

<b>Institution:</b> University of Roehampton		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 33A - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies: Dance		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Dance for Parkinson's: evidencing, developing and embedding dance initiatives for people with Parkinson's Disease internationally		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2010-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g., job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Sara Houston Ashley McGill	Principal Lecturer Senior Lecturer	September 2009 – present November 2009 – March 2017
Raymond Lee	Professor	September 2008 – October 2014
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> From 2011 to 2020 but in line with REF rules, only that which was in place from 1 August 2013 onwards is included.		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dance for Parkinson's (<i>DfP</i>) is a pioneering body of research led by Dr Sara Houston that has encouraged people with Parkinson's disease (PwPs) to dance, enabled dance artists to teach them, and helped dance organisations to support them. By providing an evidence base that demonstrates the benefits of dancing for PwPs, Houston has changed dance practice and transformed lives for PwPs across Australia, Europe and North America. The research has had several specific impacts which have had global reach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. It has provided the evidence to support the expansion of the English National Ballet's <i>DfP</i> programme throughout England and Wales;</li> <li>ii. It has raised the public profile, and embedded awareness, of the efficacy of <i>DfP</i> initiatives; and</li> <li>iii. It has enabled arts organisations, ballet and contemporary dance companies and independent dance artists to develop and advocate for <i>DfP</i> programmes.</li> </ol> <p><i>DfP</i> is also now widely recognised as a case study for demonstrating the value of arts, and arts-based health interventions.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p><i>DfP</i> is an innovative project, supported by a BUPA Foundation Prize and the English National Ballet (<b>G1</b>), to examine the potential benefits of dance for PwP and to explore what this might mean for dance practice and the arts community. The research was led by Dr Sara Houston, with important contributions from Ashley McGill and Professor Raymond Lee.</p> <p>Most medical research into Parkinson's has focused on finding a cure for the disease, or at least on understanding it in more depth. For many years it was thought that exercise would exacerbate the symptoms and consequently few studies were carried out on the effects of exercise on Parkinson's. In 2009, the consensus was challenged, and a growing corpus of biomechanical and neurological research now examines the effects of specific exercise on the symptoms of Parkinson's to investigate ways to improve motor control. However, research focused on symptomatic relief from a clinical perspective, and little had examined the role of arts activity. Houston and McGill's work was the first in the UK to scrutinise how dance as art was experienced by PwPs, the effects of dance on social and emotional wellbeing, balance, posture and gait, as well as the influence of PwPs on dance practice (<b>R1</b>, <b>R2</b>). The research can be split into two phases: firstly, the examination and evaluation of the first years of the English National Ballet (ENB) <i>DfP</i> programme in London (2010-2015), Oxford (2012), Liverpool (2013), Cardiff (2014) and Ipswich (2014) and secondly, the development of discussion and artistic experimentation with dance artists and PwPs from around the world (2011-present).</p>		

The empirical research carried out while evaluating the ENB's *DfP* classes (**R2, R3, R4**) concluded that: dance is a powerful activity for developing feelings of capability despite the progression of Parkinson's; the dancer finds that their condition interferes less with aspects of daily life; dance has a beneficial effect on non-motor symptoms and psychological health, as well as on postural stability; dance develops feelings of community (much more so than some other activities); dance motivates and encourages people to initiate and take part in other activities in their communities; and dance improves aspects of quality of life that participants felt were important.

The fieldwork outlined above formed the basis for analysis and the creation of ideas (**R2, R3, R4**), significantly and unusually highlighting the amateur, disabled dancer rather than the elite professional. *DfP* argues that dance enables PwPs to access powerful aesthetic feelings - of feeling lovely, graceful and free - that are crucial to understanding dance as a valuable experience in living well with a neurodegenerative condition. An important element of *DfP* is that it rearticulates these aesthetic concepts for a community dance/dance for health context, thereby reclaiming outdated and elitist concepts of art for the disabled non-trained person.

These are the first insights in the field of dance and Parkinson's to address aesthetic issues and articulate their importance. This argument rearticulates aesthetic concepts in a context in which they had not previously had a place. They present a new, more inclusive, paradigm in Dance Studies and dance practice. *DfP* developed, and gave voice to, the argument that dance for Parkinson's initiatives have allowed dance artists to think differently about their own artistic practice, thereby promoting dance for health, not as a passive practice *done to* people, but as an active *reciprocal* practice that has affected dance artists, as well as participants (**R2, R3, R6**). This argument radicalises ideas around dance as therapy and around community dance in relation to professional dance making.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1** Houston, S. (2011/12) The Methodological Challenges of Researching Dance for People living with Parkinson's, *Dance Research*, 29(2), pp.329-351.  
<https://doi.org/10.3366/drs.2011.0023>.
- R2** Houston, S., McGill, A. (2013) A Mixed-Methods Study into Ballet for People Living with Parkinson's, *Arts & Health*, 5(2), pp.103-119.  
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2012.745580>.
- R3** Houston, S. (2019) *Dancing with Parkinson's*, Bristol: Intellect Books. ISBN 9781789381207. Listed in REF2.
- R4** Houston, S. (2015) Feeling Lovely: An Examination of the Value of Beauty for People Living with Parkinson's, *Dance Research Journal*, 47(1), pp.27-43.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0149767715000042>. Listed in REF2.
- R5** Houston, S. (2019) Different bodies: A case study of dance and people with Parkinson's disease in Prickett, S., Thomas, H. (eds.) *Routledge Companion to Dance Studies*, London: Routledge, pp.33-43. ISBN 9781138234581. Available on request.
- R6** Houston, S. (2020) Caring Beyond Illness: an examination of Godder's socially engaged art and participatory dance for Parkinson's work in Stuart-Fisher, A., Thompson, J. (eds.) *Performing Care*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.69-84. ISBN 9781526146809. Available on request.

**G1** BUPA Foundation Annual Prize: Vitality for Life Prize, 2011, with matched funding from English National Ballet, £15,000 from BUPA and £10,000 from ENB.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

#### i. Enabling the expansion of English National Ballet's Dance for Parkinson's programme throughout England and Wales

Houston's pioneering research (**R1-R6**) began in 2010 as an evaluation of the English National Ballet's (ENB) community dance group for PwPs. It has gone on to directly contribute to the development of their Dance for Parkinson's programme, providing an evidence base to inform ENB's classes for PwP for the first time (**IMP1**). The research authenticated the programme's value, resulting in its expansion: evidence provided by *DfP* research enabled ENB to partner with regional dance organisations, dance artists and musicians to expand the programme beyond

London. Since 2014, this has involved developing hubs in Ipswich (with Dance East) and Cardiff (with National Dance Company Wales). Indeed, the hubs proved such a success that, between 2016 and 2019 they, along with the Oxford and Liverpool hubs, obtained sustainable funding to continue, using *DfP* research as evidence to PH Holt, Trusts and Foundations and private donors. The hubs have been a way of embedding high quality *DfP* practice within four regions of England and Wales with *DfP* research driving the evidence, advocacy and interest in ENB's work (**IMP2**).

The *DfP* evidence contributed to a major repositioning of ENB's Engagement Department in the company and facilitated the increase of its workforce by 1 FTE (2016) and 4.5 FTE (2019). The research allowed ENB to develop a dialogue around dance, health and research, resulting in committed evidence-based practice for its engagement programmes, including its Dance and Dementia programme, as well as for national arts and health studies (2018-2020). ENB used Houston's research observations of good practice to successfully transfer its Parkinson's programme online during the pandemic in 2020 (**IMP2**).

The Engagement Director at ENB confirmed that the *DfP* research helped '*to build the skills of the dance sector to deliver more high-quality dance and cultural activities*' for PwP (**IMP2**). For example, by developing a two-day CPD course in conjunction with the hubs and delivering it twice between November 2014 and March 2015, 40 delegates from across the United Kingdom were trained in *DfP* arts intervention methodologies (**IMP2**). Houston has translated the ENB research to other dance and health arenas, including CPD events by the Dance for Parkinson's Partnership UK (DfPPUK), in 2017/18 reaching 222 people (**IMP3**). In March 2015, she delivered two further CPD programmes in partnerships with National Swedish Dance for Parkinson's in Jönköping, Sweden and Dance for Health in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, reaching a further 75 delegates (**IMP4**).

**ii. Raising the public profile, and embedding awareness, of the efficacy of *DfP* initiatives**

Leading on from her work with the ENB, Houston has raised the public profile of the benefits of dancing for PwPs, galvanising public support and interest. Through a sustained programme of public engagement, including media features, public talks and lectures, *DfP* has both raised awareness of the benefits of dance for PwP, and established dance for Parkinson's as an accepted and embraced activity.

*DfP* research has been shared with a wide-reaching and diverse audience. The research has been cited in numerous media features, including press and television generating approximately 17,060,000 media impressions on audiences, and as a result has entered mainstream consciousness. This included Houston's appearance on ITV's *Diversity Live* in January 2015 with approximately 3 million viewers, and Houston's two interviews on *BBC Breakfast* in October 2015 and December 2015 with approximately 7 million viewers each (**IMP4**). According to DfPPUK, media coverage has directly contributed to an increase in inquiries about where to dance and greater numbers of dance artists wanting to lead classes with PwPs (**IMP3**). *DfP*'s reach demonstrates that it carries an important message that resonates with the general public, namely that lives with chronic illness can change through dancing.

*DfP* and its legitimacy as an effective arts intervention has also been recognised amongst health professionals as a result of Houston's research. Through public engagement events and talks, *DfP* has been shared with approximately 2,080 attendees outside the arts community, and most notably 1,785 health professionals. For instance, in 2016 Houston and ENB presented the research at the first National Arts in Health Showcase for health commissioners and patient groups; run by Arts Enterprise with a Social Purpose, the event carried CPD accreditation for the professionals who attended. The Royal Society for Public Health produced a webinar with Houston as one of its expert speakers, reaching an audience in 25 countries (**IMP4**).

**iii. Enabling arts organisations, ballet and contemporary dance companies and independent dance artists to develop and advocate for Parkinson's Dance programmes**

As awareness of the efficacy of dance provision for PwPs spread to dance and health practitioners and to the public more widely, Houston's evidence of the benefits of dance and her expertise in *DfP* has enabled arts organisations, dance companies and dance artists to develop and advocate for dance programmes for PwPs internationally. As the Director of Dance for Parkinson's Disease (Dance for PD) notes, *DfP* 'has validated and underpinned the multi-faceted, holistic and creative approach teaching artists in more than 25 countries use to engage with Parkinson's populations around the world' (IMP5). The number of dance classes for PwPs within the UK has increased dramatically, thanks in part to Houston's initiation of mapping PwP provision overseen by DfPPUK (<https://www.communitydance.org.uk/creative-programmes/dance-for-parkinsons>), helping PwPs to find a local class, as well as enabling DfPPUK to identify where to develop further provision. This has resulted in a 35% annual increase in the number of listed classes, from only 20 UK classes in 2009 to 112 in 2019 (IMP3).

Building on the success of the ENB research, *DfP* has gone on to play a pivotal role in the strategic development of DfPPUK, which aims to develop the sustainability and growth of dance provision for PwPs. As the Director of DfPPUK observes, Houston's research (R1-R6), including the ENB study (IMP1), has informed the training of dance artists in the UK and internationally, including training provision in 2017/18 which resulted in the growth of 20 new initiatives across the UK, creating 'new opportunities for approximately 300 more people living with Parkinson's having new access to dance' (IMP3). Houston has further enabled DfPPUK to strengthen and expand partnerships with organisations in Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK and USA (IMP3).

Through international partnerships with artistic companies, *DfP* has also empowered dance artists and organisations to start programmes for PwPs; create meaningful interdisciplinary collaborations to explore the benefits of their dancing initiatives; advocate for and report on the impacts of their programmes and gain funding to sustain programmes. Houston's research has been used by other dance companies to develop and fund their own programmes for PwPs:

- Dance for PD, New York, USA, has used *DfP* research to train 2,000 teaching artists and allied health professionals, develop lesson plans they use in their New York program and supply these to trainees around the world as part of their Dance for Parkinson's online course and assessment and Dance for PD Certification program. As their Program Director notes, the research 'raised the global profile of the Dance for PD programme... allowing the program to expand from one class in Brooklyn (2001) to classes in more than 300 communities in 25 countries (2020).' He estimates that Houston's research has reached approximately 5,000 PwP along with 5,000 of their carers and family members through the programme (IMP5).
- Hamilton City Ballet (HCB), Canada, used *DfP* research to construct their own class for PwP and Houston has worked with the company to develop best practice in teaching these classes, proving essential to their development and launch. HCB has also used Houston's research in the development of dance-based activity for PwP to use in their homes in partnership with McMaster University. HCB *DfP* classes have since gone on to reach 80 PwP (IMP6).
- In Australia, Queensland Ballet set up a programme inspired by the ENB-*DfP* partnership; Houston served on the advisory board in order to develop best practice, *DfP* research methods were used to evaluate the pilot of their own *DfP* class and *DfP* research was cited in the resulting report. After the Queensland Ballet class was established, *DfP* was embedded into 19 classes over four territories (IMP7).
- Houston's research (R1-R6) has further shaped the practice of Dance Well, a dance programme for PwP in the city of Bassano del Grappa, Italy. Her research (R1-R6) has supported Dance Well teachers in eight Italian and two Japanese cities, and has been further incorporated in a contemporary dance festival involving 35 cities and 300 multidisciplinary events (IMP8).

*DfP* has enabled arts organisations to advocate and fund programmes for PwPs by providing an empirical basis for these interventions. This is demonstrated by ENB's successful funding bid for cultural commissioning funds of £40,391 from Westminster CCG to sustain the London



programme for an extra year, using Houston and McGill's report (**IMP1**) to show the programme's benefits. The CCG specifically 'cited the development of the evidence base for post-diagnosis support as an evidence for grant giving' as a reason for the application's success (**IMP2**). Step Up for Parkinson's (Malta) which now runs classes in four different locations around the country, reported that use of the research as evidence to support their proposals enabled them to receive the funding needed to set up these classes (**IMP9**). In February 2020, DfPPUK won £500,000 over four years from the National Lottery Community Fund to extend its work to six UK regions where there is currently little provision for PwPs; the application drew heavily upon Houston's research (**IMP3**).

#### iv. Demonstrating the value of arts and arts-based health interventions

Broader key impacts achieved by *DfP* lie in embedding of the value of arts interventions for those with long term health conditions in the general understanding of arts and medical practice. *DfP* has provided essential groundwork for additional academic studies about the benefits of dance for PwPs, including Queensland Ballet programme by Queensland University of Technology and University of Queensland, Hamilton City Ballet programme by McMaster University, Dance for PD by University of Denver, and Scottish Ballet programme by Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

As the co-founder of the Dance for Parkinson's Network wrote, 'In a field where the benefits of arts interventions are often difficult to quantify, the integrity of Sara's work [**R1-R6**] has given it gravitas not only to arts practitioners and therapists, but also in the related fields of healthcare and neurology - which is no mean achievement. It remains the go-to research' (**IMP10**).

According to Bassano del Grappa's Director of Dance Initiatives, not only has Houston's research raised awareness of the benefits of such programmes, but she further 'contributed to articulate a language around dance practices and approaches that are in use but sometimes difficult to describe and share beyond the dance field facilitating the dialogue with scientists, neurologists, riabilitators [rehabilitators]' (**IMP8**). In sum, the Program Director of Dance for PD testifies that, 'The research [**R1-R6**] [...] resulted in data and insights that have fundamentally shaped the field of dance for People with Parkinson's and, more broadly, the field of arts in health' (**IMP6**).

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- IMP1** Houston, Sara and McGill, Ashley (2015) *English National Ballet Dance for Parkinson's: An Investigative Study 2*, London: English National Ballet, April 2015. Available at <https://www.ballet.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/English-National-Ballet-Dance-for-Parkinsons-research-report.pdf>.
- IMP2** Testimonial from the Engagement Director at English National Ballet dated 7 January 2021. Shows the development of ENB's DfP initiatives in response to **IMP1**.
- IMP3** Testimonial from Director of Dance for Parkinson's Partnership UK at People Dancing dated 12 May 2020. Explains Houston's role in the Partnership's strategic development.
- IMP4** Metrics Report for Dance for Parkinson's Public Engagement, 2014-2020.
- IMP5** Testimonial from the Program Director of Dance for Parkinson's Disease dated 28 October 2020. Shows the role of *DfP* research in the organisation's development.
- IMP6** Testimonial from Programme Director for Dance for Parkinson's at Hamilton City Ballet dated 5 September 2017. Demonstrates the role of Houston's research in the success of Hamilton City Ballet's launch and continued success of its Dance for Parkinson's programme.
- IMP7** Report, *Queensland Ballet Dance for Parkinson's Pilot Research* (2014). Cites Houston and McGill's research as a resource and inspiration. See page 20.
- IMP8** Testimonial from Bassano del Grappa's Director of Dance Initiatives dated 1 May 2020. Describes Houston's influence on the organisation's DfP provision.
- IMP9** Testimonial from Step Up for Parkinson's Malta dated April 2018. Cites Houston's research as critical to their funding applications.
- IMP10** Testimonial from co-founder of the Dance for Parkinson's Network UK dated 2018. Explains Houston's role in the growth of DfP provision.