



Doncaster  
Enterprise for  
Learning

## Business Placement Case Study and Evaluation 20

Rebecca from Hall Cross Comprehensive School visited Ascendance Rep on a business placement in October 2008.

Ascendance Rep is a dance and performing arts company.

### Job Study - Education Officer

#### **What does your job role involve?**

I develop, manage and deliver the company's educational programme. I plan workshops which are sustainable and the teaching and delivering of these workshops. I am responsible for all the administration and strategic development of the educational work. I write the funding applications and do all the project management.

#### **What key skills are required for your role?**

Skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are important.  
For example:

#### **Numeracy**

Numeracy is required for budgeting, managing the educational budget and the freelance division.

## **Literacy**

Literacy is required for evaluating CVs and all the communication which is required. I also need good levels of literacy for processing emails and letters, administration and marketing.

## **ICT**

I have to use a database and communicate via email. I use the computer a lot during the office time. My work is equally divided between the office and practical venues.

## **Working with others**

This is a key area for my work. I need to build relationships with many different people eg professionals, teachers, theatre staff and project managers. The ability to empathise is crucial and I need to be a good listener.

## **What qualifications, training and/or experience did you need to enter your job?**

I had professional experience which equated to a degree. I have a performing arts degree and also vocational training. I needed experience in working in commercial settings and working with young people. Administration experience was important as was project management experience, CRB, public liability and first aid.

## **What extra qualifications/training have you gained in your current role?**

I have had training for writing job descriptions, fundraising applications, appraisals and budgeting training. I have had Excel training and also an oral history course linked to Heritage lottery funding application.

### **What are the working conditions of your job?**

I work 37 hours per week but have to be flexible as it sometimes includes evenings and weekends.

I work various venues but mainly indoors. I have done workshops in the playground and at site specific outdoor venues such as parks, cathedrals and sculpture work.

Health and safety is done by the individual as you are responsible for your own hours. I am also responsible for risk assessments, site work and ensuring people are not at risk. I have to keep up to date with developments within the industry.

### **What advice would you give to young people interested in entering this field?**

Get as much experience as possible, in as many areas as possible. You will require a lot of transferable skills, so look at Youth Dance England guide to [careers.org.uk](http://careers.org.uk). Create opportunities for yourself, be proactive, look at setting up a class and setting up the funding. You have to work hard to get teaching work and talk to community organisations.

### **Evaluation of the Business Placement**

#### **What did you do on the placement?**

I shadowed the education officer in a repertory company.

#### **What knowledge about the organisation, its sector and its market place did you gain?**

I gained an understanding of the structure of the organisation, its arts director, education officer and part time administrator.

Talking to each of these people helped me to see the differences in their roles and how multi-skilled they need to be. I met the Chair of Upton Community Group who are working with Ascendance to develop long term projects for young people in Upton a deprived area in Leeds. Speaking to them made me realise how community organisations go about finding dance teachers to work with the funding processes to make projects happen. I also found I had a deeper understanding of the projects that the company work with, from medium scale touring with professional dancers to working with special needs groups. I also learnt more about the policies and day to day tasks that a dance company must have in place to operate effectively and safely.

**Do you feel that the placement was a success? Please give reasons**

Yes, it was definitely a success. I feel that I have met both my personal and professional objectives set out at the beginning of the placement. It has been interesting to see the similarities and differences between how a dance education officer in a professional dance company delivers planned sessions. There is generally much more of an emphasis on technique and creativity for creativeness sake. The sessions had a clear goal to work towards a performance. This was a very different environment to a social setting. I plan to use some of the practical activities in my teaching of contemporary dance technique. Especially interesting to me was reading through the company's business plan and their applications to various agencies for funding. I plan to use this knowledge and understanding to make funding applications for a community based dance project. It was demonstrated that skills in administration, teaching, performance, budgeting, communication and many, many more are required to fulfil the role of education officer.

**Could you suggest any improvements to the management of the business placement?**

I think I would have found it useful to have visited the Doncaster Enterprise for Learning website before my placement .This would have helped me in my efforts to persuade my school that it would be worthwhile sending me on the placement. I felt that NALD were very willing to help find a placement in the specific area that I thought would be useful. I feel that this has been of great benefit to me and, should a future opportunity allow ,I should like to follow a different role in another dance company or arts organisation and therefore to continue to build on my new knowledge and understanding.

Be whatever you want to be