

And presenting papers

DTAA members Elizabeth Loughlin, Maeve Larkin and Tessa Hens all presented papers at the second joint congress of Dance and the Child international (daCi) and World Dance Alliance (WDA) Global Education and Training Network. Driven by the question of ‘How can dance help in transforming society?’ the joint congress was held in Adelaide, Australia, 8-13 July 2018. We are pleased to print Elizabeth’s Abstract and reflections of the event from Maeve. Then an Abstract from Tess and colleague, Samantha Smrekar Thompson’s presentation, followed by a further reflection from Tess.

Panpapanpalya 2018, 2nd joint World Dance Congress

Dancing eyebrows, rhythmic knees, surging bodies: When Dance starts

Elizabeth Loughlin



The paper ‘Dancing Eyebrows....’ will draw on the thinking about movement of the prenatal baby (Piontelli, 2010), the baby’s neurological openness (Gopnick, 2009), and the baby’s rapid

developing motor and social communication (Stern, 1995) to describe and track ‘When Dance starts’.

The fetus tumbling in the womb, the baby in mother’s arms shaping together to rhymes and soft melodies, the standing older baby with eyes shining and knees bending to the insistent slow rock rhythm, the mobile early toddler surging in new directions, Dance confirms the infant’s wonder and excitement with the world. Photo images, video excerpts, and parent questionnaire will illustrate the processes in this early dance.

Babies are remarkable beings, but not always as visible or resourced as other early childhood ages. The presentation will also comment on the pathways, and the challenges in offering these infant pleasurable dance experiences in the community and health settings.

Gopnick, A. (2009). *The philosophical baby*.

New York: Picador.

Piontelli, A. (2010). *Development of normal fetal movements*. Milan: Springer.

Stern, D. (1985). *The motherhood constellation*.

New York: Basic Books.

Loughlin, E. (2017). Dance movement therapy: An aesthetic experience to foster wellbeing in vulnerable mothers and infants. Chapter 42, V. Karkou, S. Oliver, & S. Lycouris (Eds.) (2017). *The Oxford handbook of dance and wellbeing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

* * * *

The paper noted that the baby is in movement from early in pregnancy and continues after birth with increasing movement and shaping to mother’s physical form. It illustrated through video the fast changes that accompany the vertical in the older infant, walking at two years.

Presentation of the content analysis of the questionnaire showed how much parents noticed: ‘Create a space aesthetically and musically’, ‘freedom but not a free for all’ and more. The paper concluded with an engaging video of mother and baby in a mutually responsive rolling dance to Erik Satie.

It was clear in the questions following, in both the mother-baby parent-older infant dance and Maeve’s beautiful paper with video illustration, that dance movement therapy with the dancer’s thinking mind and understanding of human development is so helpful in creating dance experience in the beginning and in the older years of life.

Elizabeth Loughlin

Lieto creative dance

Reflectioning on Panpapanpalya 2018

Maeve Larkin



In July this year I attended the 2nd Joint World Dance Congress hosted by Dance for the child international and the World Dance Alliance held in Adelaide (8th -13th July 2018). The interwoven themes of dance, gathering, generations and learning

were summarised in the Aboriginal Kurna word Panpapanpalya to celebrate and honour our own rich indigenous dance practices plus indigenous dance cultures from around the world.

I experienced a disappointing and stressful start as my early Monday morning flight was cancelled and as I was due to present my paper at 2.30 that day, I wondered if I would get there on time. However, after a 2 hour delay I was on my way and relieved to meet up with Elizabeth Loughlin and her daughter Jess. Over a welcome coffee we figured out how to somewhat navigate the SA Uni campus and find our way to the designated room for the mornings Scholarly Gatherings and Elizabeth's presentation. We were surprised that the room was not set up and there was no one to assist the speakers who set up the room, introduced each other and kept the time. All three presentations were interesting and varied including "Teaching Older Dancers" by Katrina Rank from Ausdance, A video presentation of a choreographic installation called the "Child is present" created by Laura Navdrup Black from Denmark and Elizabeth's "Dancing Eyebrows, rhythmic knees and surging bodies: When dance starts." Elizabeth spoke from the perspective of her community dance classes with babies and mothers supported by photos and video snippets which highlighted her presentation. Several people were interested in talking to Elizabeth about her approach and difficulties they had encountered with their community classes.

I noticed throughout the conference that there is a growing interest in dance teachers expanding their teaching practices to include babies/toddlers, mature people plus people with physical disabilities as well as neurological diseases such as Parkinson's and dementia. As the interest grows the need for suitable training programs is also becoming apparent. The interest seems to be growing along with the evidence

from neuroscience highlighting the many benefits of dance for people of all ages and abilities. In some of the discussions it became evident, for example, with Parkinson's and dementia, that there comes a point where people who are no longer able to be supported in the community class, have to leave, which is distressing for everyone involved. This is where DMT's can come into the conversation and work with the dance community a) in offering our expertise and insights into training programs for dance teachers and b) as referral sources for individual or small group DMT sessions when there are concerns.

In the afternoon I was due to present my paper at the Scholarly Gatherings, but misread the starting time, so when I arrived Ralph Buck and Carlene Newall de Jesus from NZ were well into their presentation "Dance and Dementia, Don't Forget to Play." However, I did arrive in time for a playful balloon activity in small groups which centred me for my turn. My presentation, "Embodied Self in Dementia Care" focused on how dance and movement can tap into an embodied self which can still relate and interact with others and the environment, despite severe dementia. Non verbal expressions are often perceived as symptoms of a diseased brain causing behaviours which need to be managed, rather than as meaningful communication about unmet needs. I was pleased to receive favourable comments.

After the first day I was able to relax and enjoy the rest of the congress. Highlights for me included an evening children's dance performance where it was lovely to see varied styles, and be surprised by quirkiness and humour, as well as be moved by artistic expression and beauty. Early morning dance classes, a day of different dance styles and intensities back to back, was paradise for me. Entertaining keynotes, were other highlights. "Make Your Move: Creating Change by Kate Dawson with Andrea Beckham, illustrated with movement making various points throughout the presentation, and the Twinning Projects where young dancers from different countries around the world paired up using technology to develop their ideas and integrate them into a performance piece (rehearsing for this during the week). I left reluctantly to catch my plane, and had to leave behind the large, glossy booklet of the weeks program which was very heavy and would have tipped me over the carry on luggage limit!

Dancing for connection, growth and learning: The use of movement and dance in a specialist early learning setting

Abstract from: Tessa Hens and Samantha Smrekar Thompson

This presentation examines the role of dance in early childhood learning for children with special needs. It shares insights from a project undertaken to identify how dance is used, and the outcomes it contributes to children with disabilities, many of whom rely on non-verbal communication. This project was cited in the Early Learning Program (ELP) at Port Phillip Specialist School (PPSS), where play-based learning is advocated and the Victorian Early Learning and Development Framework is adapted for each child.

In the ELP dance is used as a teaching tool. Samantha Smrekar Thompson and Tessa Hens do not lead formal dance sessions, and dance is not oriented toward performance in their space.

Rather, dance is used in spontaneous play and teaching interactions to support students' progress towards a range of learning outcomes linked to motor skills, communication, social skills, connection, and emotional and sensory regulation.

This presentation offers four case studies, augmented by video excerpts and photos of students, which illustrate learning across a range of domains enhanced by movement and dance. PPSS in Victoria is internationally recognised for using visual and performing arts as engagement tools in teaching literacy, numeracy and life skills to students with special needs ranging from 2.8 – 18 years old.

A reflection on the congress

Tess Hens

The Panpapanpalya Conference under the auspices of the 'Dance and the Child International (daCi) and the World Dance Alliance (WDA) was hosted by University of South Australia and the Adelaide College of the Arts in July this year. The six day event was an inspiring gathering of eight hundred delegates of all ages (children and adults), from all around the world, with a shared desire to engage in inter-cultural and inter-generational dance experiences, debate and interaction. The opening ceremony was particularly beautiful, show-casing traditional Australian Indigenous dance from many parts of Australia. It celebrated truly inter-generational dance and story-telling. Mornings opened with 'Taster' dance sessions including classes for 'Seated Dance', Flamenco, Javanese Dance, Ugandan Dance, Contact Improvisation, Inclusive Dance and dance fusing Contemporary Dance with traditional Indigenous dance



forms. Every evening there were collaborative performances by children and adults from all around the world. Days were made up of multiple practical workshops and scholarly gatherings focussed on a huge variety of topics relating to the way dance can enhance community connection; express cultural identity; support social inclusion and increase wellbeing in a plethora of settings. The conference's website is still operational with its program available and well worth an explore if you are interested in attending in future: <http://www.jointdancecongress2018.com/> daCi and the WDA are due to hold their next conference in Toronto, Canada in a few year's time.

Sam (presenting with Tess and article co-author) and I were very excited to be able to share our presentation and dialogue with many professionals from around the world about connections between dance, early-life wellbeing, play, learning and supporting young people with disabilities. We were so inspired by our time at the conference we are already discussing how we might further our work, with a view to developing some inclusive play-based dance programs in future! On reflecting on our conference experiences and on the many

interesting dialogues we had with other professionals, we were struck most by the capacity of dance to advocate for human interaction that is authentic in nature. That is dance enables meaningful connection, in spite of, or even better because of, cultural, age-related or personal differences. The extraordinarily vast

array of applications of dance across the world's many cultures we witnessed at this conference bears witness to this special capacity and opens-up many exciting possibilities for the roles dance can play in our communities.

And about the previously published article that led to the presentation.....

Dancing to grow, learn and connect: the benefits of dance movement therapy and creative dance



Tess dancing with child – courtesy 'Source Kids Magazine'

moment a teacher and three young children living with Autism have connected, developing their social skills, communication, gross motor skills and experiencing sensory regulation through the enjoyable act of dance. (Thompson and Hens, 2017)

And From a simple 'Ring a ring a rosie' circle dance, the children in this scenario coordinated left and right to gallop, used spatial reasoning to move in a circle with other bodies, used large muscle groups to move up and down along vertical planes and moved to shared rhythms, developing temporal awareness. (Thompson and Hens, 2017)

The full article is freely available from the website. Copy in: [Dancing to grow learn and connect: the benefits of dance movement therapy and creative dance](#)

Source Kids is a relatively new Australian free publication that delivers valuable information to those who care for, or work with children with special needs. That is carers, parents, health professionals and teachers amongst others. It is in an easily readable magazine form.

See: <https://www.sourcekids.com.au/about>

Be sure to see the article previously published by Tess and Samantha, in *Source Kids magazine, Summer 2017*. This is a lovely appealing publication with the joy and the spontaneity of the dance shining through the writing.

Gabi runs to her teacher, Anika, tugs on her hand and says: 'Ring a Ring a Rosie!'. Anika smiles, accepting Gabi's invitation. She joins hands with Gabi and launches into a gallop spinning in circles and singing. Before long other children have seen the dance and join the circle. In this small