

Rita Carla Lee, Dancer and Movement Enthusiast
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Introduction to Performance Profiling Wheel and Goal Setting

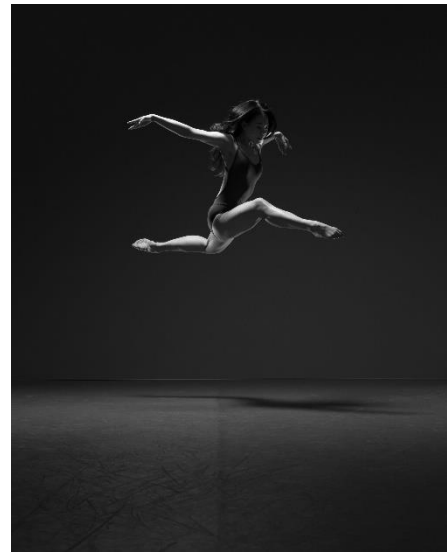
Farah Fadzali, February 2020

Being in the performing arts industry requires a significant amount of discipline and motivation. Just like in sports, many performing artists (i.e. dancers) experience instances in their career where their performance levels become stagnant and they are unable to make improvements, no matter what they do. In this article, we will outline a method of overcoming performance stagnation or preventing it from occurring using a widely used tool amongst sport psychology practitioners – the ‘performance profile’. At the same time, setting good goals too can greatly improve motivation in training.

What is ‘Performance Profiling’?

Renowned clinical psychologist Richard Butler developed the performance profile to enhance athlete’s self-awareness regarding the characteristics that facilitate successful performance¹. As such, performance profiling is a method of allowing athletes/dancers to understand what qualities they perceive needed to be successful in their sport¹⁰. In particular, dancers can use

this information to help develop training schedules in the areas they could improve on or would like to focus on (reflecting on where they are and where they want to be). The idea of a good dancer varies from one to another in a dance class, every dancer is working towards different goals. Therefore, the performance profiling wheel helps us understand and identify our goals and areas of importance to be successful as a dancer. This is also a method to keeps us accountable on our achievements/improvements rather than chasing a never-ending goal of being the “perfect dancer”.



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Often administered and monitored by dance scientists, the performance profiling wheel may be used in conjunction with their dance practitioners to help enhance their performance. The wheel can also be broken down into smaller units, specific enough to be useful for the dancer to achieve/improve their abilities.

For instance, we can break performance down into four areas:

1. physical abilities,
2. technical skills,
3. mental skills,
4. and performance-life balance.

These can then each be broken down further. For example, physical abilities can be broken down into flexibility, strength, endurance, etc.^{3,7}. Here are the steps in creating a performance profiling wheel:

1. List down the various qualities you would like to work on
2. Rate how you fair in those qualities (e.g. 3 out of 10 for flexibility, therefore colour 3 levels)

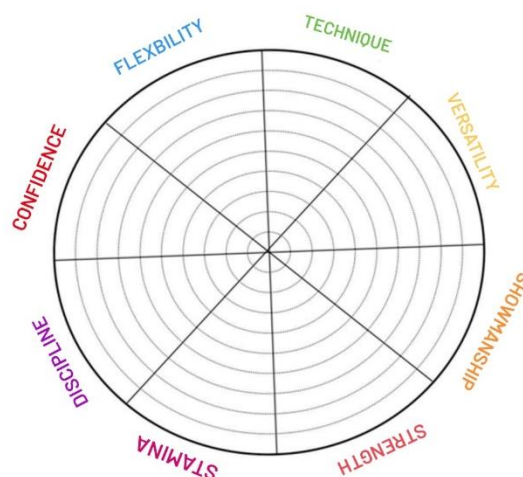


Figure 1: An example of a dancer's Performance Profiling Wheel

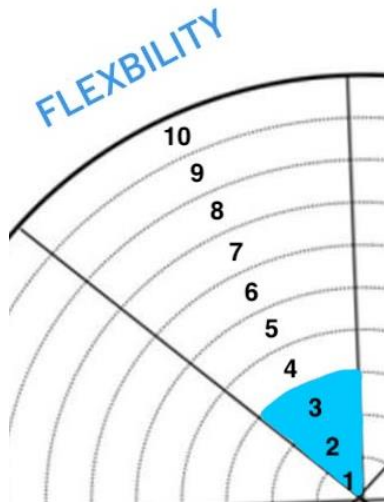


Figure 2: An example of a dancer's flexibility rating

3. Prioritize which qualities you need to work on urgently
4. Pick the first two or three rated qualities on the wheel to work on.
5. Lastly, have a goal setting task

Table 1. below is an example of a dancer's flexibility goal setting task (using the SMART goal method elaborated below)

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| S | Specify what you want to achieve in one sentence. (e.g. I want to achieve a full right leg split) | Comments: |
| M | How will you measure your progress? (e.g. I spent 30 minutes after class to work on my flexibility and splits) | Comments: |
| A | What resources do you need to attain your goal? 1. Resource: (e.g. peers / dance teachers) 2. Do you have it? Yes / No 3. How will you get them? (e.g. by asking them to assist me in my stretch) | Comments: |
| R | Is this a realistic goal for you to achieve? (evaluate your resources) | Comments: |
| T | What is your timeframe for completing this goal? Be as specific as possible. (e.g. four weeks before the start of dance competition intensive training) | Comments: |

Benefits of Performance Profiling

There are many advantages of performance profiling, in addition to supporting the goal setting process. Performance profiling encourage dancers to reflect on small goals they made. It also enhances communication and discussion with dance practitioners, allowing them to build self-confidence, self-awareness and stronger relationships with their teachers⁷. It helps to create shared language when discussing performance, so that assumptions and misunderstandings do not affect these relationships. It also opens up discussion on areas for improvement and effort needed, leading to a focused training goal.



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Once there is a set of performance targets, the performer will score themselves on each target. These scores make up the profile of the performer. From this, dance scientist can advise a dancer accordingly on the areas that can be prioritise for effort to be allocated for improvement. As such, the performance profiling supports the goal setting process immensely⁵.

Goal Setting

There are several well-documented strategies and approaches to setting goals, one of them is the SMART goal method (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable, **R**ealistic, **T**ime based). These principles ensure that goals are easy to achieve and improves both dancer's ability to assess success and failure in an objective way⁹.

Tips on improving goal setting process:

- Set performance and process goals
- Breaking down goals into short term, medium and long term
- Selecting achievable and efficient training methods
- Reflection
- Keeping goals visible in your living space
- Reward yourself once goal is achieved
- Be ready to take risks and make errors
- Keeping goals simple as to not get too overwhelmed
- Start with a performance profiling as a foundation to build from

For dancers, a motivational climate is the psychological atmosphere in which they are training, rehearsing and performing⁸. While everyone involved in the class contributes to the motivational climate, dance practitioners have the major responsibility in creating a healthy

environment. Not only do dance practitioners have a significant influence on climates, but they also impact greatly on dancers' well-being through the climate they create⁶.

End



An MSc in Dance Science graduate from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Farah has multiple experience in teaching movement therapy in various organisations in Singapore.

Farah is now a dance science researcher studying injury prevention and performer's health and safety practices. Together with her achievements and qualifications, Farah hopes to work towards the development of dance science research in Singapore.

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