

From Studio to Sector: How Practice - Based Learning Powers Dance Employability

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BA (Hons) Dance



Validated in 2007

Undergraduate Dance degree
to challenge the Eurocentric
dance canon

Diverse Dance Practices

Popping	Salsa
Locking	Lindy Hop
House	Breaking
Hip Hop	Modern Afro
Bharatanatyam	Contemporary

Industry Specific Contexts

Stage, screen, studios, clubs
and other community / social
spaces



BA (Hons) Dance



Providing a strong platform

Identifying cultural similarities & differences

Underpinning their learning & develop their own practice

Practice - based approach



BA (Hons) Dance



Providing a strong platform

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Practice - based approach

Understood as supervised and structured workplace experience where students can apply and consolidate knowledge

Learning through practical application, 'realworld' experiences and embedding in the industry

Embedded across the degree

Enables students to develop skills, competencies & professional readiness required - creative industry

Transferrable skills across a diverse range of professional fields

Central to our pedagogic content & design



BA (Hons) Dance - Framework

Examples of practice-based learning and how it can support with employability

FOUR PILLARS

01

Dance
Techniques &
Practices

02

Choreographic
Development

03

Employability
& Skills

04

Theory into
Practice

BA (Hons) Dance



“Where appropriate, the course rejects the idea of theory and practice as binary oppositions, and alternatively, students are encouraged to consider how their developing embodied knowledge informs their critical thinking skills, and vice versa. This is reinforced by the structure of learning in the studio and classroom, which features a combination of moving, doing, thinking, reading, writing, watching and discussion across all modules.”

Trim-Vamben, C and Read, J. (2023) 'Questioning Values in the Delivery of Dance Practices at the University of East London', in Colin, C. Seago and K. Stamp (eds.), *Ethical Agility in Dance: Rethinking Technique in British Contemporary Dance*. Routledge,



Dance Techniques in Practice: Anatomy, Culture and Employability

Popping and Locking | Practice-Based Learning at UEL

Fred Folkes –
Senior Lecturer in
Dance Techniques

What Students Develop in Technique Training

- **Style-specific vocabulary** and technical accuracy
- **Kinesthetic awareness** & alignment
- **Cultural and social** context of movement
- **Reflective practice** & goal-setting
- **Safe dance practice** for longevity

Technique for Sustainable Dance Practice

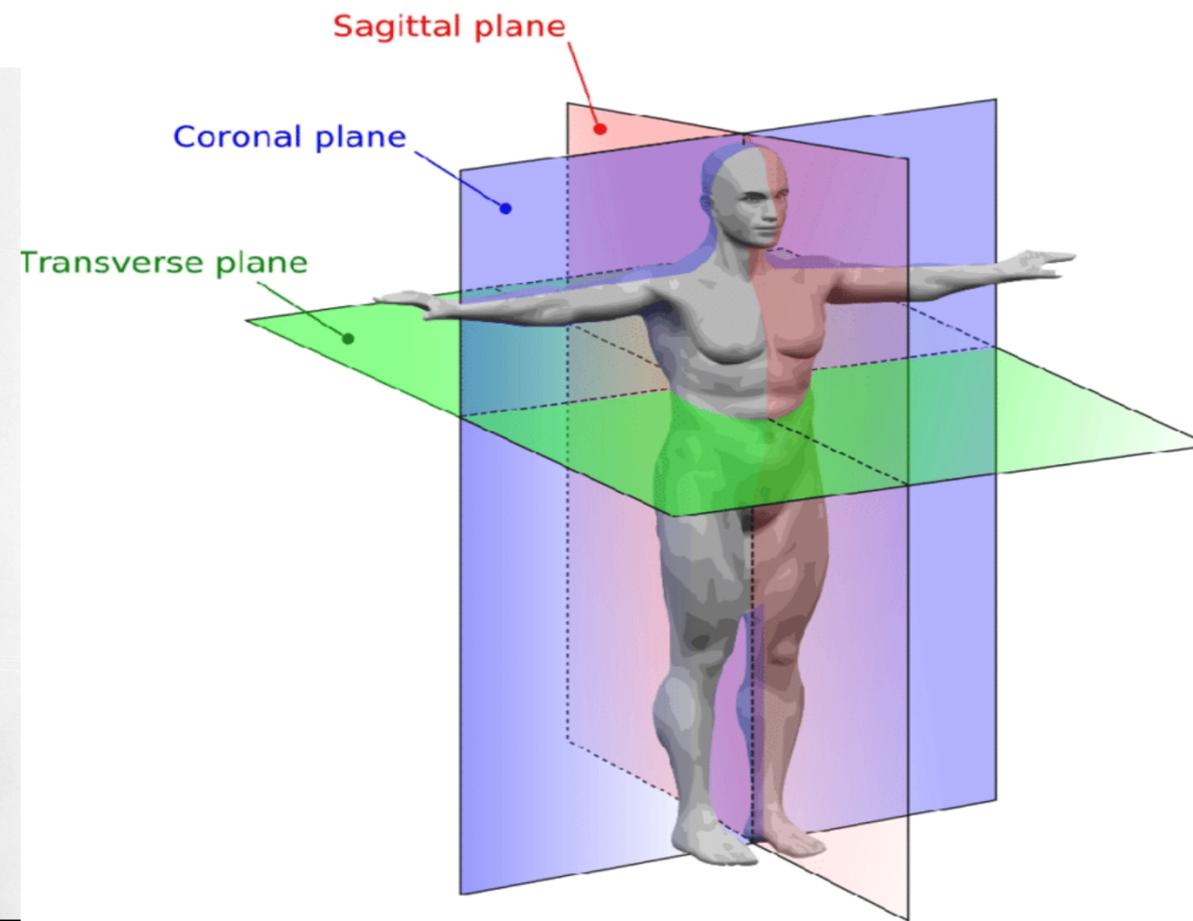
- **Anatomy & planes** of movement
- **Injury prevention & alignment**
- **Nutrition, fitness & recovery**
- **Professional preparation** for rehearsal and performance

From Movement to Meaning

The Twist 1960

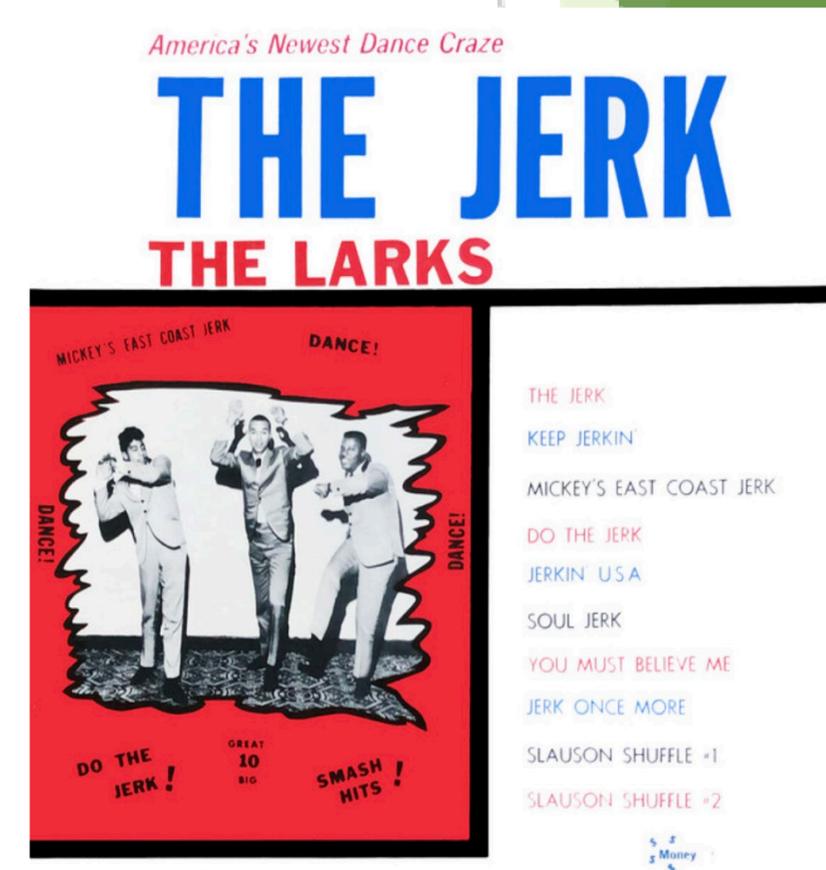


Popular social dance



Alignment, control and safe practice

The Jerk 1964



Articulation & musicality

From Studio Skills to Employability

Studio Practice	Employability Skill	Learning Outcomes
Technical accuracy & vocabulary	Professional discipline & communication	L02
Reflective journaling & feedback	Self-evaluation & adaptability	L03, L08
Peer collaboration	Teamwork & interpersonal skills	L08
Safe dance practice	Sustainability & career longevity	L07
Cultural awareness	Contextual intelligence & ethical practice	L03

Why This Matters

- Technique as **embodied knowledge**
- Reflection as **professional practice**
- **Culture as context**, not decoration
- **Sustainability as employability**

Choreographic Development

Our Practice-Based Teaching approach on the Choreography Strand of the BA (Hons) Dance Course is multi-faceted and focuses on developing professional skills students will need to be choreographers in the UK dance industry and worldwide:

- Appreciation of creative play and experimentation (R&D - Research & Development)
- Creative collaboration between peers (in group projects), creative collaborators (composers, costume designers, videographers), lecturers, guest lecturers and the Performing Arts Tech team (including at The Source).



Choreographic Development

- Knowledge and Understanding of the building blocks of making dance work, including choosing a stimuli, methods of motif development and generating movement material, choreographic devices and compositional structures, the use of partner work, the relationship between sound/music and movement, and tools for performing with intention, presence and authenticity.
- Artistic direction of all aspects of dance production: costume, props, lighting design, filming and editing.



Assessment Outcomes

In each of the three years of our course, the assessment outcome is different and aims to foster choreographic abilities in a range of professional contexts:

Level 4 - Group stage choreography, performed live in a sharing setting at the end of the term. It provides the students their first opportunity to create dance work with each other and explore the building blocks of choreography learnt on the module.

Level 5 - Screendance project (a short dance film) in which they learn a range of approaches and techniques to create, film and edit dance for screen contexts. Introduces students to the relevance of dance-making in the digital age and as a tool for social activism.

Assessment Outcomes

Level 6 - In Term 1, this is a solo “work-in-progress” excerpt, performed live at a “Scratch Lab” Sharing to an intimate audience of ACI faculty, HPLs and GLs on the course (dance industry artists) and external professionals who are champions of the course

In Term 2, the students are guided through the full experience of what it is like to be an Artistic Director and Choreographer of a dance project: directing a group of L4 & L5 dancers, creating movement and/or planning creative tasks for the dance studio, organising schedules and booking studios, collaborating with a composer or composing the music themselves, creating costumes and sets, and technical experience setting the lighting design with the Performing Arts Tech team at The Source.

Knowledge Transfer from Industry Professionals



Michelle Norton (Director of Breakin' Convention) – constructive feedback for L6 Solo sharing and auditioning opportunities to Breakin' Convention



Luke Lentès (Choreographer & Director of podcast The Capsule) & Seeta Patel (Olivier-nominated Bharatanatyam choreographer) – creative feedback in Sharing Labs



Kenrick Sandy (AD of Boy Blue) – Co-lecturer on L6 Solo module in Term 1



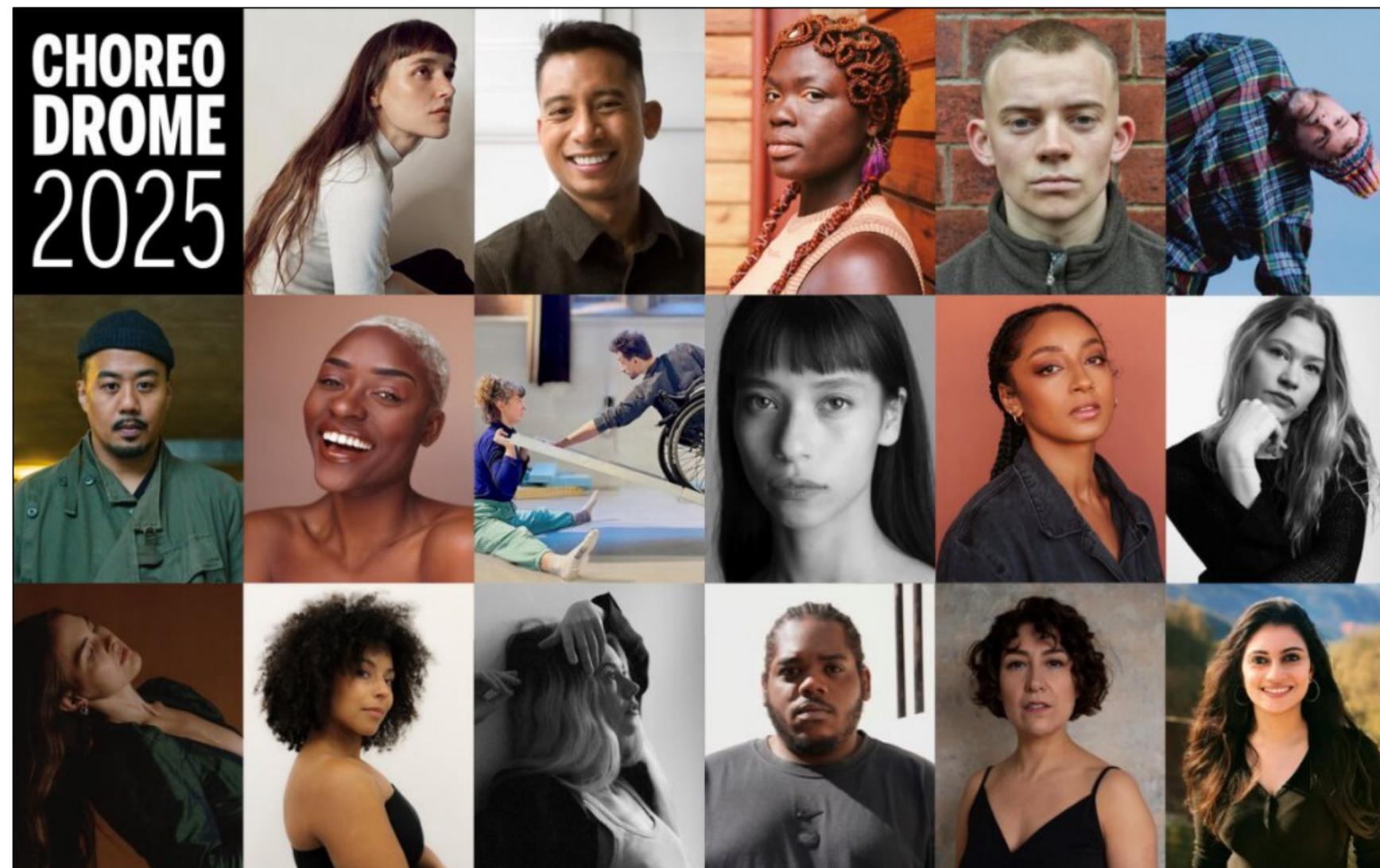
Olu Alatise (AD of AfroQueens) – master choreography workshop with L4 students



Botis Seva (Olivier Award-winning Choreographer & AD of Far From The Norm) – master class on solo and group choreography methods for L4 and L6 students

Gary Clarke

- 2024/25 Graduate
- Chosen as 1 of 17 UK artists for Choreodrome 2025, The Place's prestigious choreographic residency
- Included a £2,500 commission, studio time, production support, creative feedback and opportunities to network with potential new partners
- Developed and performed his ensemble W-I-P "BANK" explores the significance of cypher culture in Hip Hop
- Mentored by Kloé Dean



Levan Peart

- 2022/23 Graduate
- Creative Entrepreneur, Filmmaker and Choreographer
- Awarded choreographic residency at Breakin' Convention's "Back to the Lab 2025"
- Developed and performed his Hip Hop theatre work "Jungle Boy"
- Ensemble work performed to live music at Greenwich + Docklands Int'l Festival (GDIF) programme, alongside his 17 min experimental film



Tanaka Bingwa

- 2015/16 Graduate
- Performed internationally with Hip Hop theatre company Boy Blue, director Danny Boyle, and artists Anne-Marie, DAVIDO and Nile Rogers.
- Performed on BBC's Greatest Dancer and Lincoln Center, NYC
- Movement Director at Shakespeare's Globe, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and Southwark Playhouse.
- Co-lecturing with me on Level 6 "Final Projects" Choreography module this term



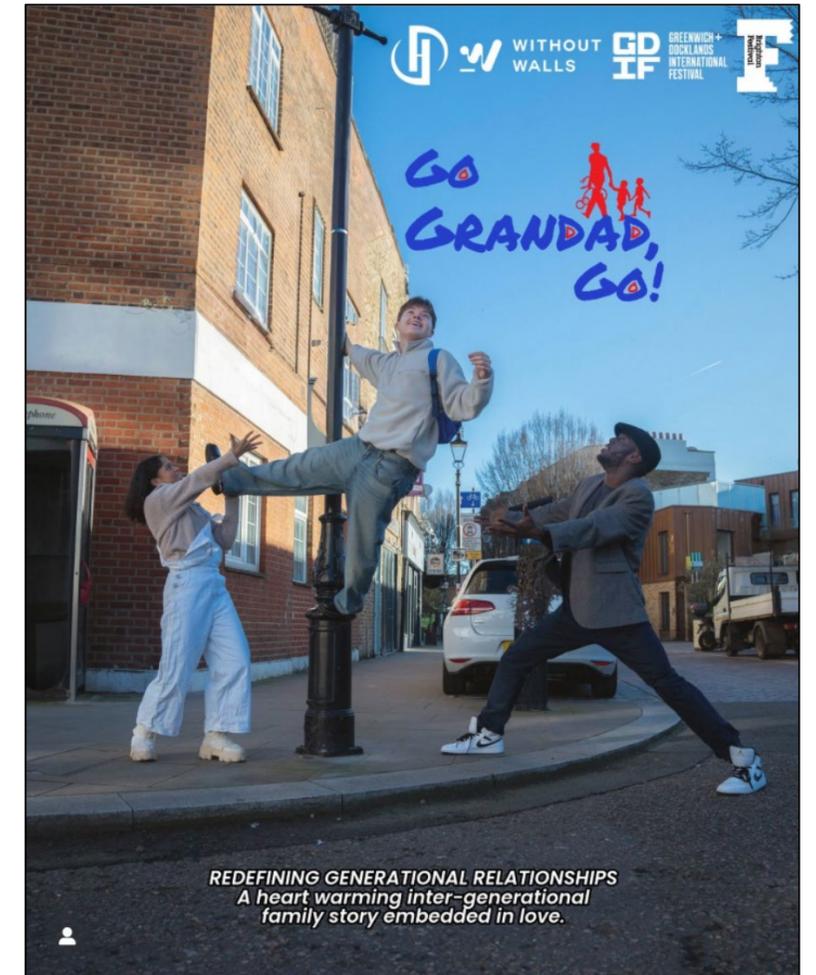
Sophie Erica St. Cyr

- 2024/25 Graduate
- Sophie's work "I/Billy" was the highest marked Final Project from Coll!de last year
- Performed in Levan's "Jungle Boy" this summer at Greenwich Int'l Dance Festival
- Currently performing as an apprenticeship with Olivier-award winning choreographer Dickson Mbi's dance company, for his work "TELLUS" touring internationally this year



Dani Harris-Walters

- 2013/14 Graduate
- Creative Director, DJ, Educator, Choreographer & Artistic Director of Hip Hop Theatre Company DHW
- Performed with Avant Garde Dance, Joseph Toonga, Lil' Simz, Boy Blue & Far From The Norm.
- Company national tours are supported by ACE
- Recently commissioned by arts org Without Walls to create the outdoor work "GO, GRANDAD, GO!" which was performed at GDIF this summer.



**Practice-Based Learning +
Exposure to the methods of Industry Professionals
= Industry-Ready Emerging Artists**



Employability & Skills

Live audience studio sharings of work (to prepare the students to perform in theatre spaces)

Level 4

Reviewing various career pathways (many of which graduates have entered) and presenting, as well as writing a case study, about the pathway that they might be interested in pursuing after graduation)

Preparation for Battling (due to many graduates entering this sector of freelance employment). First years work towards a Term 2 battle during COLL!DE (for their assessment output)

Audition preparation training with a dance industry specialist (currently Nadia Sohawon from FreeYourStyle Agency) which results in students undertaking a live mock audition and creating a casting self-tape (for their assessment)

Employability & Skills

Developing their film editing skills and creating choreographic work for the film

Auditioning and performing for the UEL Dance Collective (an Undergraduate performance company) who perform annually at MOVE IT, COLL!DE and Greenwich+Docklands International Festival)

Level 5

Learning about all of the other areas of employment within the creative arts sector (producing, events management, outreach, finance, social media and marketing) which results in COLL!DE

Creating, producing and delivering their own mini event, which is a fundraiser towards COLL!DE



Employability & Skills

Community Dance

Learning about Teaching pedagogy and being given a live community dance workshop brief to complete a lesson plan, risk assessment and workshop presentation

Industry workshops:

1. Commercial Dance afternoon (Che Barrett-Davis)
2. Developing your graduate portfolio (Fern & Tia)
3. Dancers Network and Equity
4. AJK Agency

Level 6

Community Dance 2

Being given a workshop brief and having to deliver a 30 minute workshop (in groups of 3) to one of our School / College partners

Complete a 20 hour Industry placement and complete a portfolio which includes:

1. Cover letter & CV (aligned to the placement)
2. Professional Learning Plan (PESTLE / SWOT)
3. Reflective Essay on how they have developed 5 transferable skills during the placement

Theory into Practice

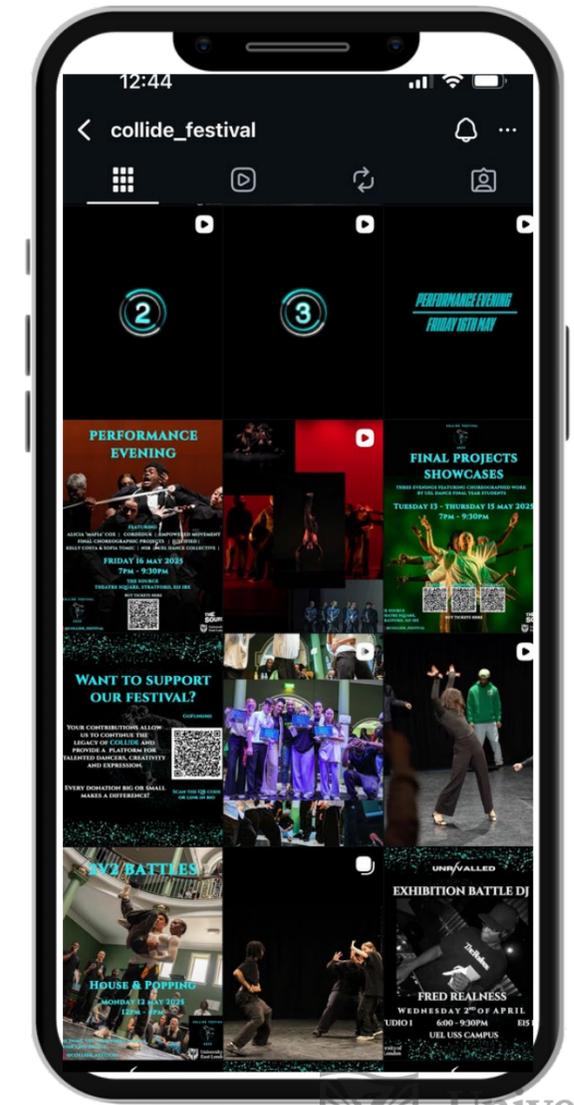
Theory into Practice - Practice into Theory

One cannot be taught without being informed by the other

Embedded across all the modules on the Dance degree

Example of Theory into Practice

COLLIDE Festival



Theory into Practice

COLLIDE Festival - Context & Background

- Level 5 modules Public Project 1 (T1) and Public Project 2 (T2)
- Arts Management & Producing Leadership & Administration

Term 1

'Theory' focused

- Foundational skills & knowledge
- Support them in producing and managing their own festival & events
- Key knowledge, theories and definitions
- Understanding the key areas develop key specific skills

Assessment

- Mini-event (utilising local & in kind resources)
- Funding application £5k (ACE)
- Selfreflective journal

Creative Development

Finance

Funding

Marketing & PR

Technical & Production

Audience Development

Community Development

Health & Safety

Theory into Practice

COLLIDE Festival - Context & Background

- Level 5 modules Public Project 1 (T1) and Public Project 2 (T2)
- Arts Management & Producing Leadership & Administration

Term 2

'Practice' focused

- Putting those foundational skills and knowledge into practice by doing
- Creates a cross collaborative practice
- Develops personal and professional development
- Increases employability
- Boosts confidence in entrepreneurship

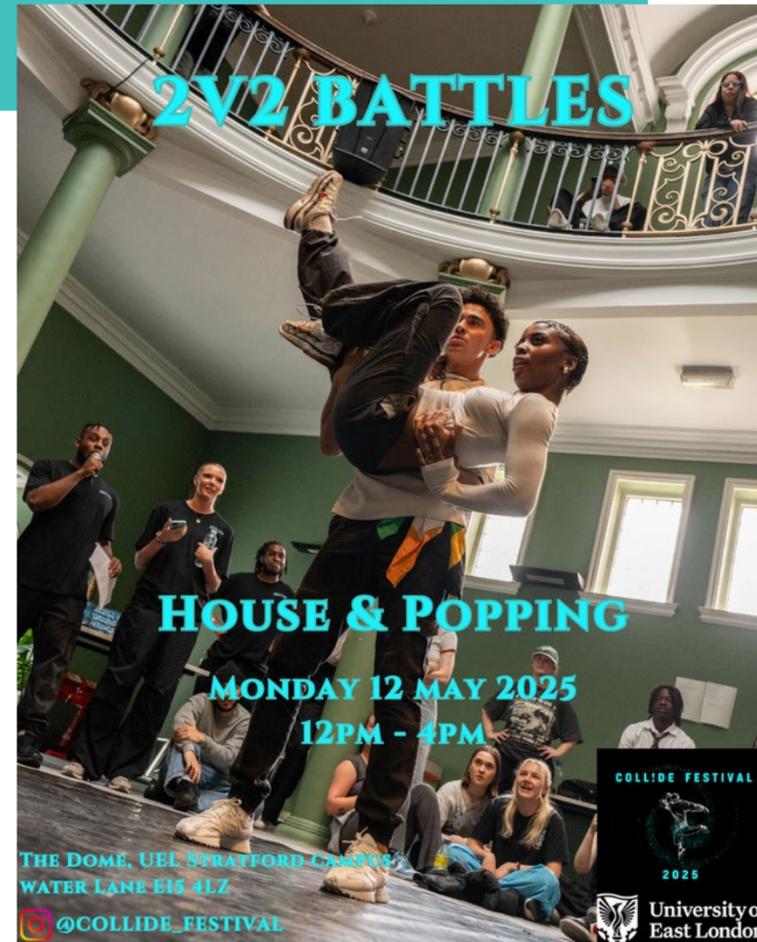
- Students get to know the structure of COLLIDE Festival
- Build from previous years success & legacy
- Get the opportunity to put their own stamp on it
- Part of their learning safe space of the institution and safety net of their lecturers

Assessment

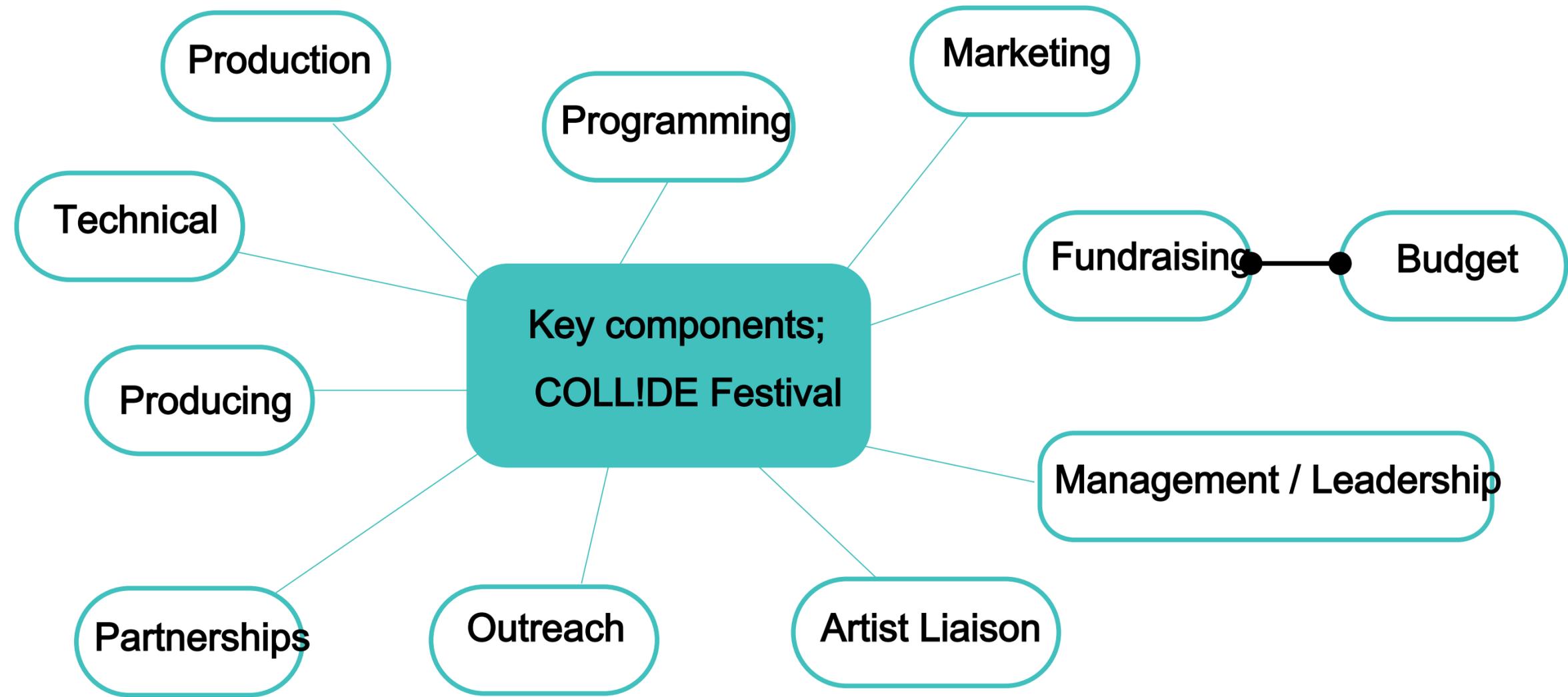
- Showreel
- VIVA
- Supporting documentation
- Written account of role and responsibilities

COLLIDE Festival

- Team with delegated roles & responsibilities
- Senior Lecturers Executive Producers
- Management team
- 3 events- 3 event teams



COLL!DE Festival



COLLIDE Festival

Teaching & learning tool

Students professional portfolio

Fosters industry relationships and connection

Develops new skills - additional employability pathways

Creates paid work / opportunity for graduates & alumni

Standalone product / brand

A 'selling' point for the Dance degree

- A professional and successful UK known Dance Festival
- Works within industry environments and with industry partners
- Generates income
- Supports recruitment
- Provides work placements
- Provides a performance platform for students, graduates/alumni and the wider community of artists and creatives

COLLIDE Festival

Our USP and The Overview

A weeklong Dance festival produced and run by the 2nd year Dance students.

The festival programme includes showcasing the 1st year Dance students assessment (2v2 Battle in Popping and House featuring industry leading judges and DJ) and 3rd year Dance students final choreographic projects, showcased in a professional midscale theatre.

The festival ends with a final Performance evening featuring current students, work from our graduates and feature works from those leading in the industry now.

COLLIDE Student Experience



Questions?

Robert Nicholson - Brown, Fred Folkes, Kamala Devam & Karine Goudout

