IADMS 28th Annual Conference Abstracts

**Performance enhancement: a performer's perspective**

Gemma Harman, PhD 1, 2, Emma Redding, PhD 2, Patricia Holmes, PhD 2

*1 University of Chichester, Chichester, United Kingdom*

*2 Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London, United Kingdom*

In recent years, within the fields of Dance Medicine and Science and Performance Science, there has been a growing desire, among educators and researchers, to find novel and effective ways of enabling performance enhancement. In light of this, the term ‘performance enhancement’ is already employed through the teaching of specifically devised safe dance principles and dedicated performance enhancement modules as part of training. The present body of literature indicates that the majority of knowledge concerning this concept in an artistic setting has been gathered through observational studies that aim to measure the enhancement of a performer or the performance. While educators and researchers acknowledge the need to enhance quality of learning, performance and artistry, the term is used without consideration of its meaning and significance in an artistic context, and rarely from the artist’s point of view. As a result, questions concerning how a performance might be enhanced and the role of the individual in the enhancement of their own artistic practice remain unanswered. Questions concerning whether performance enhancement is about facilitating the improvement of technical skills, or the on-going self-development of the performer are equally open for further investigation.

This presentation offers a review of literature on the concept of performance enhancement and serves to illustrate some of the main ways in which it is understood within the bodies of research. Reflection upon the thoughts and views of ten professional performers is offered, with their collective voice suggesting that enhancement is achieved through the intention of the individual performer. The need for an informed awareness and understanding of this concept from the subjective viewpoint of the performer is illustrated through the narratives of the participants.

It is hoped that the benefit of including a first-person perspective will be evident and that the role of the individual performer in the enhancement of their own artistic practice will be further considered. Gaining a broader and more consistent understanding of the term performance enhancement may then inform future research and the work of educators and researchers alike. This presentation makes some initial steps towards offering a framework for thought from the performers themselves.