

A Critical Reflection for the Festival Project throughout Term 2

Within this critical reflection I will be evaluating the theme of collaboration throughout the festival project so far, in terms of my contribution and production role. I am creating a contemporary piece with three dancers for the theatre, surrounding the exploration of barriers and obstacles and I am on the technical team for my production role.

The creative process for my contribution so far has been a collaboration between myself and the dancers in terms of creative input and choreographic ownership, majority of the material made so far has been from the dancers. Within rehearsals I have been delivering improvisation tasks in relation to the research I have done for the piece, the dancers then used findings from the improvisation to inform the creation of material. I have then been working with each dancer to develop their material with my own techniques related to the theme of the piece, for example restricting the space they can move in, adapting the quality and dynamics of their movement and taking away the use of certain body parts to act as an obstacle. Overall, I think this process has been beneficial for creating movement, whilst allowing each dancer to show their individuality, still cohesive due to being created from the same stimulus. However, I do feel that I could improve on my communication because some of my ideas are not translating to the dancers. Recently I have been reverting back to some improvisation tasks and phrases because the movement created was looking 'pretty', but with the nature of the tasks and themes of the piece I was looking for movement that was punchy in quality. This was especially evident when we worked on creating barriers for one another.

Within the technical department I have been collaborating with Jess, Charlotte, and the first years. With us having quite a large team, I suggested splitting the group up into 3 smaller teams with one third year as a representative, this allowed us to share the workload evenly as a team. Each team is responsible for five performances within the festival, and we made sure that these pieces were split evenly between the teams in terms of tech requirements and where they will be performed. This is to ensure that all team members get a rounded experience throughout the festival. Up until now, I have found it hard to delegate jobs to the first years because we haven't had many tasks to complete, but I believe splitting into smaller teams has been effective in terms of involving them in the process as much as I can. I think that collaboration has been good in terms of communication and working together so far, but I feel that I will have more to reflect on when we have more responsibilities, closer to the festival days.

Overall, I can see the importance of collaboration for both working towards my contribution and with the technical team effectively. From now, I need to work on communicating with my dancers and understand that its okay to tell them that some material might not be exactly what I was imagining. However, I also recognise that collaboration involves individuality, so I will be working towards finding a balance of these.

Word Count: 546**A Critical Reflection for the Festival Project throughout Term 3**

In this reflection I will be critically evaluating my work within term 3 of festival project, with a focus on how I've found collaborating within my production role and festival contribution.

Across term 3, I have continued to work collaboratively with the dancers through a task-based process, but I have focused on my communication and delivery of these. When reflecting on this in term 2, I felt that some tasks were not translating from myself to the dancers effectively, therefore I have been giving more in-depth explanations of the tasks and improvisations. When speaking to the dancers about our process, one of the dancers asked for further support and explanations for improvisation tasks. For example, in one rehearsal I asked the dancers to improvise from the ideas of tension and release, therefore I expanded on this by giving prompts such as 'imagine you're a balloon blowing up and then deflating', 'can you reach to your bodies extremities and then make yourself as small as possible – think about your use of volume here' and 'you could use levels to help you explore this'. I found that expanding on these ideas was beneficial for all dancers in the process because it gave them more to experiment with and encouraged them to try new ways of approaching movement. This overall resulted in more disparity between different tasks within rehearsals, which is a clear improvement from my reflections in term 2.

I saw a positive shift in this element of collaboration when we revisited the idea of obstruction through contact. I showed the dancers a video of early contact improvisation (Klubki, 2011) and we had a conversation about the relationship between the dancers and movement quality in the video. We noticed that the movement was much more rigid, there didn't seem to be much care when passing through movements and the core contact technique that we have worked with wasn't clear, I especially noticed jumping into lifts. However, I wanted to ensure that I was engaging with safe dance practice throughout my rehearsals, especially as two of my dancers were working with injury, and jumping into lifts could have caused further injury. We focused on using rigid movement and using the whole body to restrict the dancer at a closer proximity to the previous experiment. I also asked the dancers to draw away from what the movement looked like and instead feel like they were wrestling one another, which again supported the theme of obstruction that I was looking for. Overall, throughout this rehearsal I found that having

both a visual influence and an explanation further supported the dancers in expressing my vision through their movement.

As previously mentioned, two of dancers have been working with injury throughout this term. Therefore, we collaborated to ensure the choreography was safe and not preventing recovery. I have been working with injury myself this past year, so I have practiced translating and adapting movement “to accommodate the injury restrictions” (Daniels, 2014). The collaborative approach consisted of communication, support, and offerings of adaptations, to ensure all dancers were safe. For example, we found different approaches and revisited some tasks and material we had created up until this point and found one of the dancers’ injuries was being agitated within the contact section. Therefore, we dedicated one rehearsal to adapting this and found solutions such as changing the area of contact to the other shoulder or switching lifting roles to the other dancer. I did find that the original idea of obstructing one another through qualities of wrestling and rigid movement shifted because of this, instead we focused on tangling and getting in the way of one another. During this process I had to remind myself that the dancer’s injury and recovery came first and that the execution of this section shifting was okay. The work is about understanding barriers to make dance more accessible therefore, collaborating with the dancers and their injuries gave me an authentic experience of working with barriers and adapting throughout the process.

Within the technical department this term I have been collaborating with Dance City’s Technical Manager (Nick Rogerson) and Assistant (Jess Avery) for both my contribution and production role. My contribution included the use of props such as muslin fabric and rope to act as physical obstacles within the piece. I collaborated with both Nick and Jess to understand how the material was going to be rigged and dropped within the piece, because I didn’t want it to stay there for the duration of the work, and due to budget constraints, we were not able to hire Kabuki’s to drop the material electronically. Therefore, we had to research and build a manual Kabuki with the materials we already had at Dance City which included, a pole hung by rope from the rig, containing 4 hang points for the curtain (half couplers) and we attached a lever with a long piece of rope to the pole, which when pulled would rotate the pole, resulting in the curtain falling off the hang points. I arranged an extra testing day in the theatre with both Nick and Jess to test the manual approach was successful, and I was able to be included in the process of building and rigging this for the performance due to being part of the technical team as my production role.

Collaboration within the technical team played large part of ensuring that the festival ran smoothly in the preparation and performances on the day. However, I have found it difficult to share the workload evenly with the team in terms of administrative tasks such as sending out emails, collating technical requirement forms and creating and developing the technical schedule. Throughout this term I have worked with the mindset

that if something needs to be done, I complete the task at the soonest possible time which meant there were no delays in meeting deadlines. However, I often found myself overwhelmed and completing a lot of the teams' tasks alone because of this. Reflecting on this now, I feel I could have asked for more help and delegated to the first years on my team because when I did ask, they were happy to support me.

In comparison to this, I felt the workload on the festival day was manageable as we worked on the performances that we were responsible for, as decided in term two. The day was still very busy for us as a whole team but, I felt I was able to have breaks when needed because we had split the practical workload evenly within our smaller teams. As a team we knew who needed to be where at what time and what our tasks were, I believe this is because we collaborated and made a tech schedule and rota just for our team. This was also beneficial when cross referencing with the schedule for the festival ground roles, as we were able to let the scheduling team know if we were not available for these. Communication and planning were an integral part of the smooth running of the tech within the festival, we supported one another by asking questions and finding solutions together, and with Dance City's technical team if needed. We also communicated in the tech box via head sets to the runners to ensure all dancers were ready to perform and once the performances started, we were able to communicate and support one another with the sound and lighting cues. The reason we were able to support one another with lighting and sound cues was because we ensured that we attended the technical rehearsal of each work we were responsible for. Due to this, each work had a minimum of 3 people who understood the lighting and sound cues, which meant that if someone needed to step in on the day and help, they were prepared to. This was especially effective when one of the first years and I had to run three of the performances alone due to a maintenance issue, one of these performances being a promenade which moved through the social space, studio 1 and the theatre. Being the only two available at the time we had to plan and prepare for each section before they began, this meant turning on the setting lights in each location and ensuring the music cue was ready to be played. We also had a conversation before the work started so that we had a realistic plan to keep the work running smoothly through all three locations. We decided that I would support with the running of the music and lighting for the beginning of each section, and I would pass this on to the first year for the ending, this meant that I was able to move locations before each section finished, to ensure there was someone available to start the next section. We were able to stay calm throughout the running of this work because we had collaborated effectively with communication and preparation, resulting in the smooth running of the work.

Overall, I believe collaboration has been the key focus in working effectively with others for both my contribution and production role and when I have identified areas for improvement, the main solution has involved better collaboration with my peers, staff,

and dancers. The festival project has allowed me to expand on my collaborative practice by reflecting on and applying improvements throughout the module.

Word Count: 1,577

Bibliography:

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