

BA (Hons) Commercial Dance

Assessment Cover Page

Sarah Chattaway

2304455

Independent Project

(ADPA6000)

Written Submissions

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<https://sites.google.com/view/sc-researchjournal-ip/home>

Reflective essay: Independent project

From September 2025 to February 2026, I have been looking into “*How do dancers with strong religious beliefs impact them developing their image as dancers for the entertainment industry for 16–25-year-olds in the UK?*” In this reflective essay I will be critically analysing the final product and the decisions during the process that lead me to my final product. From very early on I decided to mainly focus on the Christian perspective as it was the perspective I knew most about. From very early on I understood the multiple roles I would need to manage and the skill I already possess that would allow me to fulfil these roles. For instance, from the very beginning, I knew I would be doing a video presentation involving dance routines to show the concept, as I already had the skills in cinematography and editing to be able to produce a well-made video. However, I also knew going into this project I would have to organise people, this involved:

- getting people on board to be involved
- Getting their consent
- Making sure they feel comfortable
- Organising a time to meet up
- Directing them
- Getting them to film me at the standard I wanted.

Even though I managed to do all of this I found myself feeling anxious about completing these tasks mainly due to my lack of confidence. My lack of confidence was mainly due to my lack of experience in this field. I was able to achieve these roles by breaking each role down bit by bit and by going over what I needed to communicate

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with my dancer/camera operator so they could clearly understand the concept and what I needed from them. As well as making sure they were comfortable in the space and allowing them to express their opinions to help make the video better, such as spacing suggestions that would look better on camera due to the lighting.

As previously stated, I have acquired the skills in filmmaking due to previously studying film studies at school when I was 15 and I have been developing these skills ever since. My skills now compared to when I first started have significantly improved. For instance, I now know how to use a filter effectively including the strength of the filter. My use of timing on each section has also improved, making certain parts (like texts and clips) run at a certain pace that keep the audience captivated. Having the skill to edit is beneficial during this process as it allows me to:

- Plan realistic what I can include in my videos and for how long.
- Makes it easier to schedule days to film including re-shoots if necessary.
- Knowing the amount of storage, I have on my filming and editing devices and being able to work around it.
- Saving time on trying to communicate what is needed for the video.
- Able to do it myself swiftly aka producing it over a weekend as soon as I have all my content.
- Keeping the budget to a minimum.
- Flexible to any changes that would improve the quality of the video.

For instance, halfway through the process I realised to make my video more accessible to as many people as I can, I should add a voice over my title cards. This

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would make the video more entertaining to the audience as well as reaching a wider audience like the blind and the dyslexic people. Making it accessible to as many people is important to me which is why I also used a dyslexic friendly font to also help with the title cards.

My main authority to talk on this subject is my many years of experiences of being around people with groups of people with strong religious beliefs and being a Christian myself with similar strong religious beliefs. Especially in the last couple of years, I have managed to expand my knowledge on understanding strong religious beliefs. This and along with being a dancer with strong religious belief that is entering the entertainment industry themselves. From witnessing the different environments of people with strong religious beliefs such as Emmaus Church in Severn Beach and Cardiff City Churches Young Adults (YA) I have been able to see a wide range of people's perspectives on this topic. This includes a wide range in age and locations mostly around the UK. Therefore during this process, I was able to use other people's point of view on the topic as well as managing to use my own experiences and knowledge.

Since starting university, 3 years ago, I have gained more of an understanding of the entertainment industry and how it operates. One aspect of the industry I have discovered are the areas I feel uncomfortable as a dancer and as part of the audience. For instance, when I had to watch, 'Ariana Grande' "God is a Woman" MTV (2018) performance on You Tube for inspiration, it made me feel very uncomfortable as they used symbolism on the 'Last Super' that wasn't in a respectful way to Christianity. However, I have felt the most uncomfortable dancing/ being in class is when I would have to dance hypersexualised such as suggestive moments towards the floor and

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twerking. I found elements of this to appear in most dance styles including commercial, Jazz and mostly in Heels. Even though I experienced this significant side to Heels I have also learnt that's not what much of the style is or represents.

Despite this side to the industry I have also discovered there is still a part for people with strong religious beliefs in the industry. For instance, Kennedy Harris is a Christian as well as a dance teacher. She has a successful career in the industry mainly as a dancer teacher that has lasted 15 years and continues to this day. There are also dance companies that can align with their strong religious beliefs. For instance, there is 'Spring Dance Company'. "We are a professional dance company, producing vibrant, life-enhancing dance for more than 45 years." (Springsdancecompany.org.uk, 2026) From this we can see they are a reliable dance company that has been going on for many years. "In primary schools, we are the UK's leading specialist in cross-curricular Dance and R.E. (Christianity)." (Springsdancecompany.org.uk, 2026) From this we can see that their strong religious belief along with dance is a big important part of the company. This makes this company a great option for dances with strong religious beliefs as it allows them to dance in a safe environment that aligns with their values. Additionally, it allows the dancer to continue to develop as a dancer alongside developing their strong religious beliefs.

Having this knowledge helped shape the direction my video essay went in. From early on I knew I wanted to add a section that showed the sexualisation of the industry and a dancer with strong religious beliefs feeling uncomfortable in that environment. I also knew the next part in the same section would show the dancer in a different part of the industry where they felt comfortable as it aligned with their values.

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According to Google Gemini (2026) there are a lot of benefits to using a reflective module such as “enhanced technical and physical performance, increased autonomy and self-correction and artistic and cognitive growth.” During this process I decided to use Gibbs reflective circle (1988) and Schön's Reflective Model (1983). Originally, I was also considering using Borton's model of reflection (2018) or Kolb's (1984). However, I decided to use both Gibbs (1988) and Schön's (1983) as it is a good balance of using in-action and on-action reflection. Gibbs (1988) and Schön (1983) used a more detailed reflective method compared to Kolb's (1984) and Borton's (2018). I found being more detailed makes my reflection more precise, allowing me to get a clearer understanding on what happened during the process whilst giving me a clearer understanding on what needs to be done to move my video essay forward. The Gibbs method is an on-action rigid 6 step reflective model whereas the Schön's (1983) reflective model consists of 4 components using both in-action and on-action reflection. Gibbs's (1988) 6 step framework involves description, feeling, evaluation, analysis, conclusion and action plan. “The different stages create a structure that helps slow the thought processes, so people reach considered conclusions.”(Medium, 2022) From this we can see that the Gibbs method (1988) will help me to slow down and process the situation. This will lead me to a high standard of work. Schön's (1983) 4 key components include problem framing, action, reflection and reframing. “You can improve your ability to solve problems while making better decisions and thinking back on what you have done.” (The student helpline, 2024). From this I can tell that using Schön's Reflective Model (1983) will not only be beneficial during this project but for future projects as well. By using both methods I can use in-action and on-action

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reflection whilst managing to go into great depth. This will help me to process all the information which will allow me to swiftly come up with a simple solution.

I went for “How do dancers with strong religious beliefs impact them developing their image as dancers for the entertainment industry for 16–25-year-olds in the UK?” I chose this because I was passionate about the subject, I had previous experience on this subject, I knew what direction I wanted to go in for this topic, and I knew how to effectively get primary and secondary research. Especially the primary research as I had contacts that could participate in it.

Early in the process I came across a problem with my primary research. Yet I managed to find a solution using the Gibbs method (1988). I could not use any of the results from my first round of questionnaires due to not having everyone's consent and not knowing who was who. Even though I reached out to all the participants from Cardiff City Church Young Adults, not all signed the consent form I sent via WhatsApp, and I could tell who was who. This made me feel anxious and annoyed at myself for not taking the time to properly proofread the questionnaires before sending them out. I was annoyed by the participants as well for not responding back to me. The questions I was asking were good as they helped to further develop the video essay. Yet I noticed they weren't answering the questions asked to them, I realised this was because some of my questions were too vague. I hadn't just forgotten to add the consent question but also a name question. This would have made it easier to identify each participant in the first place. Looking back, I realised this error occurred because I rushed through it and didn't proofread it before sending it out. I learnt that it's important to take the time to proofread it as it is important for the questionnaires to be correct and it saves a lot

of time in the long run. I also learnt when it comes to questionnaires I have to be specific. For my second round of questionnaires, I made sure that the questions were more specific, I added a consent question along with a name question. Before sending it out I took the time to proofread questionnaires. This made it easier to identify the participants along with making sure I had their consent. This solution was to create a second version of the questionnaires without the mistakes. Even though I struggled to get a lot of participants, I had enough primary research that I could use that helped me develop my Video Essay. In the future I will take the time to properly proofread the questionnaires. This will help me save time and maybe get me a few more participants. Using the Gibbs method (1988) was very beneficial when solving this problem. It allowed me to assess the situation and made me find an effective solution.

I was able to use Schön's reflective models (1983) to help me solve problems that come up. For instance, just before filming, my cast mentioned that they felt uncomfortable showing one of the dancers being paid for dancing sexually as it could appear as prostitution and went against what they believed in. It was important for me that my cast felt comfortable and safe during and after the filming process. "Creating a safe and supportive environment is essential for fostering a positive experience for dancers". (erin@mac, 2024) From this we can imply that it's important to create a safe space for my dancers, so I continue to have a positive relationship with them. This could be beneficial in the future if I need to work with them again. Likewise, I didn't want that message to come across in this section. After processing the information, I decided that we would cut the money part of the scene out. Instead, I mainly focus on the dancer with strong religious beliefs dancing awkwardly when having to dance sexually. I was playing the character of the dancer with strong religious beliefs and felt

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comfortable performing every aspect of that part. This change worked out perfectly as everyone felt comfortable on set and I was able to get my main point across clearly. Looking back, this decision was the best development I could have done as I was able to visually make my point in the video essay whilst making sure everyone felt safe in the space when filming. In the future I will aim to communicate more clearly with my cast and create a space and time for them to communicate back their opinions to me.

Looking back on the processes I believe using Gibb's reflective model (1988) and Schön's reflective model (1983) was very beneficial towards the process. Using Gibbs reflective model (1988) gave me time to slow down as I had to clearly analyse the situation in great detail. In doing this it made my next decision to develop the video essay very clear. For instance, when using the Gibbs method (1988) I was able to properly process where I went wrong and what I needed to do to fix it. However, I did find this method could be time consuming. This was especially difficult when I was running out of time. Gibbs (1988) also focuses on reflection on action rather than reflection in action. This method doesn't work when having to make decisions in the moment. For instance, I had to use Schön's in-action method (1983) when I had to change my camera angles due to the lighting of the room. However, I was able to counteract these downsides by using the Schön's reflective model (1983). Using Schön's reflective model (1983) was beneficial in this process as I was able to come up with an effective solution to the problem in a very short amount of time. Such as when I had to change part of a section to make sure my cast felt safe in the space. The downside to using Schön's reflective model (1983) is its lack of structure can be difficult to apply. It also can be high pressure education as I try to think on the spot.

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Using both reflective methods was the right decision as each method contributed to the success of my video essay.

Reflecting on the process and the final project in the future I would like to do further research in this area. In the future I would like to look into when dancers with strong religious beliefs are already in the entertainment industry and their experiences. This includes any challenges they might face due to the strong religious belief, any benefits due to their strong religious beliefs and any goals they want to achieve in their career. I would also consider using high quality equipment to get the video to a higher standard of quality.

Looking back at the process as whole and the final product I can say I was successful in what I set out to do. I managed to cover all the topics I set out to cover whilst bringing them all back to my main question. And I managed to lay it out in one cohesive video. Even though I was successful in what I set out to do there are areas I could improve on. I could improve my own dance performance in the video as I felt I could have danced better technically and performed better. Next time I will go over my routines more as this would make the routines clean in general whilst giving me more confidence to perform to camera. I also could have improved the quality of the cinematography by having better lighting as well as a better camera. However, I was on a budget. I could have also gotten more results on my primary research if I had done the questionnaires correctly in the first place. There was also information I would have liked to add but couldn't mainly due the video essay time limit. For instance, I managed to get Kennedy Harris to do a questionnaire designed for her but was unable to use any of that primary research in the Video Essay. If I were to do it again and had

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more time, I would have added a section, just on her and her responses to the questionnaire. This would give a unique perspective from someone already in the industry with strong religious beliefs. Despite all this I was able to make a coherent video essay, and reflective modules were a big part of this process. Using Gibbs (1988) and Schön (1983) helped me solve any problem that I came across. The reflective model helped me move the project forward whilst teaching me lessons I will take with me in future projects. For instance, in future projects, I will take my time when doing questionnaires or interviews mainly to proofread it. I will also get someone else to proofread it as well to make sure it's coherent. I will also make sure that everyone involved feels comfortable in every aspect of the project. As well as feeling safe enough to voice their opinions on the project. I believe using reflective models is essential for dancers in general and when creating big projects as it leads to effective solutions that can make the project/dancer better in the short and long term.

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