

# dance 4 your life

North Kent Local Authorities Arts Partnership

## Project Overview

In September 2008, North Kent Local Authorities Arts Partnership (NKLAAP) developed *dance 4 your life*, a dance research project. The project sought to build on previous findings, assessing the impacts of dance on the physiological and psychological well being of participants.

The specific aims for *dance 4 your life* were to:

- Develop young people's dance and movement skills.
- Provide a supportive, autonomous and enjoyable learning environment.
- Encourage participants to be imaginative, creative and individual.
- Measure the impact of dance classes on young people's physiological and psychological health and well being.
- Assess young people's attitudes towards dance as a physical activity, and their levels of motivation to participate in dance classes.

Investigating the potential health benefits of dance and underpinning this with scientific evidence was deemed a crucial way of highlighting the further and continued need for investment in dance.

## Project Outcome

55 Year 10 students participated in the research project.

### Physical Assessment Findings

There was a statistically significant increase in overall hand grip strength from the pre-test stage to the post-test stage. This indicates that these particular dance classes increased overall body strength.

There was a statistically significant increase in aerobic capacity from pre-test stage to post-test stage. This indicates an increase in cardiovascular fitness following the series of dance classes.



Overall, there was a positive relationship between attendance and improvements in physical assessments with a statistically significant relationship between attendance



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and aerobic capacity. In other words the more dance classes the participants did, the more likely they were to show physical improvements.

### **Psychological Research Findings**

There was a statistically significant increase in self esteem pre to post indicating that by participating in the dance classes the young people's general sense of self-worth was improved.

Participants generally demonstrated a very positive attitude towards dance with the majority choosing words such as 'Fun', 'Interesting', and 'Energetic', to describe both how they perceived the dance classes might be like (at pre-test stage), and were actually like (at post-test stage).

The majority of participants reported at post-test stage that they felt 'Relaxed' and 'Comfortable' whilst doing the dance classes.

The findings of the dance 4 your life project provide evidence that participation in dynamic contemporary dance classes can have a positive impact on various aspects of the physiological and psychological status of adolescent girls.

Partners included NKLAAP and research partner, Laban, a recognised and pioneering leader in the area of dance science.

Legacy of the project provided sound scientific evidence in terms of the health benefits of dance, thus contributing to the findings of previous studies in the field, and emphasising further, the essential need for increased and ongoing investment in dance.

For more information visit:

[Commissioning Dance for Health and Well-being](#)  
[www.nklaap.com](http://www.nklaap.com)

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