

Dancing 'in the zone' lasts a lifetime for professionals

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Dancers often report achieving transcendent states of consciousness during peak performance, and a University of Queensland study has shown these 'in the zone' states continue into later life.

UQ Master of Arts (Studies in Religion) alumnus Lynda Flower

interviewed five former professional ballet dancers who became teachers at a ballet company, university or private academy.

Ms Flower said her study found performance transcendent states not only continued during teaching but also influenced teaching techniques and life perspectives.

"All participants said they continued to feel early career performance 'in the zone' states in later professional life in areas such as direct teaching, lecturing and academic writing," Ms Flower said.

"Additionally, all the teachers taught techniques to help students achieve their own performance 'in the zone' experiences.

"These included working with students' feelings of passion and love for ballet, incorporating activities such as [mindfulness meditation](#) and tai chi into the curriculum, and creating a peaceful and harmonious learning environment."

Ms Flower said the transcendent [states](#) were described as 'spiritual' by all participants and had a positive lasting effect.

"Many former dancers said their [performance](#) and subsequent [teaching](#) 'in the zone' experiences had changed their world view with a lasting influence for the better," she said.

"For some these experiences generated an ongoing sense of achievement and 'making a difference', while for others, the 'in the zone' feelings of joy, freedom and abandonment increased intuitive awareness and the ability to handle stress more effectively."

The study is published in *Research in Dance Education*.

More information: Lynda Flower. Spiritual experiences of post-performance career ballet dancers: a qualitative study of how peak performance spiritual lived experiences continued into and influenced later teaching lives, *Research in Dance Education* (2018). [DOI: 10.1080/14647893.2018.1543260](https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2018.1543260)

Provided by University of Queensland

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