The journey of individuals into an effective and successful group is characterised by increasing

levels of cohesion and seen key to its survival (Prapavessis & Carron, 1997 and Tuckman &

Jensen, 1977). Cohesion as a construct plays a crucial role in group dynamics and is defined as:

> *A dynamic process, which is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick*
> *together and remain united in pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/ or for the*
> *satisfaction of members affective needs.*
> (Carron, Brawley & Widmeyer, 1998, p213)

Carron (1982) makes an important distinction between two types of cohesion: task and social

(Lavallee et al., 2004). Task cohesion, relates to group effectiveness, *'towards achieving the*

group's instrumental objectives' (Carron, Shapcott & Burke, 2008, p119). Social cohesion is

related to the development of group identity and social relationships within the team. Task and

social cohesion can be examined in greater depth through the lens of Individual Attraction and

Group Integration (see figure 3) (Carron, Widmeyer & Brawley, 1985). Paskevich, Estabrooks,

Brawley & Carron (2001, p473) succinctly explain why members often stay with a group:

'group members perceive and believe that their group can supply them with various task and

social provisions that fulfil their needs'. Paskevich et al. (2001) also explain that one of the

strongest motives to remain a team member is the perceptions of, and beliefs in a team's joint

purpose to achieve a group objective.
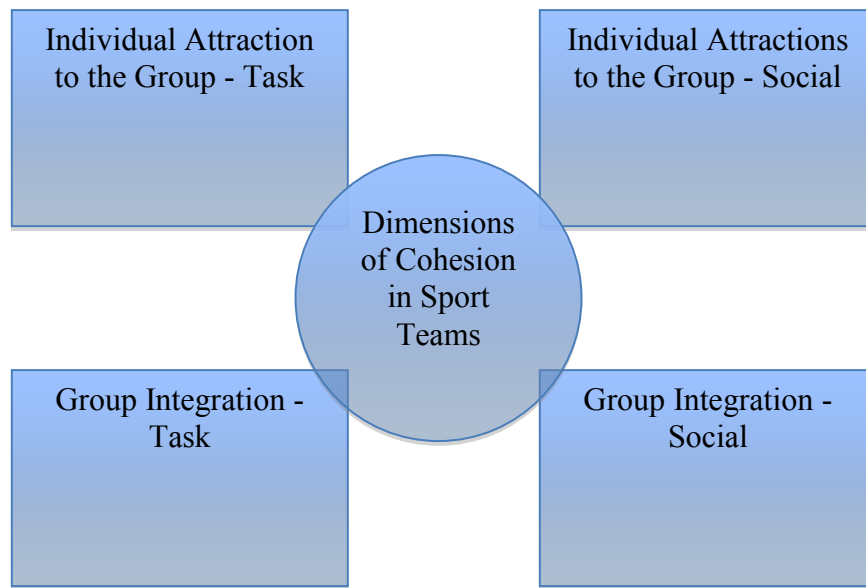
Figure 3: A conceptual model of group cohesion. Adapted from Carron et al. (1985).

The above model resulted in the development of the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) by Carron et al. (1985). The GEQ measured cohesion in sports teams and was later adapted for exercise classes. Carron et al. (2008) state that due to the development of the GEQ, a huge amount of research was undertaken to investigate the four correlates of cohesion (Carron et al., 2008):

1. Environmental factors
2. Personal factors
3. Leadership factors
4. Group (team) factors

The researcher realises that the four correlates of cohesion should not be seen as independent but interwoven within groups (Carron et al., 2005). Whilst it can be very difficult to make an analytical distinction between the correlates, this was essential for the purpose of the research. Research undertaken around the correlate leadership and cohesion to date has uncovered that

'athletes who had greater participation in team goal setting also possessed a stronger sense of task and social cohesion' (Brawley et al., 1993 cited in Carron et al., 2008, p122). Gardner et al. (1996) and Westre & Weiss (1991) found that if a coach used democratic behaviour, social support and positive feedback, and decreased use of autocratic strategies it promoted higher levels of task cohesion. These aspects match the researchers experience in a community dance context; therefore leadership was selected for more in-depth focus within this study.

3.3 Leadership Theories

Leadership is a highly complex phenomenon that encompasses many organisational, social and personal processes (Bolden, 2004 and Northouse, 2004). The construct is open to subjective interpretation and strongly informed by a person's own *'predisposition, organisational situation and beliefs'* (Bolden, 2004, p5). Across different disciplines there are many similarities and differences, however according to Carron et al (2005) all leaders have two parallel responsibilities.

> 1. *'To ensure that the demands of the organisation are satisfied, that the group is effective in terms of the goals and objectives of the organisation.'*
> 2. *'To insure that the needs and inspirations of group members are fulfilled.'*

(Carron et al., 2005, p193-194)

3.3i Situational Leadership Theory

A key leadership theory seen as relevant for the two case studies under investigation is Situational Leadership Theory, developed by Hersey & Blanchard (1988). This is based on the assumption that leaders employ different styles depending on the environment, situation and the maturity level of their followers (Bolden, 2004; Hersey & Blanchard, 1988; Lynch &

McCormack, 2011 and Sims, Faraj & Yun, 2009). For example, as the level of skill and maturity increases within the team members, the leader will adapt his/her task-relationship style from directing to coaching, supporting and delegating.

The theory is based on the interplay between three factors: task behaviour, relationship behaviour and level of maturity of team members. Task behaviour being the amount of guidance and direction the leader gives, relationship behaviour being the amount of support the leader provides and the level of maturity being the readiness of team members to perform a task. Hersey & Blanchard's (1988) model clearly demonstrates the four styles in relation to the task and relationship behaviour, see figure 4.

High

COACHING High support & low control behaviours	MENTORING High control & high support behaviours
DELEGATING Low support & low control behaviours	DIRECTING High control & low support behaviours

Supportive

Low   Directive   High
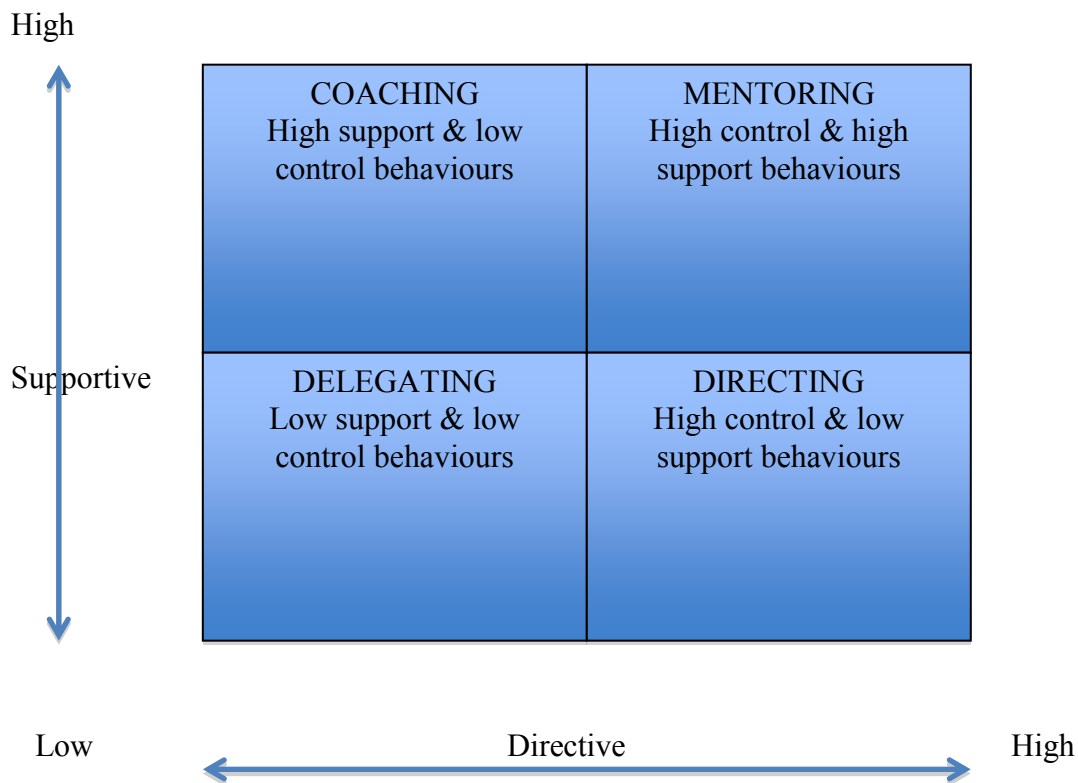
Figure 4: Situational Leadership Model devised by Hersey and Blanchard, 1988.

Figure 4 will be key to the dance companies within this research, as working with PWLD requires an increasingly adaptable, supportive yet empowering approach to leadership (MENCAP 2008). However although Situational Leadership will be the focus, it is important to embrace other leadership theories, particularly in the current climate of change. Bolden (2004, p28) concludes:

> *The qualities of openness, empathy, integrity and self-awareness are coming to the fore and demand a more participative leadership style.*

3.3ii Leadership qualities, styles and behaviours

For situational leadership to be used within a group requires certain qualities, styles and behaviours depending on the circumstance. Hoyle (2010) in a keynote speech asked a very pertinent rhetorical question: with the current funding climate as it is: What do dance leaders need in 2010? Her response included the summary that a leader needed the following qualities:

- Resilience
- Well-being at the core of what they do
- Strong and open
- Courage
- Flexible and open to collaboration
- Most importantly to have creativity

In the context of Disability Arts, MENCAP (2008) advises that leaders need to be flexible, adaptable, multi sensory orientated, reflective, person-centred, patient and able to take risks. So although many of the qualities relate to generic leadership in the arts there are several qualities that are key when working with PWLD. Fraser (2003) also identified the requirements of a 21st Century arts leader, seeing the key qualities and attributes as being honest, forward looking,

inspiring and competent. He goes on to add:

> *Outstanding leadership is often about challenging the status quo developing a vision and enthusing and working with others to deliver it*
>
> (Fraser, 2003, [accessed June 2011])

Having and communicating a vision is seen to be key to effective leadership and group effectiveness (Hopkins, 2003; Fraser, 2003 and Carron, Hausenblas & Eys, 2005). Hopkins (2003) considers visionary leadership is essential to develop an environment that challenges, excites and allows people to explore and reflect. In a team, in this case a company, it is important that creative contributions from all involved are valued (Hopkins, 2003).

3.3iii Distributed Leadership

There is a relatively little literature concerning leadership in dance, yet Hoyle states:

> *Dance has the adaptive capacity, which is crucial to leadership today… and… 'dance can provide some excellent models of 'distributed' leadership, in which everyone plays a part'*
>
> (Hoyle, 2007, p8)

With so many leadership theories available to the researcher, clarification and definition can be problematic. Although situational leadership is the main focus for the research, Hoyle's reference to distributed leadership serves to highlight an additional important phenomenon in the context of the research. Seemingly, distributed leadership can apply within and throughout situational leadership, with each leader operating across the dimensions of the model.

Much research, until not long ago, used frameworks in which leadership sits with one person only (Bolden, 2004 and Small & Rentsch, 2010). Therefore instead of focusing on individual consequences of leadership activities, the attention needs to turn to *'how team leaders and*

*team leadership processes foster more interconnectivity, integration, and coherence among team members' (*Zaccaro et al., 2009, p84). Several authors make a clear distinction between traditional leadership models and team leadership models, focusing on the team as a goal oriented unit (Small & Rentsch, 2010; Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2009; Zaccaro, Rittman & Marks, 2001 and Zaccaro et al., 2009).

Research by Cheshire Dance (2005), identified five practitioners, deconstructed their work as creative leaders and made several discoveries:

> *Groups work best when the 'leaders' genuinely believe the potential contribution of others to be as, or more, powerful, meaningful and relevant as their own.'*
> (Akroyd et al, 2008, p31)

The practitioners also recognised that effective leaders have an authentic interest in others, and are able to make other voices heard as well as their own perspective. By achieving this, the leader is creating the *'space for different, and richer possibilities for all'* (Akroyd et al., 2008, p31). Hoyle (2007) and Bennis (2003) confirm this stating that, through practical delivery, practitioners stimulate ownership by the whole group, giving everyone a leadership role. Leaders are no longer alone, they do not need to have all the skills and characteristics of the members, what is needed is: *'vision, the ability to rally the others, and integrity'* (Bennis, 2003, p xix). Carson et al. (2007, p1217) support Bennis (2003) and argue that:

> *The complexity and ambiguity that teams often experience make it unlikely that a single external leader can successfully perform all necessary leadership functions.*

Gibb (1954) was one of the first to identify and define the notion of two types of team leadership: distributed and focused (Carson et al., 2007 and Harris, 2008). Carson et al. (2007)

explains the difference: focused leadership occurs when leadership is in the hands of a single individual, whereas distributed appears when two or more share the leadership roles and functioning of the team. Focused and distributed leadership have been considered to be endpoints on a continuum rather than either one or the other (Carson et al., 2007 & Gronn, 2002). Harris (2008) points out that the consensus in the literature is that distributed leadership overlaps considerably with shared, collaborative, democratic and participatory leadership concepts. Often the term distributed is misused, meaning any type of team or shared leadership but more importantly there is a misconception *'that distributed leadership means that everyone leads'* (Harris, 2008, p173).

> *Distributed leadership theory would recognize that many people will have the potential to exercise leadership in any organisation but the key to success will be the way that leadership is facilitated, orchestrated and supported.*
>
> (Harris, 2008, p173)

Past researchers have argued that for shared leadership to materialise two elements must occur. Firstly, members must offer leadership and seek to influence the team; and secondly that members are willing to take leadership from multiple team members. Carson et al. (2007, p1222) propose that an overall team environment that consists of the following three dimensions facilitates shared leadership: ***'shared purpose, social support, and voice'.*** The three dimensions work together to create an internal team environment that encourages and enables shared leadership. These three factors appear to align well with the purposes and philosophy of good community dance practice as will be explored in the following paragraphs.

The first dimension of an internal team environment supporting shared leadership, is ***shared purpose*** occurring when team members understand and focus on the team's goals and objectives, and become *'motivated, empowered and committed to their team and work'* *(Carson et al., 2007)*. As formulated by Jasper (1996, p11) an aim of Community Dance is *'the creation of social cohesion through the sense of being involved in a group endeavour'*.

The second dimension being ***social support,*** Carson et al (2007, p1222) define as, '*team members' efforts to provide emotional and psychological strength to one another'*. Therefore members recognise and value each other for what they can each bring and offer to the team developing a sense of shared responsibility. Social support within a team is linked with team maintenance and sustainability *'by providing 'interpersonal glue' that helps build a strong internal social network'* (Carson et al., 2007, p1222).

Finally the third dimension that facilitates shared leadership is a ***voice. A voice*** means that the team members have an active say in how the team carries out its purpose and reaches its goals. Jasper (1996, p12) suggests that in community dance '*the aim is the participants should shape and take control of the situation in which they are engaged'*. Leaders' communication with groups, particularly with PWLD requires great skill. Goldbart & Caton (2010, p1) state that there is clear consensus amongst researcher, practitioners and family members that one of the most important factors is:

> *Communication with people with the most complex needs is most successful with familiar, responsive partners who care about the person they are communicating with*.

Communicating with PWLD may involve employing more creative means to gain the desired result (Kelly, 2007). One way of communicating could be signing, such as Makaton (Thomas & Wood, 2003). Makaton was developed in the 1970s to help people with PWLD communicate. It uses speech**,** gesture, facial expression, eye contact and body language, (Makaton, [Accessed January 2011]). Dance can offer PWLD a way of expressing themselves through an art form, for some a new way of communicating to others that is non verbal (Bartlett, 2009). Communicating the inspiration for a dance piece is vital to get dancers engaged, particularly involving PWLD. Hitman interestingly states *'you need to start from a place that people can understand and relate to'*. A dancer needs to feel involved with creative processes but maybe less able to do so, if he/she does not understand: *'The more abstract or intellectual the starting point, the more difficult it is for the dancers to engage'* (Hitman cited in Hale, 2001, p32). Communication therefore is an essential leadership skill particularly working with PWLD.

3.4 Emerging research questions

To conclude this chapter, the following three key research questions will be investigated, which have emerged from the identified gaps in the relevant literature explored in the contextualising disability and the theorising group cohesion chapters:

1. *Why and how were the two case study companies first founded?*

2. *What factors contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?*

3. *How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of group cohesion in the two case study companies?*

The research will specifically investigate within the context of dance companies involving PWLD. This in itself is original research filling an evident gap in the literature of dance and disability. The research will be exploring the formation process and its influence on the two companies. It will then continue to investigate how Situational Leadership contributes to the cohesion of the dance companies; with an awareness that many interrelated factors contribute to cohesion. Resulting from the review of literature the researcher will utilise ideas from Carron et al's (2005) conceptual framework for sport teams, Weinberg and Gould's (2007) characteristics of a team and Hersey & Blanchard's (1988) Situational Leadership theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Crotty (1998) suggests that the theoretical perspective adopted by the researcher, the methodology and methods used and the researcher's view of the epistomology are interrelated in a development sequence. Grix (2004) also concurs that the methods selected by the researcher are inextricably linked to the research questions posed and to the sources of data collected. Grix's (2004, p54) demonstates the interrelationships between the building blocks of research (see figure 5), and states, we *'can't chop and change between ontologies and epistemologies'*, because *'your research foundations are a skin, not a sweater to be changed every day'* (Marsh & Furlong, 2002).

Ontology → Epistemology → Methodology → Methods → Sources

What's out there to know?

What and how can we Know about it?

How can we go about Acquiring that knowledge?

Which precise procedures Can we use to acquire it?

Which data can we collect?
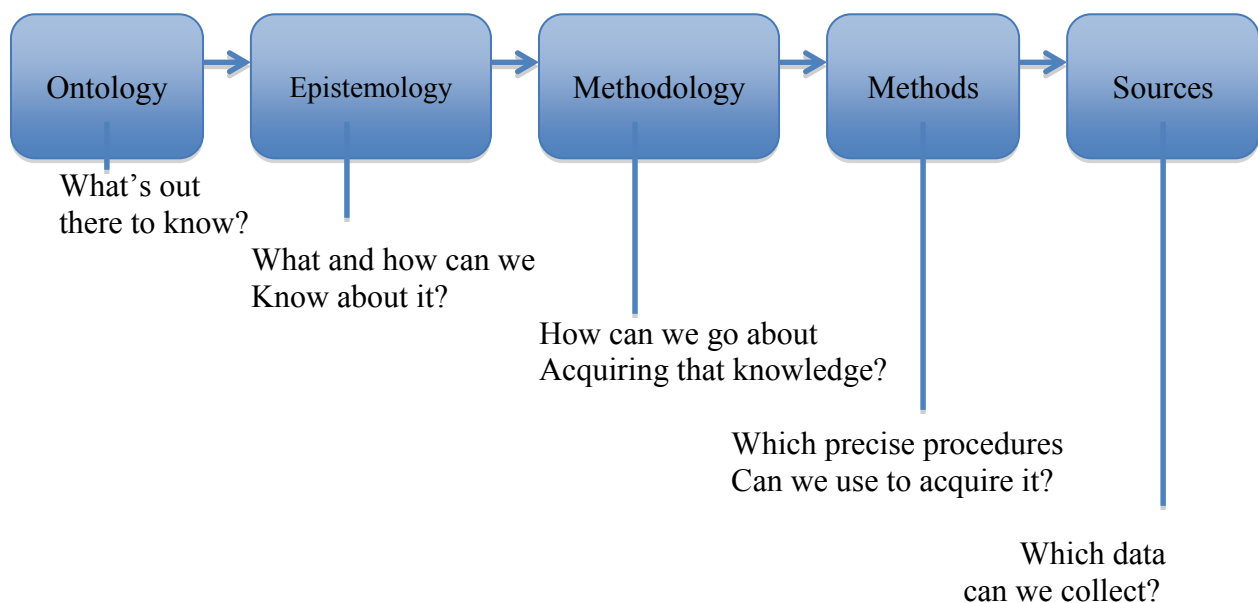
Figure 5: The interrelationship between the building blocks of research (Grix, 2004, p66)

A paradigm encompasses three elements: epistemology, ontology and methodology. Denzin & Lincoln (1994, p105) define a paradigm as:

> *The basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways.*

Paradigms steer the researcher towards methods that are predominantly quantitative (numerical based), or qualitative (predominately narrative based). It is the *'connection between theory and research, epistemological considerations and ontological considerations'* that forms the two distinctive research perspectives (Bryman, 2004 p20). Ontology is the starting point for all research, and as emphasised by Blaikie (2000, p8) our: *'ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality'*. My ontological position, is that PWLD are often excluded from mainstream opportunities, with many barriers obstructing; and all too often they are excluded from taking part or leading on academic research, resulting in crucial richness being overlooked (Gilbert, 2004). Therefore the epistemological stance pursued is linked to the researcher's belief that meaning lies in the voices and behaviours of those people most closely connected with the companies. Whilst ontology embodies understanding *what is*, epistomology seeks to understand *what it means to know*.

There have been advances in research involving PWLD, to the extent that funding bodies now frequently insist on including PWLD in the research protocol. Consequently researchers are constantly striving to develop and employ research methodologies to hear and to respond to the voices of the disabled. *'Nothing about us without us'*, (Charlton, 1998, p3), and '*no participation without representation'* (Finklelstein cited in Barnes and Mercer, 1997, p7) are salutary cautions to those conducting research into disability to respond to the emancipatory

paradigm (Walmsley, 2006). It is often presumed that if persons have a learning disability, they are unable to give feedback or communicate; therefore other people define what it means to have a disability and how disability is experienced (Taylor, 2005).

Research literature involving PWLD is sparse. However what is available demonstrates the richness and potential of articulating the way disability is experienced (Gilbert, 2004). Gilbert emphasises that there are still significant gaps in the research, particularly research involving those with severe learning dificulties (SLD). The social model of disability has been a key influence in changing the thinking and research environment (Gilbert, 2004 & Walmsley, 2006).

The most appropriate theoretical approaches often utilised in research involving PWLD are the participatory and emancipatory paradigms. The dividing line between these paradigms can become blurred. However they can be distinguished from one another by, involving PWLD participate (participatory) and involving and giving some control to PWLD (emancipatory) (Gilbert, 2004 & Walmsley, 2006). Zarb (1992 cited in Walmsley, 2006, p196) identitfies a difference as:

> *Participatory research may be a prerequisite to emancipatory research in the sense that the researcher can learn from disabled people and vice versa.*

Zarb elucidates that participation and involvement will never constitute emancipatory research '*until it is the disabled people themselves who are controlling the research and deciding who should be involved and how'.* Participatory research is described as a step in the right direction towards emancipatory research (Gilbert, 2004 & Richardson, 2000). This research study aims to constitute progress towards emancipatory research, which *'can only be judged emancipatory after the event' (*Oliver, 1997, p26). Shakespeare (1996, p116),

believes that emancipatory research is important and aims to *'equalise the research relationship, and gives participants some control over the process'*. However he realises that this is *'ultimately impossible'*. Tangen (2008, p160) explains that new approaches are emerging around participatory methodologies, emphasises *'reciprocity, gain and empowerment',* (Oliver, 1992, p111).

Critical theory informs this work and is subsumed within the general interpretive paradigm:

> *The interpretivists' concern with 'subjectivity', with 'understandings', and the way people construct their social world, introduces complexities that involve elements of uncertainty.*
>
> (Grix, 2004, p83)

So whilst the interpretive paradigm focuses on understanding society, a critical stance will look at how society creates and can change barriers. The critical focus is on policy formulation and implementation strategies to improve inclusivity and national sensitivity to disability issues. Therefore by the researcher identifying the structural societal problems and then making constructive, evidenced-based differences through the study a critical stance was adopted.

4.1 Research Design

The design of the research is multi-site case studies, and methods are informed by the mosaic approach. The first case study is a company of PWLD, of which the researcher has had no previous direct contact but is aware of them through the community dance network. The second is a similar company with which the researcher has been closely involved for ten years. Through the case studies the researcher gathers an interpretive account of social structure and processes, to seek meaning and understanding and achieve purposive critical

engagement to improve dance and disability opportunities. Grix affirms the researcher's stance:

> *Qualitative researchers tend to be working in an 'interpretivist' philosophical position, using methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to the social context*
>
> (Grix, 2004, p120).

Qualitative methods allow the researcher to be creative when communicating and consulting with young PWLD (Beresford, 1997 and Kelly, 2007).

Yin (1994, p90) revived the case study as an important approach when conducting social research:

> *Case study is a strategy for doing research, which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence.*

A view elaborated by Gerring (2007, p37) who affirms that the *'case study approach to research is most usefully defined as an intensive study of a single unit or small number of units, for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units'*. This contention defines this research. While promoting the dance companies, it aims to inform other established companies and those in the early stages of development.

Case study research may be seen to raise validity issues as it only considers a case or a small number of cases of a much larger population (Gerring, 2007 & Gray, 2004), leading to unwarranted assumptions, from which one cannot generalise (Creswell, 2003 and Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2000, cited in Gray, 2004, p137) guide researchers to improve the generalising potential of case studies by making a *'systematic selection of cases ...that are typical of the population'*.

Lincoln and Guba (2000, p172) classify the possible threats to validity under three headings: *'reactivity, respondent biases and researcher biases'.* Supporting this, Marshall and Rossman (1999) explain that one of the biggest challenges for the researcher is to show that personal interest will not bias the study, creating an *'open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers'* (Creswell, 2003, P196). Prolonged time in the field can reduce both reactivity and respondent bias as the researcher becomes more accepted. This is seen to increase understandng thus lending greater credibility to the narrative account (Robson, 2002 and Creswell, 2003)

4.2 Research Methods

Gray (2004) explains that in terms of data collection the case study approach requires a multi-method approach, therefore methods used for this research were:

- Semi-structured interviews,
- Participant observations,
- Questionnaires
- Documentation.

The methodology and methods of data collections are crucial to the research design, and were carefully selected to address the underpinning questions (see table 1).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	METHOD SELECTED
How and why were the two case study companies first founded?	Interviews: Directors of the companies Documentation: Initial plans/ meetings; company plans
What factors contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?	Interviews: Directors, dancers Questionnaires: Parents Observations Documentations: Company plans
How does leadership relate to group cohesion in the two case study companies?	Interviews: Directors, dancers Documentation Observations

Table 1: Methods selected to address the research questions

The multiple approach method allowed triangulation to address issues of construct validity, as several different measures of the same construct were revealed. Triangulation is a research approach using more than one perspective, theory, participant, method or analysis (Robson, 2002). It can *'enhance confidence in the overall conclusions drawn from the study'* (Spicer, 2004, p297) and Robson (2002, p174) affirm this stating that it *'enhances the rigour of the research'*. However triangulation has attracted severe criticism: for example Spicer (2004, p298) states that *'it fails to recognise that different findings are likely to emerge from each method and that any one individual is likely to interpret data and write research accounts in very different ways'*.

4.2i The Mosaic Approach

Many researchers (Alderson and Goodey,1998; Davis, Watson and Cunningham-Burley, 2000 and Morris, 2003) argue that it is no longer acceptable to exclude PWLD because they challenge traditional research methods. One example of a methodology that represents this shift in thinking is the mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001).

The mosaic approach, developed by Clarke and Moss (2001), is a methodology using visual and verbal signals to capture young children's perspectives, with the potential for use with older children as well as PWLD (Clark and Moss, 2001). The mosaic approach aims to counteract exclusion. Makaton signing was an instrumental visual aid when trying to gain the dancers perceptions and is mentioned below (4.2ii). Children (and PWLD), are considered to be experts and advocates in their own lives and a synthesis of techniques is used to gather their views, lived experiences and to construct an approximation of the individuals' reality, (Clark and Moss, 2001). The arts have much to gain from hearing people's voices, especially PWLD who are often excluded (Clark and Moss, 2001). Table 2 shows systematic recording of evidence captured for this research.

METHOD		DATE	TIME
COMPANY A			
Interviews	Director x1		70 minutes
	Lead Facilitator x1		20 minutes
	Dancers x3		5-20 minutes
Questionnaires	Parents x3		N/A
Observations	Getting to know sessions		2 x 2 hours
	In depth observations		6 x 2 hours
	Annual performance		1 x 2 hours
Documents	Dancer's feedback on sessions/ performances	N/A	N/A
	Company information	N/A	N/A
COMPANY B			
Interviews	Director x1		45 minutes
	Assistant/ support director x1		25 minutes
	Dancers x3		5-15 mins
	Parents x3		
Observations	Introduction sessions		2 x 2 hours
	In depth observations		2 x 6 hours 4 x 2 hours
	Annual Performance		1 x 4 hours
Documentation	Company B's 3 year plans from past to present.	N/A	N/A
	Dancer's appraisal records		

Table 2: Table showing systematic recording of evidence

4.2ii Semi-structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews were used, which involved *'predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based upon the interviewer's perception of what seems most appropriate'* (Robson, 2002, p270). Pole & Lampard (2002, p131) describe semi-structured interviews *'as providing insider accounts of social phenomena with the interviewer and interviewee having a much closer relationship based on a conversation rather than an interrogation'*. Mason (1996) and O'Connell, Davidson and Layder (1994), despite competing views of social research, all suggest that it is the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher, which influences the approach of the interviews.

Interviews were conducted with the Artistic Director's (AD), Learning Director (LD), the Lead Facilitator (LF) , three dancers (D), and three parents (P) from each company. Individual interviews with the dancers required the researcher to sensitively build rapport (Kelly, 2007 and Morris, 2003). It would have been valuable to interview all the dancers and their parents, however this was unrealistic. All interviews are constrained by time even before any analysis can take place (Pole & Lampard, 2002 and Robson, 2002).

> *Time is one of the challenges that Booth and Booth (1996) recognise for the facilitator who is working with adults and children with more severe difficulties in learning, including limited language skills*.
>
> (Tilstone, 2001, p157)

Interviewing provides a flexible way of finding out *'the meaning of particular phenomena to the participants',* and have the potential to *'provide rich and highly illuminating material'* (Robson, 2002, p271-273). However the interviewer requires considerable skill and experience, to rule out biases, which can threaten the validilty and reliability of the interview material (Robson, 2002).

Researchers have found that open-ended questions can be quite difficult for those who do not use verbal communication, and closed questions are slightly more effective (Kelly, 2007). However the researcher must avoid leading questions, especially those which reveal his or her own interests in the research.

Interviews with the dancers, directors and co-directors, lead facilitators, and parents varied in length (see table 2). Interview with the parents of Company A were not possible, so questionnaires were sent out to three parents from each company. For dancer interviews, questions were displayed using makaton and for Company B, the LD was present during the interview. For many of the participants verbal communication was very limited, therefore by using key makaton signs throughout gave the dancers a stronger understanding of the questions and allowed them to respond using signing if the method was his or her preference of communication. The interview questions were developed in relation to the underpinning research questions (see page 29). Individual questions were developed for all involved.

Interviewees were asked to give his or her consent for the use of a tape recorder. Where possible hand-written notes of the key issues were used in conjunction with tape recordings, (see appendix A & B). The researcher decided to use a notepad instead of a dictophone for the dancers in Company A, as it felt the most sensitive approach given the level of relationship. It was not possible to record the interview verbatum but a conscious effort was made to note all the key points.

4.2iii Observations

Observation was a major element of the data collection; particularly as cohesiveness and leadership are a prime focus of the research. Foster (1996) and Pole & Lampard (2002) stress, observation is a demanding and complex method of data collection. Foster (1996, pvii) states *'our minds must make sense of the data'* we receive and to do this we *'order, interpret and give meaning to incoming information'*. Participant observation was the approach used, which required that the *'observer seeks to become some kind of member of the observed group'* (Robson, 2002, p314).

For Company B, the researcher took the role as 'participant as observer'. However *'maintaining the dual role of observer and participant is not easy'* (Robson, 2002, p317) and will depend on the nature of the group. Company A, with which the researcher was unfamiliar; a mix of 'marginal participant' and 'participant as observer' was used. A passive approach was used on initial meetings, to sensitively make my presence known, gradually the 'participant as observer' approach was used, as trust and rapport developed.

During the first observation of each company, the researcher used Carron et al's (2005) conceptual framework for the study of sports teams (see appendix C & D). This was helpful to gain an insight into the group environment, member attributes, group structure and basic group processes. The subsequent observation sessions went into greater depth. Weinberg & Gould's (2008) framework, (see appendix C & D). Due to the broad nature of Carron et al. (2008) model, a more specific focus on leadership was chosen. Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) situational leadership model was utilised as means to categorise and record behavourial observations (see appendix C & D).

The researcher spent eight sessions (two hours per session) observing Company A and also attended their main annual performance. For Company B the researcher observed two intensive rehearsal days prior to their performance (10am-4pm), four regular sessions (duration of two hours each) and their annual performance. For Company B the researcher was able to video record several of the observational sessions. This was useful to look back and observe the interaction, but also to gain evidence (appendix J). Video recording company A did not feel appropiate given the short term nature of the interaction.

4.2iv Documentation

Documentary sources provided a valuable, and an unobtrusive cross-validation of other methods (Robson, 2002 and Marshall & Rossman, 1999): for example the history and present situation of the two dance companies. These styles of documents helped *familiarise the researcher with a topic, organisation or setting'* (Pole & Lampard, 2002, p160). Documents of particular interest to this research were the robust company year plans (stating the company's mission, values, aims and objectives), the dancers feedback (see appendix H), archive/ promotional videos and print/ information from websites and reviews. The dancer's feedback books were especially important as this enabled their voices to be heard.

4.3 Data and Respondent Characteristics

Qualitative data emerged from interviews, observations, visual images, video recordings, published texts and historical documents from the two case studies, all of which required analysis. Firstly, a identification system was developed in order to allow participants to remain annoymous and to also create a short hand when discussing the results (see table 3). The following data was collated from respondents and given identification codes:

- Artistic Director = AD
- Lead and Support Facilitator = LF/SF (Company A only)
- Learning Director = LD (Company B only)
- Dancers = D
- Parents = P

Following the code will be either -A or –B, (Company A or B). Finally the method of data collection, for example:

- Interview = -I
- Observation = -O
- Questionnaire = -Q
- Documentation = -D

Therefore an interview with the Artistic Director of Company A would be identified as AD-A-I: (line) 23. Cross-referencing the data from the documentations, interviews, observations and questionnaires, limits the chances of bias in the methods or sources'(Bell, 1999; Grix, 2004; Hakim, 2000; Stake, 1995 and Yin, 1994). Yin (194, p92) stated, '*the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of the converging lines of inquiry'*.

.

Table 3: Identification numbers of all Respondents and data collated

	Gender	Id No.	Interview (-I)	Observations (-O)	Questionnaire (-Q)	Documentation (-D)
COMPANY A						
Artistic Director	Female	**AD-A**	AD-A-I	All Observed		Annual review
Lead Facilitator	Female	**LF-A**	LF-A-I			
Support Facilitator	Female	**SF-A**				
Dancer 1	Male	**D1-A**	D1-A-I			D1-A-D
Dancer 2	Male	**D2-A**	D2-A-I			D2-A-D
Dancer 3	Female	**D3-A**	D3-A-I			D3-A-D
Dancer 4		**D4-A**				
Dancer 5		**D5-A**				
Dancer 6		**D6-A**				
Dancer 7		**D7-A**				
Dancer 8		**D8-A**				
Dancer 9		**D9-A**				
Parent 1	Female	**P1-A**			P1-A-Q	
Parent 2	Male	**P2-A**			P2-A-Q	
Parent 3	Female	**P3-A**			P3-A-Q	
COMPANY B						
Artistic Director	Male	**AD-B**	AD-B-I	All observed		3 year plan
Learning Director	Male	**LD-B**	LD-B-I			
Dancer 1	Male	**D1-B**	D1-B-I			
Dancer 2	Male	**D2-B**				
Dancer 3	Female	**D3-B**	D3-B-I			
Dancer 4	Male	**D4-B**				
Dancer 5	Male	**D5-B**				
Dancer 6	Male	**D6-B**				
Dancer 7	Male	**D7-B**	D7-B-I			
Dancer 8	Female	**D8-B**				
Dancer 9	Female	**D9-B**				
Dancer 10	Female	**D10-B**				
Parent 1	Female	**P1-B**			P1-B-I	
Parent 2	Female	**P2-B**			P2-B-I	
Parent 3	Male	**P3-B**			P3-B-I	

4.4 Analysis of data collected

One of the first tasks was to reduce the large amount of data, by stringently excluding any material that was not relevant to the research questions (Seale, 2004). Thematic analysis was therefore employed, this being a process for encoding qualitative informaion (Boyatzis, 1998 and Braun & Clarke, 2006). Patterns of consensus and contradiction were tracked across data sets through coding. There are two ways of generating themes, one is inductively from the raw data and the second is deductively from theory and prior research (Boyatzis, 1998). Emergent themes were identified in this study primarily through deduction, for example Weinburg and Gould's (2007, p161) characteristics *'norms, collective identity, distinctive roles and structured modes of communications'* were found and other dimensions from theoretical models drawn from the lliterature. Furthermore, Braun & Clarke (2006) explain:

> *The "keyness" of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but in terms of whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question.*

At the same time the researcher had an *'openness and flexibility to pereieve (further emerging) patterns' (*Boyatzis, 1998, p8), allowing inductive patterns to emerge.

Yin (1994, p103) states that, a general strategy is required to *'produce compelling analytic conclusions'.* Stake (1995, p74) explains there are two strategic ways that a researcher reaches new meanings, *'through direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class'.* Case studies rely on both of these methods. The primary aim, with intrinsic case studies '*is to come to understand the case'*, as is pointed out by Stake (1995, p77). He explains how it will help us *'to tease out relationships, to probe issues, and to aggregate categorical data'.* Although

many writers such as Bryman (2004), Neuman (2003) and Yin (1994) state their beliefs of the right way to analyse qualitative data, each researcher needs to find his or her own personal recipe for successful analysis.

4.5 Ethical Issues

Grosvenor and Rose (2001, p6) contends that *'ethics is a central principle of research practice'* and ethics *'are about being clear about the nature of the agreement the researcher establishes with research participants'.* Ethical and practical issues are crucial in this research particularly into aspects of the lives of vulnerable adults. Firstly access to research Company A was required. Due to the fact that a large amount of the data collection would be collected through observations, all involved needed to be informed about the research. As a researcher working with PWLD alternative ways to explain and ensure that the participants consent is an authentic response needed to be explored (BERA, 2004). It will be important to *'recognise the right of any participant to withdraw from the research for any or no reason'* (BERA, 2004). Prior to the interviews all interviewees were requested to sign a letter of consent which explained, that they are able to withdraw at anytime, that they have the right to not answer any questions they wish not to and all interviewees have the right to object to the use of tape recording in the interview.

To conclude, my methodology and methods, which are important building blocks to my complete research design, have all derived or been carefully selected to address my initial research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the factors that contribute to the development and sustainability of dance companies involving PWLD, with a focus on leadership and group cohesion. Data were collated and analysed from two case study companies in the form of interviews, observations, questionnaires and documentation. The ultimate aim being to identify any knowledge and insight that can be disseminated and increase opportunities available to PWLD. The data were analysed thematically in relation to the issues identified in the literature review. Themes are presented and explored under the following headings:

1. **background and comparisons of the respective companies –** in the context of social and political influences;

2. **formation –** why and how were the two case study companies first founded?

3. **development and sustainability –** what factors contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?

4. **leadership and Group Cohesion –** how does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of group cohesion in the two case study companies?

5.1 Background and comparisons of the case study companies – in the context of social and political influences.

The historical overview of the case study companies is considered important in understanding their continuing stability and success (see appendix I). The organisational charts which follow (figures 6 & 7), show the different company structures and demonstrate the wider social context of the two dance companies. For example Company B is a partnership between a major ballet company (it is an education/outreach initiative) and a special school (referred to as the Ballet Company and the Special School). This offers the PWLD expertise from an arts and an educational background. The AD-B emphasised that the partnership between the two organisations makes Company B unique:

> *It was about dovetailing classical work with community dance and education principles and creating our own methodology.*
>
> (AD-B-I: line 46-48)

Company A, is much larger in scale to Company B (see figures 6 & 7). It consists of an Adult Performing Group, Youth Group and community classes. The equivalent group to that of Company B could be the Adult Performing Group of Company A. However, it is important to examine the full context of Company A, as all aspects contribute to its development and survival.

Figure 6: An Organisational Chart of Company A
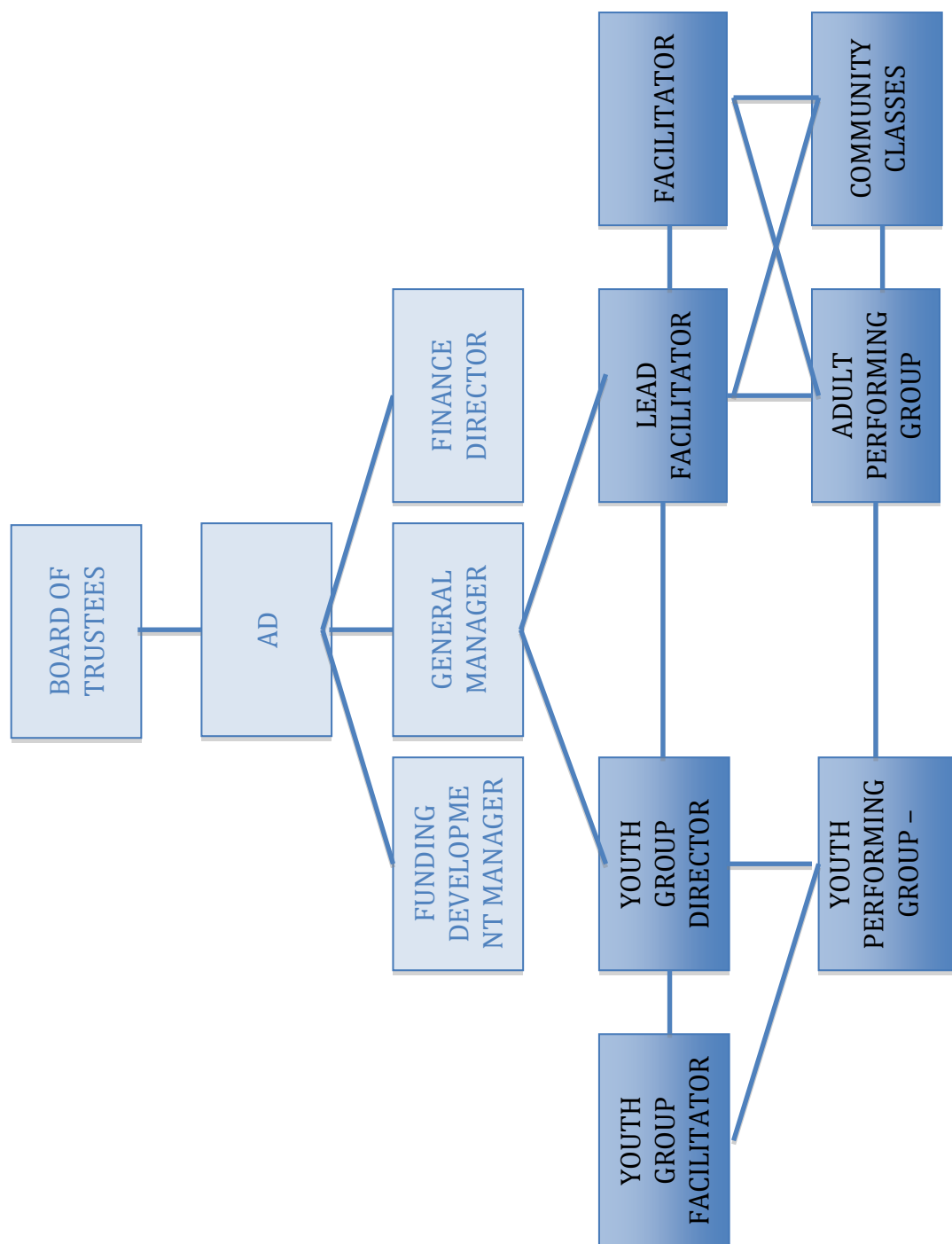
Figure 7: An Organisational Chart of Company B
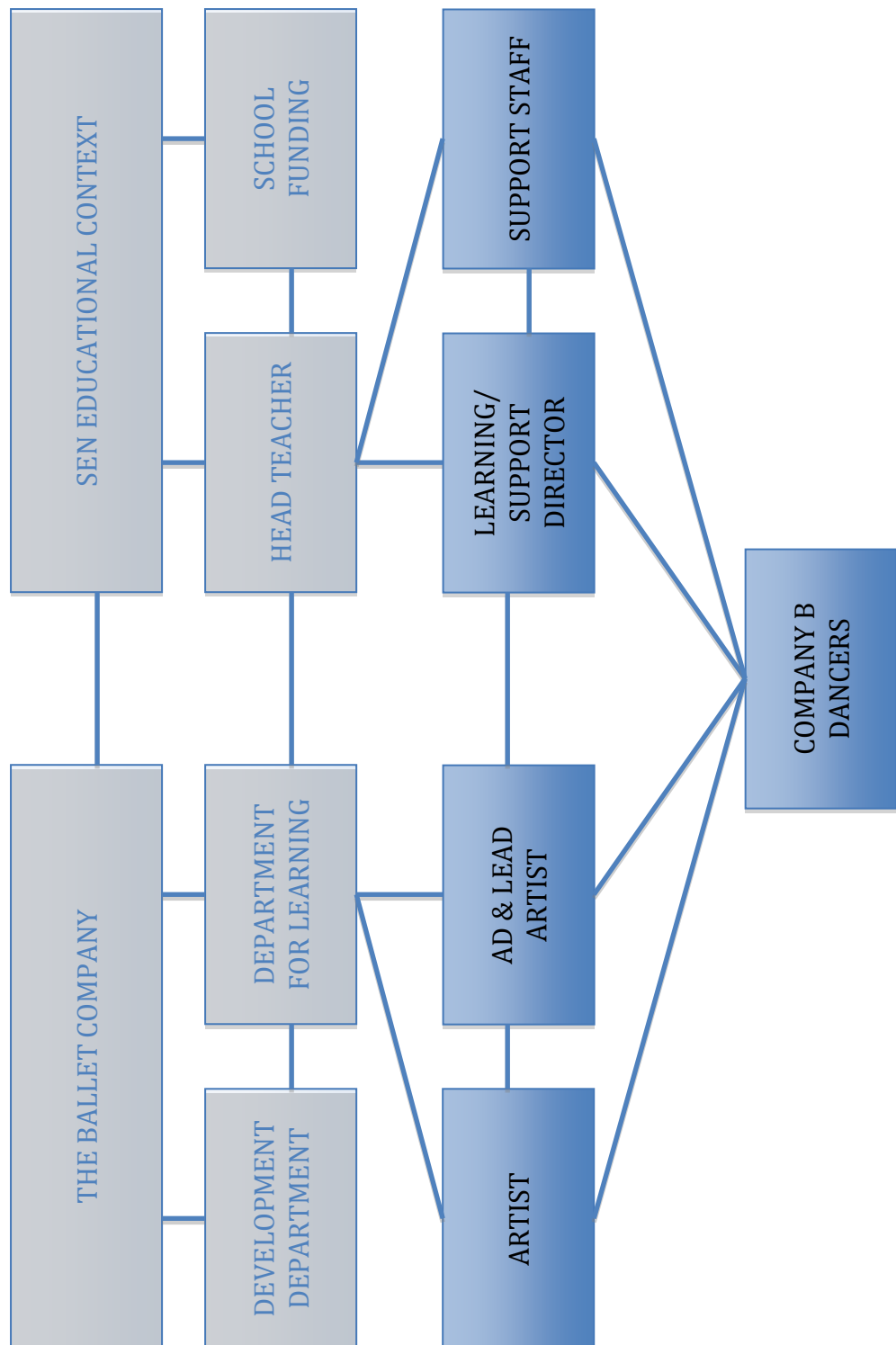
In both figures 6 and 7, the darker shaded boxes, show those who are '*in the studio*' working closely alongside the dancers. The lighter shaded boxes represent those external to the studio, but equally critical to the survival of the companies. The figures show the key lines of connection/communication and are not intended to illustrate formal line management responsibilites. For example in Company A, the Adult Performing Group closely work with the Lead Facilitator (LF) and Support Facilitator (SF), but also have strong connenctions with the adult community classes, as several of the Adult Performing Group attend the Community Classes as role models to the participants.

It is evident when examining the organisational charts (Figures 6 and 7) that Company B is co-led and an equal partnership between the Ballet Company and the Special School, whereas Company A gives an hierachical impression. Another clear distinction is that the AD-A, no longer works creatively in the studio with the dancers: the dance facilitators being wholly responsible for this. However in Company B the AD remains the lead artist/ choreographer and is actively involved in the studio. Figures 8 and 9 show the companies in the broader dance context.

Figure 8: A Contextual Diagram of Company A

- Lead Facilitator and Facilitator Adult perfoming group
- Youth Group Director & Facilitator
- General Manager, Development Manager and Finance director
- Artistic Director
- Board of Trustees
- Dance and disability
- Community Dance

Figure 8: A Contextual Diagram of Company A

Figure 9: A Contextual Diagram of Company B

- Learning Director & Support staff (Special School)
- Artistic Director/ lead Artist & Artist (Arts organisation)
- Educational Context (SEN)
- Arts Organisation
- Dance and Disability
- Community Dance

Table 4, details the similarities and differences between the two companies: comparing

company size, sessions, outreach work, venues and funding situation.

Table 4: Similarities and differences of Company A and B

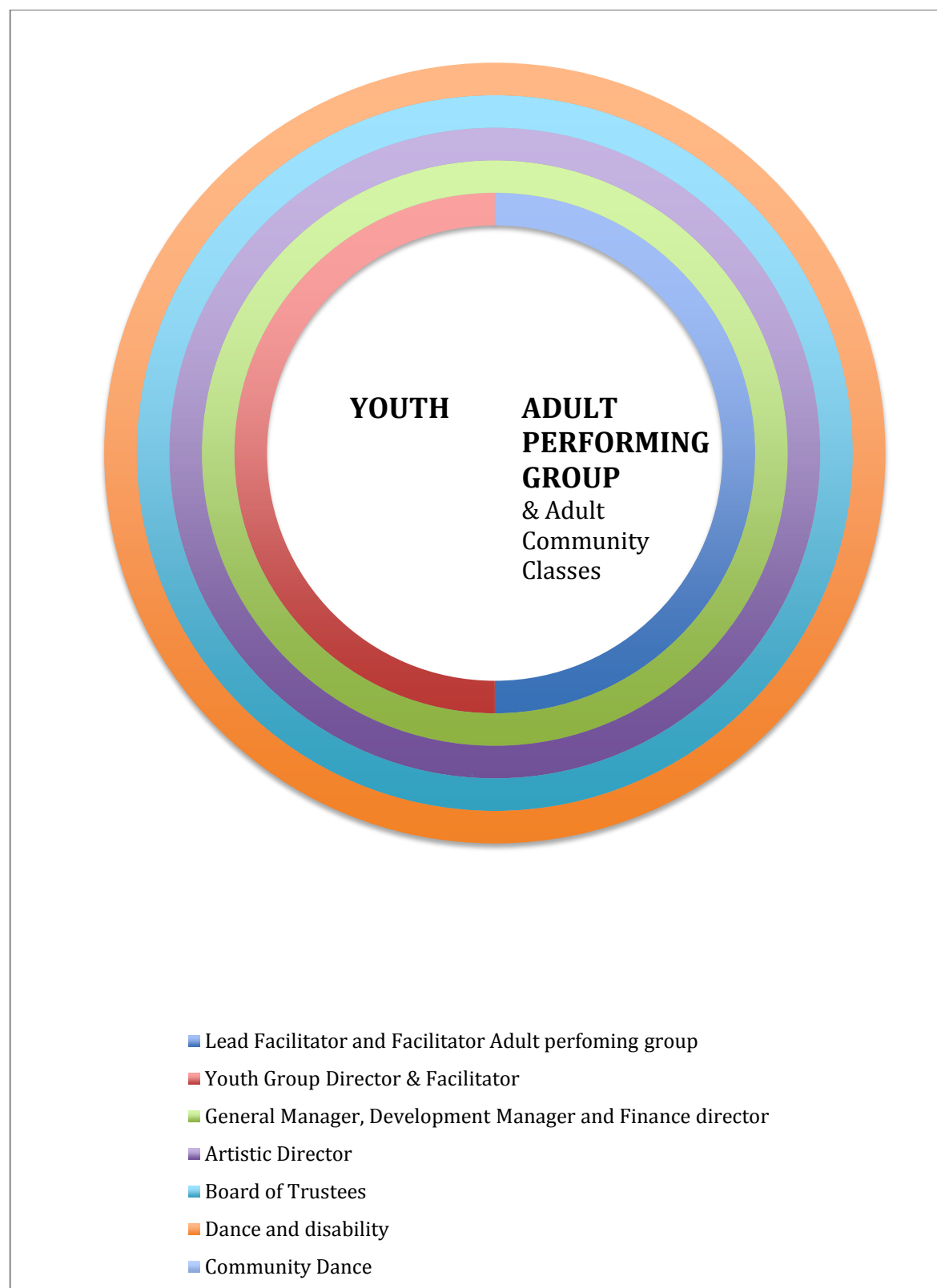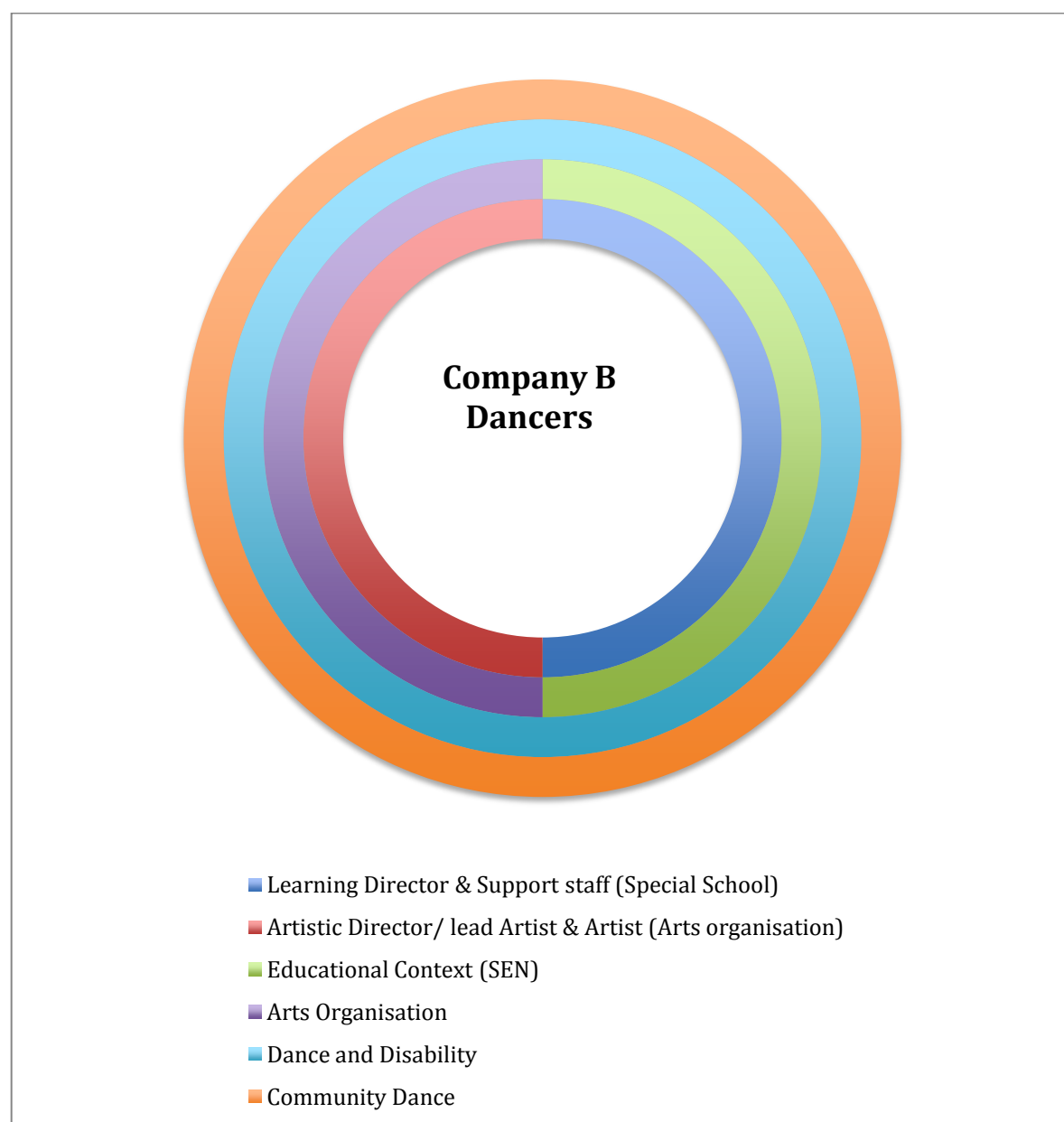|	**COMPANY A** **Registered Charity**	**COMPANY B** **(Partnership between Ballet Company and Special School)**
GROUP SIZE	• 8 PWLD in Adult performing group • Approx. 15 dancers in Youth performing group; • Both groups combined leading up to performance • AD (not hands on in studio) • Lead & support Facilitator per group • Trainees/ work experience/ volunteers • 1 Musician per group	• 10 PWLD (6 male/ 4 female) • 1 AD/ lead dance artist • 1 support dance artist (the researcher) • 1 LD/ educational support • 1 Support educational staff • 1 pianist/ composer
SESSIONS	• Adult group – Thursday 1.30-3.30pm • Youth group - Wednesday 4.30-6.30pm and Saturdays • Adult Group join Youth Group near performance	• Meet every Monday 7-9pm • Approx. 9 intensive days throughout year. • 1 large scale performance, several small scale performance
OUT-REACH WORK	Examples Include: • Adult Community Classes (Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays during term times • School projects/ day centre workshops • Conferences	Examples Include: • Trainee Physical Education Teachers • Occupational Therapists • School projects • Various conferences
VENUES	• Adult Group – Church Hall (Free of Charge) • Youth Group - Church/ community Hall (pay per hour) • Above venue created into performance space • Hire out local theatre	• Professional studio at Ballet Company (Free of Charge) • Performance space - Studio Theatre (holds 220) within building of Ballet Company. • The Special School – various smaller events
FUNDING SITUATION	Main sources (see appendix I for full detail): • Initially funded by Bromley Mencap • 1992 Grant through the Pools £40000 for 1 year. • 2008 Reaching Communities Funding through Lottery £500000 over 5 years.	• Funding through Development Department of the Ballet Company, from trusts, charities, foundations and Grants. • Funding for specific projects is applied for separately, when appropriate opportunities arise. • Additional funds raised charging for outreach activities

5.2 <u>Formation</u> – Why and how were the two case study companies first founded?

Analysis of the formation stage is essential in studying the development of the companies,

although it was not a primary focus of the research. Company A**,** was started by a then

voluntary freelance artist, now the AD-A, working PWLD in a social service centre (see

appendix I):

> *I was setting up my own practice working with disabled people with learning*
> *difficulties…I was just looking for another focus in my work.*
> <div align="right">(AD-A-I: 9)</div>

The Company has experienced highs and lows since its inception, many significant to its

development. Some of these milestones related to attaining substantial or failing to secure

sufficient funding. Key to the success of many Arts Organisations, funding will be explored

latterly. It is important to recognise the AD's resilience, vision and belief in Company A:

> *I had passion. I was banging out applications, running classes…thinking about*
> *collaborations and performance opportunities for the dancers…driving a mini bus to*
> *take people from A to B. I must have been driven!*
> <div align="right">(AD-A-I: 122-127)</div>

To summarise, Company A was formed primarily:

- To increase the opportunities for PWLD

- In response to the AD's vision, dedication and commitment.

Company B was started by the now AD-B, then a professional dancer in the Ballet

Company, who became inspired whilst working on a project with a group of students from

the Special School.

> *I was impressed and struck by this quality of movement that emerged from these*
> *young people. It became very inspiring to witness the movement that was unfolding*
> *from various improvisations…so a new kind of aesthetic for me.*
> <div align="right">(AD-B: 18-22)</div>

The relationship grew between the Ballet Company and the Special School, the AD having

the support of the now LD as an informal mentor in developing his skills as a dance artist in

special education (see appendix I). A conference, by the FCD, made the Ballet Company aware of initiatives across the country involving PWLD and sparked conversations to '*formalise, extend, and develop the relationships between the two institutions and offer increasing opportunities for the gifted and talented people at the school*' (AD-B-I: 32-34).

It is interesting to note that at approximately the same time as the inception of Company B, Bartlett (2002) spoke of the necessity to increase the opportunities for PWD in dance in response to increasing interest. In addition, in terms of formation rationale, both companies arguably were striving to address what Barnes & Mercer (2010), Broomhead (1998) and MENCAP (Accessed 2011) highlight in terms of the lack of choice and extent of quality further education and training for PWLD.

To summarise Company B was formed primarily:

- to develop a model dovetailing classical ballet and community dance approaches that could act as a catalyst to creative and exciting dance possibilities,

- to provide quality dance opportunities for talented PWLD of school leaving age,

- to further the partnership between the Ballet Company and the Special School, appreciating the valuable professional development that both institutions had previously gained from the relationship.

- in response to the AD's vision, dedication and passionate commitment

(Company B's Review and plan 2009-2011; 3)

5.3 <u>Development and Sustainability</u> – what are the factors that contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?

To aid the presentation of the preceding research question, factors contributing to development and sustainability will be discussed under the following headings and subsequently further subdivided:

a) **Strategic Factors (external to the studio)**

b) **Behavioural Factors (internal to the studio)**

5.3a Strategic Factors (external to the studio)

i. Strategic Priorities, Partnerships and Collaboration aligned to the vision

It became evident through interviewing the ADs, the LD-B, and consulting the year plan documentations, that **strategic priorities** and the congruence of these with the overall vision is key in the companies' development. AD-A explained how Company A had just completed its five year business plan and this had given a real focus: *'the whole area of training…for practitioners, health care professionals, other dance professionals and businesses'* (AD-A-I: 271-273). This emphasis on training practitioners will be key when thinking about the succession of Company A and when the AD chooses to retire.

> *I would really want Company A to carry on… I know one day I will retire although I have no intentions yet. The infrastructure and our procedures are far more set up now. There is a whole set up we go through… so it's quite a rigorous process.*
> (AD-A-I: 496-506)

Company A is in a very different place to Company B when thinking about succession, as the AD A is no longer hands on in the studio. Her role is much more about driving the Company forward with a strong vision and passing ownership to a core team of facilitators to do the work in the studio.

Another initiative **Company A** has in the pipeline is a '*flagship performance company*' to provide a '*training pathway for learning disabled dancers who want to take their skills further (*AD-A-I; 280*).* The AD emphasised this flagship company would be adding another layer, rather than replacing existing initiatives and referring to core principles that stress:

> *Company A began in the community, so its roots are in the community and we don't want to lose that. It's really important that we are working in the community to give people opportunities*.
>
> (AD-A-I; 476-479)

These plans were designed to advance and expand the company and secure greater financial stability. As AD-A-I: 275 states, Company A '*needs to become less dependent on grant income'.* In spite of the ACE (2010b) rhetoric and their notion of 'Great Art for Everyone' discussed earlier in this study, seemingly, funding anxieties remain a very real issue for companies operating in this field.

The flagship performance company, and emphasis on training require effective leadership flexibility and demonstrate '*situational leadership'* in action (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). During the research observations, the Company was running an Inclusive Dance Practice Training Scheme (IDPT) and trainee practitioners were working alongside more experienced facilitators. This required leadership at many levels, from the AD to the LF (delegating/ mentoring) to the trainee practitioners (mentoring/ coaching/ directing) and to the dancers, who were also given leadership roles.

Company A also recognises the benefits of ***collaboration*** to the development and diversity of the company. Company A's first collaboration, was with London Contemporary Dance Theatre. The AD recollects that:

> *It was great really great – it really opened my eyes to what else can be done, there's a whole world out there and I've just been working on my own for seven years!*
>
> (AD-A-I; line 59-60)

The researcher was observing Company A, whilst collaboration with New Adventures took place. During the period of observation (see appendix C) it was clear the dancers were fully engaged in creating a new piece based on Cinderella. Feedback sessions reinforced this as the dancers expressed satisfaction to the of exposure to new ideas:

> *'I enjoyed it (collaboration) as I never had the opportunity before hand. It was an eye opener.'*
>
> (Appendix H, p165)

> *'Excellent, very good performance… I'm good at it…All together. I want to show people at the performance. Gosh I can't wait until the performance.'*
>
> (Appendix H, p166)

Company B also has clear *strategic priorities* affirmed in the company's three-year plan. These create a lucid vision for the company across the development of five distinctive areas of activity: training, creation, performing, advocacy and learning (Documentation). The AD emphasised that one of Company B's major challenges from others was *'the level of investment for a relatively small group of people' (AD-B-I: 117)*. He added that the company's overarching aim is to *'make fantastic pieces of theatre'*, however with the nature and needs of the dancers in Company B, he felt, it would not be possible to do this with significantly larger numbers of dancers. Therefore Company B has chosen to focus on broadening the impact of the company through outreach programmes that *'challenge stereotypical views of dancer's with learning difficulties' (*AD-B-I: 123*)*. This can be a sensitive area, which has to be approached with care and expertise. This was clearly demonstrated during observation at a Special Schools Trust Conference, where Company B performed. Their contribution, and the reception they received, demonstrated that it was possible for PWLD to respond to high artistic expectations, be recognised as skilled dancers

and excel as community artists and educators. This event could be argued to be an example of the Affirmative Model of Disability in action (Swain & French, 2008). It was an opportunity for the dancers, to be *'given a voice'* (Allen, 2005) and appropriately showcased as 'different but equal' and, as 'givers' as opposed to 'takers'.

Whilst **Company B** allocates high priority to *collaboration* epitomized by the *partnership* between the Ballet Company and the Special School there are challenges. The LD spoke of a potential difficulty:

> *We are currently with the new government, they are just gutting the Arts so our status (Performing Arts) at the school is changing we are losing chunks of arts money…So one of the worries is that as the Ballet Company takes over the funding, hopefully, if they marginalize the input from the school they have missed a trick!'*
>
> (LD-B-I: 156-160)

The AD also stressed that partnership was at heart of Company B, therefore raising many questions about the future of the company if support was pulled from either side of the partnership:

> *Company B would never have survived and won't survive without the buy in of its respective partner organisations. If the Special School pulled its support the project would crumble and if the arts organisation pulled its support the project would crumble.*
>
> (AD-B-I: 148-151)

From my observation and experience of working with the Company B, it is what it is because of the whole team input. The question that could be asked is: Would Company B still be Company B, for example, without the AD or without the LD or even without Ballet Company's support? It would certainly have to evolve, as its identity has come from each individual's input into a 'collective identity'. Potentially, this would dramatically change if the structure were altered. This concurs with Weinberg & Gould's (2007) characteristics of a special team, with one of the four being a *'collective sense of identity'*.

There are other examples of collaborations, which contribute to the development of Company B. These include work with universities, for example links with trainee physical education teachers and occupational therapists. Initiatives such as these seek to encourage 'inclusive practice' and in the case of trainee teachers *'to think about dance as a powerful tool'* (AD-B-I: 137). Future collaborations are consistently planned, contributing to the sustainability. At the time of the interview the AD spoke of a future partnership with the learning disability charity Mencap in 2012:

> *Company B, Mencap and Midlands Arts Centre are looking at a three day festival, alongside and celebrating the Cultural Olympiad – focused on the learning disabled community.*
>
> (AD-B-I: 140-42)

From documentation it is clear the project aimed to leave a legacy of skilled dance artists, extending opportunities, for PWLD. These results concur with Hopkins (2003) that visionary leadership is essential to developing an environment that challenges, excites and allows members to reflect. Therefore having a strong vision is one of the key factors in exercising the leadership function in a successful company. Visionary leadership is discussed below emphasising the importance of the specific qualities, styles and behaviours required of leaders who work PWLD.

Partnership and collaboration are emphasised by, in and through the work of ACE (ACE, 2010b) and clearly are prevalent within the history and future plans of Company A and B. It is clear that these have contributed to their success and sustainability to date, supporting Stenton's (2010) advocacy for collaboration and it being 'good practice' in community dance.

ii) Funding

Funding, as mentioned previously, is crucial to companies such as those being investigated.

Company A to date has received the majority of their funding from the National Lottery.

Early in their formation the Board of Company A recruited a fundraising consultant,

recognising that without regular income the Company would struggle to survive. High points,

such as gaining £40,000 spread over one year from the Pools to develop Company A: *'was*

like winning the lottery!' (AD-A-I: 75). Receiving a second substantial contribution of

£500,000, gave the company *'stability for five years'* (AD-A-I: 181*).* Low points, included

the cancellation of classes and projects as funding had dried up. This particular issue featured

prominently in the literature, Freeman (2011) for example agonised about funding cuts to

inclusive dance and the repercussions it would have in resurrecting established barriers that

had taken so long to break down.

Company B's fund raising happens in the Development Department of the Ballet Company.

Money comes from a variety of sources with the majority of applications related to specific

projects or initiatives. Money is also allocated from the wider Ballet Company budget, which

is sourced from ACE. The Ballet Company as a Regularly Funded Organisation has an array

of obligations to its primary funder (ACE) of which education and outreach activity is one.

Company A and B have achieved relative financial stability throughout their existence. The

extent that this is typical of companies operating within this context is arguable (and not the

focus of this study), as despite the rhetoric as espoused by ACE; the recent funding cuts could

be argued to challenge their development and sustainability (Freeman, 2011). It is important

to note that while Company B owes its existence partly to ACE through the Ballet Company,

Company A receives little directly from ACE, despite their work being closely aligned with ACE strategic objectives (ACE, 2011a, p7).

iii) Venues

The companies generally use two types of venue, one for rehearsals and one for performances. Company B's partnership allows it to use the Ballet Company and the Special School's facilities and this access makes a significant contribution to the continuing success. Company A is not as fortunate with venue access as Company B. The AD remarked studio space is *'expensive…that's one we haven't been able to crack yet'* (AD-A; line 304-306). However, shortly after receiving lottery funding, Company A was offered office space free of charge in a theatre, where the company performs occasionally, this conveniently provided the company with a base. These two significant events ultimately provided the company with a period of stability to consolidate development towards achievement of its vision.

iv) Parental engagement and community support

 Both AD's and the LD-B, recognised the crucial importance of parental engagement to the survival of the companies:

> *Company B dancers are dependent on family…in order to get them to and from Company B…and it isn't and wouldn't be possible without that strong level of commitment…it is a big challenge and its something that needs to develop over time, that level of trust.*
>
> (AD-B-I: 159-164)

> *It's… community support, support from the local community and parental support, getting parents and carers on board.*
>
> (AD-A-I: 297-298)

> *Transport is always going to be an issue therefore the process is winning the families over. That's slow and it takes more than two hours a week, its two hours a week teaching and choreography and its much more in terms of social networking.*

<div align="right">(LD-B-I: 71-73)</div>

The issue of transport, featured within the literature, is important to consider when creating new opportunities for PWLD. Physical barriers such as lack of transport remain a key obstacle (NIACE; 2003), making opportunities worthless to many PWLD. This was evident with Company B as the LD mentioned:

> *Transport, that kind of independence, we have two members travel trained. One young man who was travelled trained, he frightened his family when the bus was re-routed and he didn't know where he was going.*
>
> <div align="right">(LD-B-I: 63-66)</div>

However it is clear from the responses in the parents' questionnaires, that they all recognise the social, psychological and physical benefits gained from participation in dance. It is also interesting how strong the team aspect came across through the interviews, this seemingly being an important feature. Parents observed:

> *She has mild cerebral palsy and very poor spatial awareness. The dance training she has received has helped with this in an amazing way.*
>
> <div align="right">(P1-A-Q)</div>

> *The delight she takes from being part of a team. The ability to pass on to others through dance, just what they are capable of!*
>
> <div align="right">(P2-A-Q)</div>

> *Personally, socially, his confidence has come on tremendously. Everybody says since he has been in Company B how much his confidence has come on.*
>
> <div align="right">(P2-B-Q)</div>

> *He has learnt to work as a team. It has brought… out of himself and his confidence has grown since he has been with Company A, and its still growing.*
>
> <div align="right">(P1-B-Q)</div>

Parents are also aware that both companies challenge their sons or daughters to achieve goals and raise their aspirations:

> *She loves the public performance on stage at the theatres, but probably the most beneficial time of all in Company A was when she did the choreography course and choreographed her own dance, which was performed in public.*
>
> (P1-A-Q)

The LD-B succinctly summarises the challenge of getting parents on board but once it has happened it is a huge bonus to the stability:

> *We've worked with and on those families for nearly twenty years in the case of the oldest Company B dancers. The families value it, they're proud, they invite relatives, and they talk about what their young person does like any other parent.*
>
> (LD-B-I: 117-119)

The above qualitative results from the parents concur with much of the literature (Bartlett; 1998b, FCD; 2002 and DCMS, 2004) surrounding Community Dance and how it has the power for personal and social development.. This stems from practitioners embracing a set of values that:

> *Recognise the power and contribution of dance in transforming and empowering the lives of individuals and their communities.*
>
> (Bartlett, 1996, p15)

The parents also concur with Hale (2001) regarding the impact performing can have on an individual or company, achieving a sense of pride and ownership. Through providing a performing platform for PWLD this will ultimately begin to challenge aesthetic norms and cultural notions of the 'ideal body' of who can or cannot perform (Brew, 2009, Charnley, 2011 and Hale, 2001). Interestingly one of the parents mentioned the most beneficial moment was when their daughter choreographed a piece to be performed, this relates back to Paskevich et al. (2001) who suggested that members remain in a group when they feel fulfilled by task and social provisions or challenges. So the task of choreographing and taking ownership clearly stimulated the dancer within Company A.

5.3b Behavioural Factors (Inside the studio)

A focus in this study was leadership styles, qualities and behaviours. The AD-B remarked:

> *I get a massive buzz from being with a group of people that I love dearly and want to spend time with. I get reward from the sometimes - difficult challenges the dancers give me around their quirks and eccentricities. It's about two things – me being part of that community and me being in a creative space were I can experiment and play.*
>
> (AD-B-I: 214-221)

It is apparent that the AD-B is patient; flexible and resilient with the dancers yet manages to provide a space for creativity, which is aligned with the literature (Fraser, 2003; Hoyle, 2010 and MENCAP, 2008). These skills are essential when working with PWLD and were evident during observation. For example during a session several of dancers were absent, which can prove to be very difficult for the other dancers as the choreography often relies on cues from each other. This required the AD to be flexible and work on something different. During another session:

> *A dancer decided not to join in and sat out for the barre work, seeking attention from the AD. The AD left the dancer alone, seemingly trying a new tactic to get the individual back up and involved without wasting the other dancers' time, as this has happened more than once.*
>
> (Appendix D, p152)

Similar observations were made with Company A: for example when the Youth Group and the Adult Performing Group came together to rehearse the performance piece:

> *A couple of dancers looked like they were finding it difficult working in such a busy environment compared with their normal sessions ....A solution might have been having one week prior to the guest artist attending altogether, and really focusing on group/ team work and making sure everyone was feeling comfortable and included.*
>
> (Appendix C, p141)

Weinberg and Gould (2007) identified four characteristics of an effective 'team' namely: ***collective identity, distinctive roles, modes of communication and norms***, all which were evident in the observation and interviews. It is important to remember that leadership is

inherent in all four characteristics and each will vary depending on the leadership styles/ qualities and skills utilised.

i. *Collective Identity*

One way that Company A has built a collective sense of identity is in and through its name, appearing as a logo on Company A's t-shirts. One dancer remarked *'Company A dancers have t-shirts'* (D2-A-I: line 42) and the LF concurred: *'we obviously wear our Company t-shirts and are very proud to be part of Company A'* (LA-A-I: 40-1). The AD and LF both emphasis the importance of the company identity, the ethos of inclusivity and feelings of unity:

> *I think it's the ethos and the values of Company A that it's very inclusive, that people are there because they want to dance; they want to take the opportunity regardless of ability.*
> (AD-A-I: 249-251)
> *I guess inclusivity is an identity of Company A in that we never turn people away.*
> (LF-A-I: 35)
>
> *The session always begins in a circle so that everyone is equal and everyone is invited into the circle and worthy of their place.*
> (LF-A-I: 23)

An excellent example of group shared decision making to build Company B's identity was observed in a session where the AD and LD were exploring ideas with the dancers regarding a new logo for the company (Appendix D). This was an illustration of allowing everyone's input into the session and into the company's identity (Weinberg & Gould, 2007 and Lavallee et al., 2004). It was also an example of coaching from situational leadership. The directors were asking non-directive questions (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988).

During another observation with Company B close to a public performance the AD built up a sense of performance using their collective identity by saying: *'We are Company B and we need to do a great performance, which you all can do!'* At this the dancers signed the company name using makaton, which was a poignant affirmation of group identity (appendix D, p145). Here the AD was using the company name as an identity and group-focusing tool, emphasising their identity as dancers and the standard expected of them. The AD also gave the dancers encouragement by affirming his confidence in them and belief in what they can achieve. The LD concurs with this emphasis on the importance of inspiring confidence in explaining why the dancers adhere:

> *They come back because of their self-belief, they are dancers why wouldn't they come back – that's what they do…they are performers.*
>
> (LD-B-I; 113-114)

A different kind of reinforcement was exercised by the LD who remonstrated with three dancers who were not giving 100%*: 'We are Company B and we need to do our best!'* In this way the dancers are given guidance on what is expected and what is not acceptable. They are clearly encouraged to grow and develop as dancers and never settle for second best. It is clearly the leadership style of the AD and LD, who create a positive, task involved and socially supportive environment for Company B, and will be explored further in this chapter.

Both AD's commented on the enhanced sense of achievement, unity and collective identity during and after a performance. The AD-B believes that:

> *There is a sense that they have a true identity as a company…When we all come together…all dancers, the practitioners, the musician, the stage technicians, actually that for me became when Company B really came together… a significant moment!*
>
> (AD-B-I: 238-249)

The AD-A concurs:

> *I think any performance that Company A does, especially the whole company, it feels like this is Company A. We've done programmes of work, five pieces… and that felt yeah this is Company A.*
>
> *(AD-A-I; 448-452)*

When the dancers were asked about how they feel after a performance they responded concisely:

> *Shocked…because of the audience…happy, perfect, that we are excellent!*
> (D1-B-I: 45-49)

> *I feel very, very proud and happy*
>
> (D2-A-I: 34)

> *Performing is the best bit. Feels like all the practice done has paid off. Makes me feel proud!*
> (D1-A-I: 23-24)

This is concurrent with the feelings and thoughts of the parents who emotionally remarked:

> *I always have a lump in my throat when I watch Company B, and everyone comments on how good they all are and as Dancer 6's mum I'm so proud of him.*
> (P1-B-Q)

Whilst the dancers' verbal communication was concise, their body language was vibrant when they were talking, with one dancer sitting up straight, glowing with pride. The dancers' opportunity to perform in front of an audience made them feel proud to be part of a company with a collective identity but affirmed their individual identities as dancers. Observation field notes concur:

> *It was such an incredible moment to see all ten dancers taking a curtain call, holding hands, bursting with pride. Moments like this demonstrate how important the opportunities that companies' such as A and B, are to these young adults. This gives them an identity, a direction in life with a fantastic sense of achievement.*
> (Appendix D, p150)

ii.   Distinctive roles

Company A's warm up involves passing the lead role around the group giving everyone an opportunity. It is clear Company A encourages each dancer to play a leadership role; demonstrating 'distributed leadership' and giving them a distinctive role. During observations of Company B, the AD passed ownership over to the dancers from the warm up. One dancer, whose strengths are teaching others, led the warm up weekly and he was proud this was his *'distinctive role'* (appendix J). This relates to the literature where Zaccaro et al. (2009, p84) states, with others in agreement (Bennis, 2003, Carson et al. 2007 and Harris, 2008), that distributing the leadership role amongst members, where their particular strengths lie, fosters *'interconnectivity, integration and coherence'* within the team.

The other dancers in Company B also have distinctive roles when they are encouraged to contribute to the choreography (Appendix J).

> *One by one each of the dancers improvised to the same music, giving his or her interpretation. It was apparent what a lovely environment has been created over the years, making each dancer confortable to get up and just enjoy dancing with no inhibitions.*
>
> (Appendix D, p153 & J)

The AD and LD know the dancers well and use their appreciation of their individual skills to the company's advantage by placing the dancers in roles that complement their style.

When the dancers from both companies were asked during interviews, what their strengths were D1-B quickly volunteered *'performances…people like me…they say dancer 1 you are brilliant' (D1-B-I: 125)*. This dancer consistently demonstrated a sense of pride in what he does and celebrates his identity as a dancer in Company B. Some dancers struggled to articulate their strengths or distinctive roles, but managed to say something about another dancer, therefore relying on another dancer to talk about their own special attributes. This

demonstrated their mutual respect and affirmed their belief in one another's talents (appendix

D):

> *I think Nicky fantastic at ball piece, my favourite piece. My second one Sarah in the girls dance – she's my favourite girl.*
>
> (D1-B-GI: 56-57)

> *...D is perfect! (Pause) She's good at moving – yeah.*
>
> (D7-B-I: 77-79)

One of the strongest motives to continue to be a team member is the perceptions of, and

beliefs in a team's joint purpose to achieve a group goal or objective (Paskevich et al., 2001).

From the dancer's responses above it is clear they are able to articulate what they excel at but

also recognise the other dancers in the Company and how everyone's input makes it the

Company it is.

iii.   *Modes of communication*

Company A differs slightly from Company B, in that the facilitators do not have an SEN

education background. The AD-B has the freedom to delegate (situational leadership) to the

LD-B, any situation requiring SEN expertise. This allows for talented dancers with

particularly challenging behaviour or specific communication difficulties to be a part of the

company. Company A does not have this option. However the very experienced dance

facilitators have worked with the dancers in Company A for many years, which is often the

best way to learn how to communicate effectively with PWLD. The artists', who lead the

sessions, in both companies, use simple language, repetition, and demonstration and in some

cases a range of communication approaches. The pace of a session is strategically set to

allow the dancers to realise their potential at a pace to suit their learning preferences.

Makaton sign language is one of the key modes of communication in Company B. It is used not only to explain elements of the session or performance to the dancers but also as a stimulus for movement ideas. For example during one observation the dancers were recapping a piece from their repertory, called September Reflections. This piece was created after 9/11 to allow the dancers to express their emotional responses non-verbally, as many have very little verbal communication skill. The makaton sign for sad is moving your hand, with your thumb and 1st finger closest to your face. The dancers were then encouraged to develop this simple movement into something unique and personal to them. Makaton was also extremely useful whilst collecting data, particularly with the help of the LD's experience, during the interviews. This enabled the dancers to understand questions via a preferred method of communication (appendix J).

AD-B emphasised the importance of personal preference in communication as everyone responds differently and needs different approaches to understanding and the achievement of excellence:

> *Where possible lots and lots of visual stimuli and demonstration within our choreography, and demonstration from the staff whether they be ex dancers or not.*
> (AD-B-I: 194-196)

The LD-B stresses that he would never de-value peoples' cognition: '*they (the dancers) would wherever possible understand what they are doing and why*' (LD-B-I: 49-50). Therefore the dancers must be able to conceptualise what they are creating in dance. Communication skills are therefore fundamental to effective leadership particularly when working with PWLD and this is strongly emphasised in the literature (Bartlett, 2009; Goldbart & Caton, 2010). The research parallels Clarke & Moss (2001), Kelly (2007) and Thomas & Wood (2003) in that to communicate effectively with PWLD innovative ways need to be employed to gain success.

Membership of Company A and B gives the dancers the opportunity to communicate with other people with a love of dance. Many have made important friendships through attending the weekly sessions. The social aspect of both companies was strongly emphasised:

> *I like the dancing and seeing my friends. I just like moving!*
>
> *(*D1-A-I: 11)

> *Like dancing, like seeing my friends every Wednesday and Thursday. I like the Lead Artist she makes me dance.*
>
> (D2-A-I: 13-14)

> *Staying together and talk – be friends*
>
> (D3-B-I: 47)

> *I would also like for us to dance with the Youth Group again, it was lovely…all join up and work together.*
>
> (Appendix H)

Dancers' parents could see that they had not just acquired dance skills, but had also developed their social and communication skills for every day life. When parents were asked specifically about the benefits of participation, positive comments included:

> *Confidence and ability in social integration*
>
> (P1-A-Q)

> *She had to learn to mix with people she didn't know*
>
> (P2-A-Q)

> *In a way that socially he mixes very well with the group, where he wouldn't have in the past.*
>
> (P3-B-Q)

This invokes Carron et al.'s (1985) model of the four dimensions of group cohesion: group integration and individual attractions to the group, and the two subsumed task and social domains. The implied importance of the social contribution of participation was confirmed by

observation and group interviews. This revealed the mutual respect and the pleasure they took in each other's company and achievements (appendix H).

iv.   Norms

From observations and interview with the LF the researcher became more aware of the normative structure of Company A. The company always started their sessions in a circle with name and shape (ice breaker/ a way of introducing oneself). This had a particularly important purpose in the community classes as new faces would appear each week but it was also used in the Adult Performing Group every time a new person participated in the group (appendix C). This has become part of the culture of the group as the dancers often preempted it and would tell the dance artists that is what they were going to do.

Company B had a similar normative learning culture, starting in a circle for an introductory talk (appendix J). The talk set the aims for the session and the high expectations. Goal setting, a norm, within Company B, emphasises the Group Integration-Task and Individual Attractiveness-Task aspect of the group cohesion theory. It stresses the importance of *'motivation towards achieving the group's instrumental objectives'* (Carron et al., 2008, p119), but also to fulfil these, the individuals' task needs to adhere to that of the companies. Allowing the dancers to participate in the goal setting gave a stronger sense of identity and cohesiveness, concurring with the literature (Brawley et al., 2008 and Carron el al., 2008).

Interestingly, when closer to a performance, the LD gave the dancers simple individual goals, illustrating a situational leadership and a shift towards a more directive approach:

> *"D4-B work quick and don't get stuck as you hold the team up we need to have a good rehearsal"*

"D6-B try not to wind other dancers up, be grown up!"

"D4-B try and leave Glen Campbell outside the studio and just focus on your dance while you are here."

<div align="right">(Appendix D; p145)</div>

It is very easy to undervalue the importance that dancers attach to individual guidance and attention as it gives them a feeling of personal worth as part of a team and continually raises their expectations. The AD-A concurs and elaborates:

> *That person has a) a right to be there and b) that they are not just there as a body but because they want to learn and progress their skills!*
>
> <div align="right">(AD-A-I: 348-49)</div>

It is also customary for Company B dancers to participate in a full ballet technique warm up at every session, as the origins of the company lie in ballet and its tradition (appendix J). This norm is a result of the leadership from the AD:

> *Company B is unique because it is rooted in ballet and that for a community arts group is very unusual.*
>
> <div align="right">(LD-B-I: 46-47)</div>

The AD has always strived to preserve the integrity of the dance form by *'honoring ballet tradition'* and not do *'his dance form a disservice'* (LD-B-I: line 48-49).

v. Empowering Ownership (Norm)

Empowering ownership seemed to be an important attribute to both companies. Very much part of the pervasive values and ethos of the sessions, they were observed and demonstrated through the interviews (appendix J). The LF-A remarked:

> *Ownership – all the movement material comes from the participants and nothing comes from me. I'm not there as a leader but a facilitator. By giving the dancers ownership it is also developing their creativity and responsibility for themselves. They need to be able to make choices – it helps with everyday life.*
>
> <div align="right">(LF-A-I: 11-17)</div>

Similarly the LD-B emphasised that:

It's about ownership by everybody, everybody's got their bit to put in, it's a recognition of what you've got, and its therefore rooted in what you've got rather than haven't.

(LD-B-I: 39-41)

5.4 <u>Leadership and Group Cohesion</u> – How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of group cohesion in the two case study companies?

The researcher recognises the rich diversity and complexity of the literature around leadership and has focused on Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) situational leadership theory. At the same time distributed leadership can apply within situational leadership, and with each leader operating throughout the model. Observation was the predominant method used to investigate this, however additional information was gained from interviews. During each observation session a specific grid was used to organise data collection (see appendix C & D) relating to the four aspects of Situational Leadership: Coaching, delegating, mentoring and directing. It became clear that both companies required leadership to be flexible and adaptable to the needs of the group depending on the company's specific goals.

Company B's leadership style was flexible to meet the needs of the company, agreeing with Hoyle (2010). There were clear differences in the AD's leadership style depending on the situation. For example observations occurred during:

- Regular session with performance in the distance,
- Dress rehearsal/ sessions close to performance,
- Performance day
- Regular sessions following a performance.

The AD describes the structure of a regular two hour session as:

A bonding warm up, led by the dancers into something a little more directive, using the classical form, so a set of formalized positions and frameworks we work within and then shifting in the second hour to a more empowering style that works to develop

> *the ideas and signature moves, which are very much part of Company B's identity, their house style.*

(AD-B-I: 103-108)

This statement clearly describes how the AD switches his leadership approach to allow for the objectives to be achieved. When Company B dancers were creating a new piece, everyone was given ownership and the opportunity to input their ideas to the process in a highly supportive but relatively undirected environment (appendix D). The AD would then adopt a more directive approach to collate the movements to structure the dance. This aligns to the literature (Akroyd et al., 2008) suggesting that by recognising that everyone's contributions are as powerful as your own enables greater group cohesion.

Observing a performance day was interesting as all four elements were noted: Coaching, delegating, mentoring and directing (appendix D). The AD-B and the LD-B started by explaining what the day's schedule was, in a directive manner (especially for the dancers with autism who needed to know in advance the schedule). The style then changed to a mentoring and coaching approach asking the dancers how they were going to make this a good performance and what they needed to do to achieve it. The warm up was delegated to the usual dancer; keeping a ritual/ norm that gave the dancers a sense of familiarity and security (Weinberg and Gould, 2007). The final dress rehearsal was very directive in order to keep the dancers on track and focused, however at the same time it was important to support the dancers emotionally prior to a performance. This concurs with the literature surrounding the qualities required of a leader (Hoyle, 2010 and MENCAP, 2008). Finally before the performance, it was interesting to observe the AD hand ownership of the performance to the dancers, affirming the non-directed approach ensuring the dancers gained a personal and

collective sense of achievement. This reflects good community practice as discussed in the literature (Akroyd, 1996).

To summarise Company B uses a very flexible, but calculated leadership style in order to achieve its aims. The AD articulates his role emphasizing the importance of inclusivity by:

> *Recognising everybody's strengths and areas for development within the room… recognising when someone can do a job better than you in the room.'*
> <div align="right">(AD-B-I: 168-172)</div>

He also stresses how important it is to enable each dancer to have his or her voice in the room – '*their creative voice, their physical voice, and their literal voice at times' (AD-B-I: 173-174)*. This engages with the thrust of chapter 4, where many authors stressed the importance of hearing the voice of PWLD (Barnes and Mercer, 1997; Charlton, 1998; Gilbert, 2004; Oliver 2007 & 2009, Shakespeare, 1996 and Walmsley, 2006) and was an aim of this research. The AD also recognised the challenge of ensuring that all voices can be heard when under pressure, concluding:

> *It's about nurturing a collective sense and distributed leadership but having to call the shots as time moves on, when we have to respond to certain deadlines, be they performances, outreach work, evaluation methods or processes.*
> <div align="right">(AD-B-I: 175-178)</div>

Despite the limited time spent with Company A compared to Company B, it was still possible to observe rehearsal periods, final rehearsals and performances and it was evident that the two companies had developed a similar learning and performing culture, philosophy and situational leadership style. During the initial observations in December 2010, the adult performing group was three months away from performance and dancers were rehearsing and creating material from workshops held in the October half term by a guest artist from New Adventure's Company. The LF and SF created an environment, in which the dancers were

coached to find interesting ways to move and create the characters they were portraying (see appendix C) allowing ownership. The directive approach was only used to pull sections together. The dancers evaluated their feelings after each session. Perceptive comments from the dancers demonstrated how much they value being able to contribute and also a sense of cohesiveness within the company:

> *It was quite good actually, quite exhausting! I was trying to think of other ways to do it too and you can't always think on the spot – especially when you are dancing around – I enjoyed it!*
>
> *I enjoyed being the part of the paparazzi…I enjoyed the company I worked with.*
>
> *Looking phase from Cinderella - the end floor position crouch was really nice. My looking movements with my hand my face. I really enjoyed dancing in the group too.*
> <div align="right">(Appendix H, p165)</div>

The comments referred to both the task cohesion as well as the social element, referring back to Carron et al. (1985) sport's model for cohesion.

The last part of a session observed was dedicated to rehearsing and completing one of the dancer's own pieces of choreography, as part of the *'ground breaking mentoring new choreographers'* programme (Company A Newsletter, 2010). This provides the opportunity for the dancers to choreograph for a performance, not a common opportunity available to PWLD. The choreographic mentor working alongside the dancer remarked:

> *Dancer 1 gave clear instructions to the dancers using both verbal and physical communication. Sometimes telling the dancers what to do and at others manipulating their bodies into shapes he wanted. He also showed an ability to be in the dance and see it from the outside at the same time, a major breakthrough in the work and his choreographic skills and understanding.*
> <div align="right">(Company A Newsletter, 2010)</div>

Leadership is therefore an essential component to achieve cohesion in a company with dancers with learning disabilities. It became clear that although the structures of the companies were very different, in both, situational leadership was a crucial component of the organisational culture. The companies recognised that people have different skills and qualities and used this to their advantage. Although the ADs had a key major role in the leadership of each of their companies, leadership roles were often distributed to other members if their skills and qualities are more appropriate. Although the AD-A remarked:

> *The challenges are getting the team to work as a team, as a cohesive group, and because everyone is different as we have so many freelancers – so bringing people together and I never want clones of one another, everyone brings their own personality to it, which is a good within the banner of Company A.*
>
> (AD-A-I: 410-413)

Evidence shows that although the companies were initially started by one person's vision, passion and dedication, the formation required further recruited individuals, taking on leadership roles where their differing expertise could be utilised. For example in Company B the LD from the Special School came on board almost immediately to allow the company to develop under joint partnership of the Ballet Company and the Special School. However, for Company A, it was several years before others became involved. It was collaborating with another company that opened the eyes of the AD to further possibilities. It was from this point onwards that Company A excelled and continually developed, with the help and leadership of others, with differing expertise.

To conclude this section, it is no longer advantageous for a 21st Century leader to work alone:

> *The complexity and ambiguity that teams often experience make it unlikely that a single external leader can successfully perform all necessary leadership functions.*
>
> (Carson, 2007, p1217)

Distributed leadership, although in itself requiring particular skills and qualities, permits the acquisition of ownership, focus and motivation. These could, in turn, be argued to be key to the development and sustainability of dance companies involving PWLD.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

To conclude the research into the development and sustainability of dance companies involving PWLD, with a focus on group cohesion and leadership, it is important to return to the research questions underpinning the study to summarise key findings permeating the previous chapters:

1. *Why and how were the two case study companies first founded?*

2. *What factors contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?*

3. *How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of group cohesion in the two case study companies?*

To conclude the study, reflections on strengths and limitations, emergent recommendations and further research possibilities will be discussed.

6.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This study has shown that dance companies of this nature are formed within and in response to their socio-political context. The social model of disability has had a considerable influence, alongside the move within the community dance arena towards appreciating broader aesthetics in and through dance. Throughout the research, recognition of the current funding climate has been important. Since this process began, companies have folded or have had to rethink their existence, due to lack of support from the ACE. The research clearly demonstrates the need for strong leadership at all levels.

Question 1: Why and how were the two case study companies first founded?

The Companies were, started by passionate and dedicated artists with a strong vision. At the formation period and beyond, this developed as a result of strong, distributed and situational leadership with an openness to collaboration and partnership. The AD's visions for increasing the opportunities for PWLD, particularly those of school leaving age, have ultimately been successful and sufficiently inspiring for others. The AD-B also inspired to develop a new model dovetailing classical ballet and community dance approaches.

Question 2: What factors contribute to the development and sustainability of the two case study companies?

In terms of the formation of such companies several factors have been shown to be key and, as one might anticipate, many of these overlap with the conditions required for further development and sustainability (albeit relative) to exist. Figure 10 summarises the strategic and behavioural factors that were identified as important contributors. It became evident that the survival of the companies was dependent on many factors, with either company emphasising certain elements, depending on their preference. However it is important to realise that effective and flexible leadership approaches are an absolute pre-requisite.

It has become clear that certain leadership qualities and attributes are key. In particular the ability of the leader to create and communicate an inspiring vision, and establish with and through the group an appropriate collective identity. This is achieved through the establishment of rituals, norms, distinctive roles and modes of communication. All these aspects have been shown to nurture the personal and collective identity of the groups.

Weinberg and Gould's (2007) sport's model *(norms*, *collective sense of identity*, *modes of communication and distinctive roles)* served to provide a useful framework for this research situated in a dance context. As far as the researcher is aware, the model has not been explored before in the dance arena.

Figure 10: *An emergent model showing the strategic and behavioural factors contributing to the development and sustainability of companies involving PWLD*
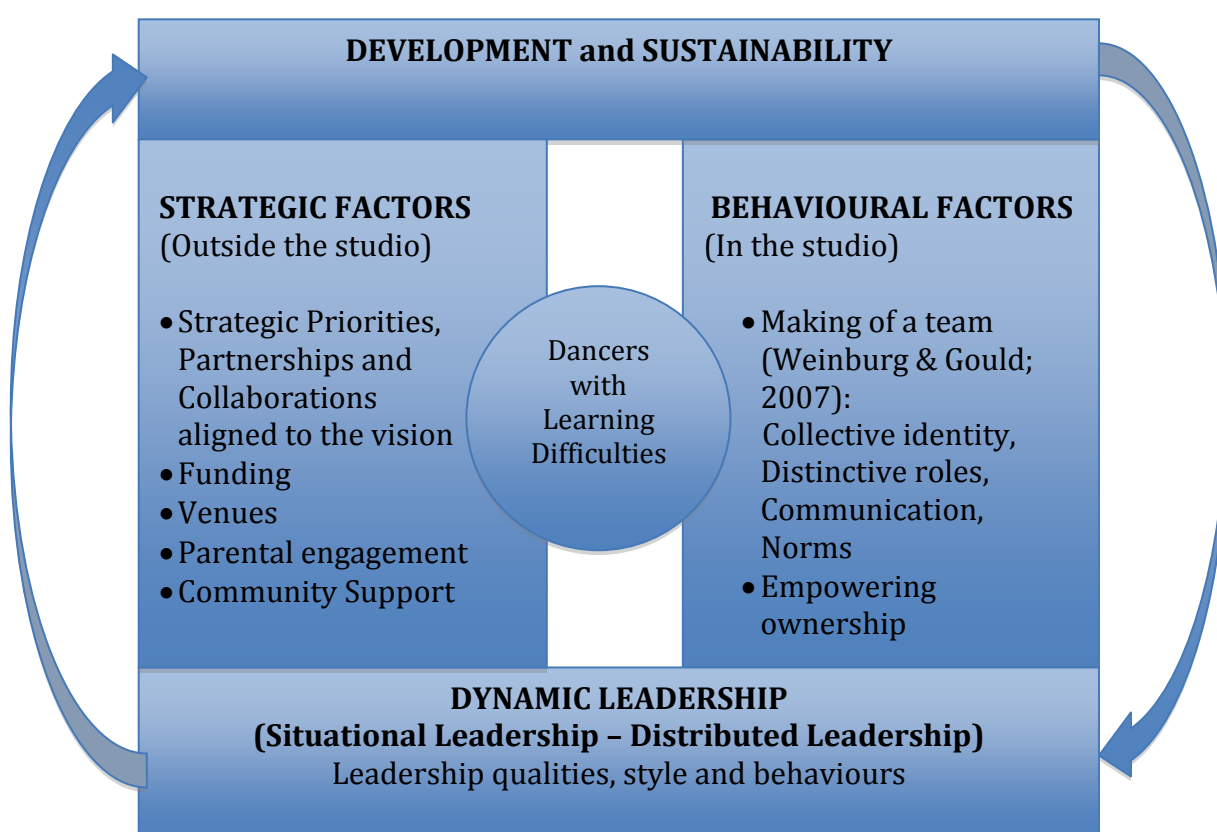
Figure 10 therefore summarises and focuses on the factors for success in the case study dance companies for PWLD. It can form a critical springboard for others engaged in research and/ or development in the field of disability dance. The model illustrates that factors contributing to the development and sustainability of the companies can be divided between strategic and behavioural factors, both being reciprocally significant. However for the case studies in this the research the behavioural factors were more pertinent. To make the

strategic and behavioural factors successful in developing and sustaining such companies, dynamic leadership was a key underlying contributor, with a particular focus on situational and distributed leadership. Without effective leadership to develop partnerships and collaborations or to create a collective identity and group norms for example, the companies would not be as successful as they are today. This research and emergent model will therefore contribute to dance literature providing new possibilities and insights in the area of disability dance.

Question 3: How does leadership contribute to the creation and maintenance of group cohesion in the two case study companies?

Leadership proved key to the maintenance of group cohesion within the two companies. The extent to which leadership operates right across the companies (at many levels) made analysis complex. However, the power of distributed leadership clearly has a significant role to play within the companies, offering task and social provisions for all involved, supporting the finding in sport and exercise science.

> *'Group members perceive and believe that their group can supply them with various task and social provisions that fulfil their needs'.*
>
> (Paskevich et al., 2001, p473)

Situational leadership also became key, particularly for the AD's and LF's, as their approach required flexibility to the changing group's needs in order to achieve a cohesive company. This simply could be goal setting, using a coaching approach rather than a directing approach, to attain a stronger sense of cohesion, as concurred in the literature:

> *'athletes who had greater participation in team goal setting also possessed a stronger sense of task and social cohesion'*
>
> (Brawley et al., 1993 cited in Carron et al., 2008, p122).

Below (figure 11) is an emergent model showing the building blocks of leadership for dance companies involving PWLD resulting in development and sustainability. This has been developed by the researcher to summarise findings from the research.

The model illustrates emergent findings that indicate group cohesion within dance companies involving PWLD is dependent on a combination of the values, behaviours, skills, styles and vision of an effective leader. The hierarchical model shows the significance of the leader, needing an inspiring vision (often co-created) from which to shape and influence a range of context specific leadership styles. These encompass and permit intra - organisational approaches which in turn shape the companies' behaviours. The behaviours are underpinned by particular values, personal to the leader but embraced by the collective. These factors combined, serve to support the creation and maintenance of effective group cohesion. Additionally the model (within the context of leadership) differentiates between strategic and behaviourial factors throughout its hierarchy. It could be argued that strategy sits solely at levels one to three whilst behaviourial factors can be seen at all levels, including the communication of the vision.

Again, the model can be useful as a starting point for future research regarding consensus or contradiction of realities in other case study dance companies for PWLD. Every dance company involving PWLD will be unique, as no situation will be identical due to differing variables, for example; people, venue and funding. However, this research can still provide a rigorous appreciation of how two specific dance companies have developed and sustained a strong presence within the dance field, focusing on the intraorganisation climate, leadership and its effects.

Figure 11: Emergent model showing the building blocks of leadership within dance companies involving PWLD
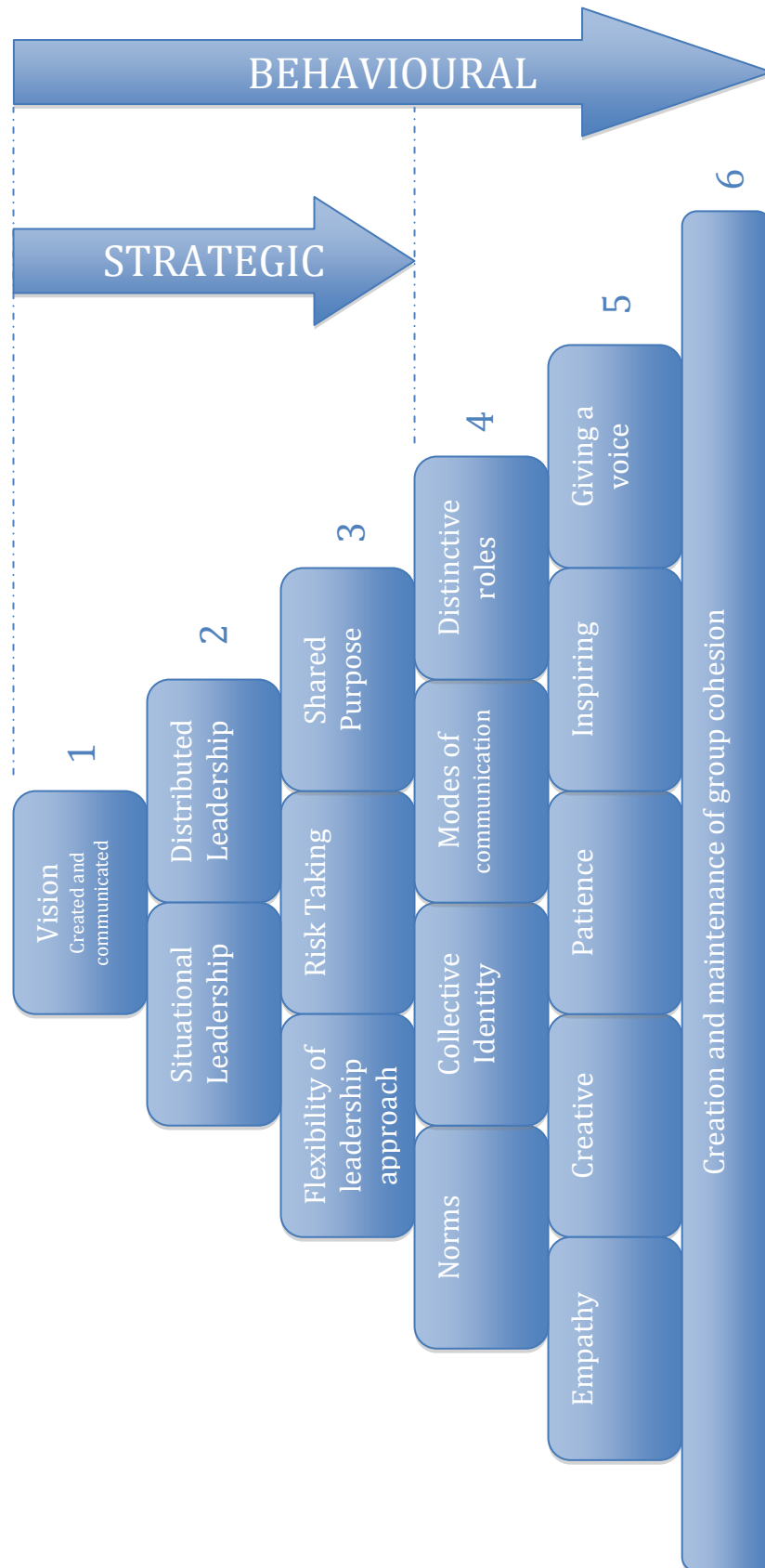
6.2 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

A main strength of this study lies in my status as an insider researcher. This gave me the opportunity to collect views and perceptions of those involved with Company B, but also gain inside access to Company A. I therefore had privileged access to rich and reliable data for my research. However my relationship with Company B for ten years could also be seen as a limitation, as it maybe difficult to look at the Company with fresh eyes without bias.

Another strength was being able to triangulate three sources of data: interviews or questionnaires, observations and documentation, to make the findings more reliable. It was also a great strength to be able to capture film footage of Company B, to help analyse and substantiate my findings.

In retrospect, there were several limitations in the research. The first being my initial interviews with the dancers. For the Company B dancers' interviews I fortunately had the LD present to aid the communication using makaton, as my makaton is limited. The LD has a wealth of experience working within SEN, enabling him to gain perceptions that I may not have been able to achieve. Interviews with Company A dancers were conducted alone, which proved very challenging, particularly due to the lack of familiarity in comparison to Company B. That aside, whilst recognising these communication challenges, much rich data was gained and this could be seen as quite rare when researching with PWLD.

Due to time constraints, only three dancers from each company were interviewed. It should be recognised that, whist essential and fascinating, interviews of this nature are very time consuming and can result in limited data, largely due to specific communication challenges.

Although interviews with the dancers were a useful tool, there were still limitations in the data collated; therefore another method was tried with Company B. This involved asking the dancers two questions: how does Company B make you feel? How would you feel if Company B ended? The dancers were then asked to express their feeling through movement. The dancers found this quite difficult particularly as it was done in silence. The researcher did not want music to influence their perceptions. One dancer in particular understood the concept but the others found this a challenge. Due to this result this was not tried with the dancers at Company A, as it did not feel appropriate to ask the dancers.

A limitation that was evident from the start of the research was that it would not be reliable to use the GEQ to measure the group cohesion of the companies, due to the small number of dancers within each company. Therefore to measure the group cohesion a qualitative approach was employed, using Carron et al. (2008) four categories; focusing on leadership.

This was an ambitious study, as group cohesion and leadership are extensive concepts with multiple theories. The analysis therefore in places tends to be superficial and over generalised. By focusing only on one emergent issue, i.e. situational leadership, it would have been possible to go into greater detail.

6.3 EMERGENT RECOMMENDATIONS

A recommendation for leaders/ artists/ facilitators who are interested and passionate about working with PWLD would be to have a strong vision with robust future plans, which in turn will make the company appealing to prospective funders. Support from major funders also serves to raise the profile of the company making the work recognised and accepted by the community and beyond.

Another recommendation would be to create time for capacity building within the company, as succession will be key to the continuation and survival of companies. This could involve training artists/ facilitator/ leaders within the company's environment through coaching, mentoring, delegating and directing (Situational Leadership). However to be able to gain support and funding to do so, policy makers need to understand more deeply the challenges of such companies, recognise the characteristics of success, and fully support training opportunities to encourage more individuals to enter this field. Both companies are at present, striving towards this with the Inclusive Dance Practice Training scheme (Company A) and the project in partnership with MENCAP, MAC and Company B. Both initiatives aspire to leave a legacy of passionate artists/ leaders working in this field.

Clearly from this research it is evident there is a severe shortage of such opportunities for young PWLD once they leave school. This is due to many barriers, however this research has highlighted principles of good practice and it is hoped that this will support others working in these contexts.

6.4 IDEAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In addition to what was investigated during the study, in hindsight it would have been interesting to research dance companies involving PWLD that had folded. This however, would never be as rich in data, as it would not be possible to observe the intraorganisational climate of the companies. However some relevant information may be gained from speaking to those previously involved, to uncover any factors that contributed to their demise. One such opportunity might have involved Blue Eyed Soul (BES), a dance company similar to those researched. BES recently had their regular funding cut by ACE (Freeman, 2011). This company formed in 1984 following collaboration with Cando Co, once again demonstrating the power partnership and collaboration can have in this field (Stenton, 2010 and ACE, 2010a). Unfortunately, with funding cut the company has been forced to close. This event coincides with the culmination of this research, proving that a lot of work remains.

The researcher hopes that this study will contribute to the awareness that surrounds disability dance and will result in greater number of opportunities being made available for PWLD. It has been a learning process; all was not as straightforward as it had looked. For example, I underestimated the challenge of moving into a new arena for dancers with learning difficulties and the time it takes to build trust and confidence to communicate with participants. However, many valuable strategies were tried and some interesting results emerge from a unique study using two companies for PWLD.

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