

Staff reflection

QReport bachelor Dance - april 2020

Response: 20 teachers



Overview

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
What should we be proud of? What are our best practices?	What should be improved? What should we pay attention to?	What opportunities can strengthen the bachelor programme, our position or profile?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-ordinators & team – organisational culture 2. Individual support of the student 3. Connection working field – performing opportunities 4. Teaching & performing artists 5. Vision of the programme 6. Pedagogic concept 7. Student as an autonomous artist 8. <i>(Interdisciplinary) projects & collaboration</i> 9. International dimension 10. Diversity & inclusion 11. Flexible & adaptable attitude 12. Feedback culture 13. High level teachers 14. Portfolio 15. Good communication practice 16. Programme integrating fluidity & stability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time for reflection & digestion - students 2. Preparing students for reality of professional life 3. Theory/contextualisation 4. Balance in the programme 5. Value of outdoor activities 6. Coherence – increase the potential of individual input in the team/programme 7. A bout de souffle – sustainable workload 8. Student profile 9. Externe communicatie 10. Infrastructuur 11. Self assessment 12. Benefits of a digital learning platform 13. Adaptation to a individual study programme 14. Working conditions – contracts, payments 15. Efficiency in daily management 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External networking cultural, artistic and educational context 2. <i>Interdisciplinary sharing of projects, classes, workshops</i> 3. Alumni policy 4. Role & identity in a shifting field and society 5. Strategic use of research 6. Artist in Residence 7. Going off track, taking risks, exploring the unknown 8. Extending the Inclusive LABO 9. Encourage connection of the staff by supporting their artistic trajectory

1. To be proud of

1.1. Coördinatoren & team (16)

Cultuur in de opleiding

- The heads of dance are very dedicated and doing an amazing job keeping everything as positive as possible, (especially now!). They are always ready to help, advice, and support their students, but also their staff.
- Incredible commitment of all staff members. – miracle of the school
- Innovative staff & highly devoted coordinators.
- A great culture of cooperation and transparency.
- Very human & full of empathy.
- Clear yet gentle communication on and offline towards students and staff. Best practice!

Individuele begeleiding van de student

- Empathic approach to students' individual situation/needs without losing the responsabilisation of the students themselves.
- De opleidingshoofden alsook de docenten hebben een nauw contact met de studenten waardoor ze een zeer persoonlijke begeleiding krijgen.
- Combining a rigorous follow up of the developments of students with a very mild, generous and quite personal relation to each student.
- There is a strong alliance between all colleagues regarding the importance of the educational and overall wellbeing of all the students to give attention to and encourage students to develop their individual talents.

1.2. Connectie met werkveld (13)

Performing opportunities

- Studenten doen beroepservaring op in publieksvoorstellingen
- Performing opportunities during the year.

Teaching & performing artists

- De studenten (...) krijgen de kans om met choreografen/docenten/dansers te werken die zelf in het werkveld staan zowel in België als internationaal. – De opleiding blijft continu evolueren.

1.3. Sterke visie & pedagogische doordachtheid (11)

- The programme is not exclusively based on a certain kind of contemporary dance, but is very open to other styles as well, starting from contemporary dance. The idea is not to have one 'type' of student, nor in the selection at the beginning of the programme, not at the end.
- Offering a study program and a methodology of teaching that is solid, and sufficiently standardised/ transparant, while at the same time keeping openings for more adventurous and ad hoc projects.
- Wij werken vanuit het artiest zijn, van binnen naar buiten
- Openness to experiment without losing a technical dancer's 'ground'.
- Not being defined or confined by one (dogmatic) artistic style or vision.

1.4. Student als autonoom kunstenaar (11)

- Individuality
- Students can develop their artistic skills and their own preference/style at the same time.
- We observe the students "growing" in understanding and analyzing their practices.

- Making artists out of dancers.
- We trainen dans-kunstenaars. Naast de technische bagage om uitvoerend te dansen, ontwikkelen we persoonlijkheid en eigen makerschap.
- We bieden verschillende 'smaken', aan de student om te proeven en zichzelf daartussen te leren positioneren. Door het eerst te belichamen, nadien woorden aan te geven, te feedbacken of becommentariëren. Zo ontwikkelen zich communicatieve kunstenaars.

1.5. (Interdisciplinaire) projecten & samenwerking (7)

- Studenten doen beroepservaring op in publieksvoorstellingen
- The mix of disciplines on the 'kunstensite' deSingel.
- Leerrijke projecten met Toneelhuis en Needcompany
- Evidence of this great openness and respect for the wide range of styles in contemporary dance in the dance-programme was recognized this year in the group-pieces that the third-year students made for / with their fellow students. The range was very varied and the search for good artistic quality was certainly recognizable in every piece.

1.6. Internationale dimensie (6)

- international teachers
- international standard & reputation
- international exchange of cultures and habits amongst the students
- a good mix of national and international

1.7. Diversiteit en inclusie (5)

- Inclusive dance programme, development projects on dance and diversity
- Diversity resonates in many directions- student population, teaching staff, programme input and output, vision...
- Labos and practice of Diversity.

1.8. Voorbereiding op 'na de studie'(3)

- De studenten krijgen een zeer diverse opleiding waardoor ze zich na hun opleiding nog verder kunnen specialiseren.
- Verschillende invalshoeken voor zelfde technieken of thema's – differentiatie in voorbereiding op het leven na de opleiding.
- An interesting program, actual enough to prepare for what's next.

1.9. Single suggestions

- Watching performances in the Facilities.
- The stage performances of our students are fantastic!
- Being able to make many things possible, happen, being adaptable.
- Good communication practices.
- Very colloquial, open-minded, yet sharp-thinking students.
- Good practices are the feedback culture and a versatile movement intelligence of students.
- Creativity
- High level teachers
- A steady, varied programme, with a strong combination of passionate, innovative professional and international artists/ teachers from an experienced Artistic and Performative background, providing a challenging, inspirational, professional training and guidance.

- Portfolio: opportunity for creating an own voice.
- High quality of education.
- Exposure to many different forms of dance.
- You should be proud of an educational curriculum/program that integrates qualities of fluidity and stability at the same time.

2. To be improved

2.1. Programma: rustpunten (8)

- De opleiding is heel groepsgericht met een vol programma, is er dan tijd voor “vrije/lege momenten” voor verwerking en persoonlijke verdieping/groei?
- Letting “free time” for students to rest and integrate the knowledge.
- Meer tijd voor studenten om te reflecteren.

2.2. Programma: The next step (6)

- The field of ‘contemporary dance’ had some strong blows over the past years, and it will probably only get harder. I guess we best try to install a dialogue to reflect on this and try to imagine best ways of adjusting the study program to the new environment. There is a sense of disorientation in the student group(s) that just graduated, so we might need to take more time with our students to discuss ‘the real world outside’, and try to provide them with tools to navigate the chaos that usually comes after (art) school.
- Safe Cocoon – how to create opportunities for students to connect with the reality of the working field, feel safe but more challenged, less protected.

2.3. Programma: Theory - Contextualisation (5)

- Balance between practice & theory
- Linking theory and practice, enhanced by connection to master programme
- More space for continuous reflection and discussion about current relevant topics in the field

2.4. Programma: Samenhang - Balance (4)

- Lack of connection ; limit the range of proposition and explore in depth
- Fragmentation due to many projects & courses

2.5. Programma: Meerwaarde van externe activiteiten (4)

- More outdoor activities in relation to other art disciplines

2.6. Programma: varia – single remarks

- Self assessment: Is there a possibility to see how students perceive themselves in our classes.
- De digitale leeromgeving is ook nog een uitdaging.
- The possibility for students to occasionally adapt within the proposed programme, to periodically propose, a supported and approved individual schedule, to nourish their artistic and creative needs.
- Consistency and continuity in intensity of body training.
- Education in Professionalism to students.
- Repertoire mag niet verloren gaan.

2.7. Docenten: team (6)

- Changing and travelling staff: how to maintain a team feeling?
- How to arrange encounters with freelance teachers and 'fix' staff to learn about one's work and discover links and overlaps
- Coherentie in het programma & teamwerking zijn een uitdaging
- communication and actions that is past the stop of Jodka should be reviewed

2.8. Docenten: keep your staff safe & healthy! (5)

- overload – workload – unsustainable – unacceptable – burn-out
- Could we have some internal meetings or a working group on this topic?
- Less is more?

2.9. Studentenprofiel (5)

- Are Belgian students finding the way to this school enough?
- Ages of the students: missing older or other type of maturity for challenging the thinking.
- The students seem careful. This might be a cultural thing, as I observe something similar at PARTS. Maybe they could more actively ask about or question taught content and used methods? Maybe this is asked too much of BA students? (...) I think students could be more upfront with their critical thoughts and with their weirdly wild ideas.

2.10. Externe communicatie & alumni (6)

- Visibility, transparency, communication, networking, politics, connecting to working field and society... more and better...
- Finding ways of how this highly up-to-date knowledge can flow back into pre-professional and amateur training in Belgium.

2.11. Infrastructuur (4)

- One Large Studio & Small dance studios
- Enough space/rooms to dance (also with the masters !)

2.12. Varia – single remarks

- Working conditions - contracts and payments for staff and teaching team should be better.
- Keep dreaming to change the many contract and other bureaucratic rules of AP to facilitate working with freelance artists and planning.
- Efficiency – continue the grounding of the vision and daily functioning into the educational system and expanding towards the working field - at the same time and in a coherent way.
- Zij-instromers & begeleiding van deze studenten.

3. Opportunities

3.1. External networking cultural, artistic and educational context (17)

- Exchange with other performing and visual art schools in Belgium (ISAC, Bxl, KASK Gent).
- I feel there are strong connections into the field, not just in terms of producing and showing or touring students' work but in terms of a critical exchange between the learning environment of the course and the professional field of production and dissemination. I think this exchange could be sharpened and formulated even further in terms of how

these two different environments function differently but can actually interact, learn from and support each other.

- MUHKA, MOMA (research for costume), Middelheim, Verbeke Foundation
- University of Antwerp & Master in Dance

3.2. Interdisciplinary sharing of projects, classes, workshops (9)

- Theater students in the same floor, musicians and architectures in the same building: great opportunity for exchange within artists: how to underline this even more in the curriculum.
- Providing further platforms for students, artists and teachers to interact and collaborate with the other departments within the Conservatory. - Possible merging of some daily classes/ workshops and creations within different departments.
- Cross-disciplinary collaborations seem to remain somewhat underdeveloped. Also towards the outside world (the 'profiling' of the school) this could probably still be highlighted more.

3.3. Creating an alumni policy (4)

- Two or three post AP collectives operating in and around Antwerp/Belgium. If we could continue and increase support in helping the quality of their performances reach even higher levels, this could have much reflective value of what is being achieved here.
- De sterke connectie met het veld is een opportuniteit om de student – alumnus/ danser te blijven verbinden aan de opleiding als publiek, ambassadeur/ toekomstig gastprof.

3.4. Role & identity in a shifting field and society (4)

- On the level of society: since the current Corona virus crisis puts the body under such threat and focus, I do believe -even if it might be hard to see it now- that as trained 'body specialists' we might have a lot of knowledge to share with our communities.
- How to make the corona crises also an opportunity to investigate new tools, new artistic, new connections, new horizons, new communities, new visions, new public performance.
- Positions in the cultural field are changing, in Antwerp, Brussels, Flanders: take advantage of that, start talks now.
- Create and development of a link/narrative with/about the environment/Anthropocene (it is the backdrop of the current and future life of our students). This can be developed both within the curriculum as well as in a move into the public space.

3.5. Strategic use of research

- The research funding is a great opportunity for the school. I believe that maybe we could try to take some time as a staff to commonly think of research projects that can serve both the school, the staff, the students and the larger field.

3.6. Single thoughts & suggestions

- Artist in residence & Ondernemerschap
- Daring to go off track, take artistic risks, explore the unknown, expand and stay humble for everyone...
- Introduce Inclusive LABO dancers, with deeper interests in the dance field, the possibility/ opportunity to participate in certain creative, artistic classes/workshops (if the context allows for it), within the dance programme, as part of an extension of the Inclusive LABO.
- Encourage/support staff to feel more connected to the institute by supporting their artistic trajectory (e.g. training opportunities/residency opportunities/paid for colloquia, cheaper tickets...) = reward / support in other ways than wage.