

# Comprovisation: Optimising Professional Classical Ballet Training for Adolescents

## Abstract

Little research has explored different types of movement modalities that may influence the benefits of creativity and positive learning environments on young pre-professional dance students. Improvisation tasks focusing on a given theme- termed Comprovisation, may offer a method of enhancing the learning experience for this group. Research (from Torrents et.al, 2015) showed that movements executed with a large range or amplitude of motion were considered by experts to be more beautiful. Training dancers' kinaesthetic awareness in order for amplitude, or "Breadth of Movement" (BOM) to develop, can potentially be achieved with the implementation of Comprovisation. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether Comprovisation integrated into classical ballet training of young pre-professional ballet dancers, benefits BOM. Furthermore, it was studied whether Comprovisation supports a task involving environment and satisfies Basic Psychological Needs (BPN). Ethical approval was granted by the Faculty of Human Science and parental consent was obtained for the seven female participants, 11-13 years of age. Methods: A ballet enchainement danced by all participants was filmed before and after a three-minute intervention of either guided practice or Comprovisation. During the guided practice interventions, the participants were encouraged to repeatedly practice the steps from the enchainement while concentrating on developing the BOM within their dancing. When the participants executed Comprovisation interventions the focus was also on developing BOM, but here the participants improvised on a given theme that supported the idea of expansive movements. For example, whilst improvising, they were to imagine that they were wearing the room as if it was a giant body suit, and that when they moved, the room moved with them. Six pre and post intervention video recordings of ballet enchainements were collected and shown to the participants. They then, as a group, rated their dancing on a scale for BOM for each pre and post recording. An expert also rated the observed BOM. In this way it was possible to see if the perceived BOM had changed from the pre intervention recording to the post intervention recording. For example, increase in the score for BOM of a rond de jamb enchainement, where a guided practice intervention was used was 3 from the participants and 5 from the expert. In contrast, increase in the score for BOM of a tendu enchainement, where a Comprovisation intervention was used was 20 from the participants and 10 from the expert. On an individual basis an open (written) questionnaire on the participants' experiences with Comprovisation was completed in order to detect whether BPN had been met. Interrater agreement for the BOM ratings was checked using the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC). Results: Comprovisation interventions had a greater effect on BOM than guided practice. In a two-way mixed effects test for consistency, a moderate degree of reliability was found between the average measurements. The average measure ICC was .714

with a 95% confidence interval from .007 to .918 ( $F(11, 11) = 3.499, p < .05$ ). Questionnaire responses showed that Comprovisation supported BPN within a task involving environment. In conclusion, utilisation of Comprovisation within this small sample group was able to aid the development of creativity, artistry, musicality, cognitive flexibility, and motor ability for the group. Moreover, it was shown that Comprovisation brought positive impulses and resilience for life within and outside of the dance studio for these participants.