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**A Framework for the Studio Teaching of Professional
Contemporary Dance Students**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
London Contemporary Dance School at The Place
University of Kent at Canterbury

Mary Evelyn

August 1998

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the specific requirements of contemporary technical training in the context of full-time courses designed for individuals who aim to become professional contemporary dance artists.

The demands of the profession are analysed alongside consideration of the need to maintain a long-term view, rather than to allow work which is currently fashionable to have an inappropriate influence on present training procedures. Inherited structures for technical training are discussed, together with the need for transformation of the physical work to ensure its continuing relevance. The physical, intellectual and emotional characteristics of the contemporary dancer most likely to be able to contribute positively to the profession are examined.

My aim is to define and illustrate a teaching methodology which will encourage the development of these characteristics. It is argued that the aims of a holistic mode of dance education, physical training towards exceptional levels of technical expertise, and the need to teach students to cope with change need not be in conflict. Further, that teaching methods which are educationally informed and which celebrate the students' individuality, far from jeopardising the high levels of technical expertise expected of students in vocational dance schools, will contribute to their training in positive ways. A video presentation, giving further insights into the methodology proposed, is a vital adjunct to the thesis.

The proposed methodology demands of students that they bring all facets of themselves to the work, developing the ability to take responsibility for their own learning. The demand on teachers is that they also maintain a creative involvement with the teaching process, analysing their teaching strategies, the ways in which they may work towards a deeper understanding of their students, and continue to develop teaching material in order that it serves the needs of individuals in their classes.

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Preface

The initial stages of this research began over twenty years ago when, following graduation from a teacher training course at Goldsmiths College, University of London, I trained as a dancer at London Contemporary Dance School. The difference between the philosophy underpinning the education I received at university - and was determined to pursue in my subsequent teaching - and that behind the training methods which I experienced as a dance student was pronounced. Clearly, at that time and in those institutions, education and training were thought to be two separate endeavours.

In admiration for the professionalism and technical expertise of dancers who had previously trained at The Place, I willingly succumbed to a regime which was both physically and emotionally draining. However, I questioned the need for what seemed to be a suppression of individuality in pursuit of technical excellence. As a consequence, over the following nine years, while performing and teaching, it was my aim to find a teaching method which would allow for the expression of each student's individuality, while maintaining levels of physical development appropriate for the professional dancer.

During those nine years I was fortunate enough to study at length, in company classes and during intensive courses for professional dancers, with some of the most inspirational dance teachers of this generation. I am particularly indebted to Richard Alston, Hans Brenna, Merce Cunningham, Chris Komar, Siobhan Davies, Robert North, Lynn Seymour and Dan Wagoner. As they came from different training and performance backgrounds, it is not surprising that their teaching philosophies as well as the physical material that they used were, to varying degrees, different from each other. Some of these teachers shared methodologies which revealed respect for the individuals in class and a seemingly genuine concern for their artistic development, others were inspirational in terms of their commitment to the development of the techniques they taught. Others managed to combine a desire to communicate their knowledge with a concern for their students as

well as for maintaining an extraordinary level of expertise in the reproduction of established dance vocabularies. During my training at The Place, I was privileged to work with Peter Connell, Juliet Fisher and Alan Herdman, who were similarly influential. All these teachers have affected my work profoundly. Investigations made through the Alexander Technique and Pilates method further influenced my search for training methods which would take account of the individual's physical as well as emotional and intellectual needs.

Returning to London Contemporary Dance School as a teacher, in 1988, I discovered that the philosophy underpinning the work had changed significantly during the intervening ten years. The establishment of a degree programme had confirmed a belief in the value of contextual study, and technical work was now approached with an awareness of broader educational aims alongside the specific requirements of training. Nevertheless, there often remained a divide between the physical and the intellectual, between the work explored in technique classes and that of the choreographic and contextual studies. While some aspects of this division seemed to be inevitable, I continued to seek teaching strategies which would encourage students to make connections between the different areas of their work.

Although some teachers had always respected the development of individuals during their training, it was important to note that once the institutional philosophy had changed, the task for such teachers was considerably simpler; the training became significantly more coherent and students had, in general, enhanced self-esteem and confidence. It is recognised that both the institutional ethos and the philosophies of individual teachers contributing to a training programme are of fundamental significance. Therefore it is important to note that there was, at The Place, a sympathetic environment in which my work was encouraged to develop. It would be difficult to ascertain the extent to which an alternative pedagogy might have interfered with this process in a different environment; however such issues are not part of this study. Rather, this thesis presents an optimistic

view of the exciting, challenging and thought-provoking work which teachers and students can share when all are united in a search for effective methods which assume a respect for all the individuals involved in the process of training. . .

Increasingly our students are learning to communicate not only through their physical eloquence, but also through the written and spoken word. They are encouraged to analyse, appraise, discuss and promote the art form. To be part of this continuum of change, as a teacher in such an environment, is both a privilege and a great responsibility. This thesis is written with that responsibility in mind. It will have served its purpose if, as well as being a means by which to share knowledge with students and student teachers, it acts as a catalyst for further discussion amongst the dance teaching profession concerning the important issue of the evolution of a teaching methodology which seeks to unite the aims of education and training and to encourage individual, creative responses to the training process.

I would like to thank London Contemporary Dance School for the financial assistance which was vital to the completion of this project. My supervisors, Dr Mollie Davies and Dr Richard Ralph, have provided both practical and moral support which was equally essential, and I thank them both.

Introduction

The principal objective of this study is to establish a theoretical framework for the studio teaching of professional contemporary dancers which is transferable to techniques and styles of contemporary dance other than the writer's own. The study seeks to offer practical suggestions as to how new ideas can be incorporated into a teaching programme for contemporary dance students without losing any of the rigour rightly associated with training to a very high level of technical expertise.

Further, it aims to show that this is possible without pinning such ideas to the specifics of a dance syllabus, indicating thereby that the concepts dealt with are universally applicable. It is hoped that such a framework will be useful to student teachers as well as to those already in the profession who seek guidelines and practical suggestions that will help them to make the changes that they recognise to be important.

Alongside the recognition, by many dance teachers, of the need to explore new ideas and develop appropriate methodologies has been an understandable reticence amongst those involved in contemporary dance to define their pedagogy in terms of a fixed syllabus. Such an alignment of physical and methodological ideas would be counter to the notion of a developing and truly contemporary movement vocabulary. This study seeks to show that effective teaching strategies can be applied to a wide range of teaching material, by clarifying their relationship to the writer's own movement material as well as by discussing the issues involved in more general terms. Thus it will be established firstly that the theoretical framework can be applied to specific movement ideas and secondly that these ideas need not be as fixed as the term *dance syllabus* would imply.

That change of various kinds is important has been recognised by many teachers for some considerable time, yet in the field of vocational dance training it is still most often the case that inherited structures and strategies continue to be used without much thought

as to whether or not they continue to have relevance. Until very recently, it has been assumed that dancers who have been lucky enough to train with great teachers will have assimilated enough to be similarly inspirational, in time, themselves. Proof of this assumption is that until a teachers' course was set up at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance (1995) no attempt was made to train the teachers of vocational contemporary dance students. The system of learning through working with more mature artists, akin to an apprenticeship, has been accepted for long enough for the acquisition of teaching skills, as if through osmosis, to have acquired the status of a tradition. Yet at the same time there have been pleas, many of them impassioned, for a more thoughtful approach, focusing particularly on the balance between technique and expression, concern for the students' self-esteem, the vital area of injury prevention and the need to take account of the changing needs of the profession.¹ An attempt to answer such pleas is long overdue.

The report from Dance UK's conference 'Tomorrow's Dancers' (1994) highlights two main issues that urgently need further discussion. The first could be summarised as a call for a better balance between the physical, emotional and intellectual development of dance artists. The second focuses on the need to change established methods of teaching, where this is necessary, in order to draw upon the experience of other athletes and the findings of sports scientists.

This latter area of study is one that we ignore to our disadvantage, given that we recognise dancers as athletes on a par, at their best, with Olympic athletes. We proceed at our peril if we do not, at the very least, learn from them in the vital area of injury prevention. Detailed and accurate analysis of both the effectiveness and safety of the physical material that is used in dance technique classes would be very welcome indeed. This is not, however, the concern of this study. The focus here is rather on the first of these important issues, that of taking into account the students' emotional and intellectual development as well as their physical understanding and skill.²

In the process of establishing a theoretical framework which encompasses these concerns, two key relationships will be explored through descriptive, critical and analytical methods. Firstly the relationship between educational theories and the training of dancers and secondly the teaching-learning relationship as it is manifest in the field of vocational dance training. Potentially useful analogues from teaching practice in other disciplines are identified and evaluated in order to determine their appropriateness to the dance teaching situation.³ The writings of dance artists involved in teaching are explored in relation to the emerging argument.⁴ Finally, by relating the framework to the specific details of the writer's dance material, the study aims to show in detail how the theories expounded can result in effective practice. In the final section a video presentation is given in order to illuminate some of the key concepts least readily described in a literary medium.

Chapter 1

Towards a Teaching Methodology for Contemporary Dance Technique

Prior to assessing the effectiveness of different training methods, the skills and qualities that today's dancers need to possess are defined and discussed under three headings:

(1) The 'intelligent dancer'

It is argued that the concept of a dancer as an 'instrument' to be played by the choreographer is almost totally defunct. If dancers are to be prepared for the demands of the profession, they need, increasingly, to be ready to contribute to the creation of new work in many different ways.⁵ No longer merely physical vehicles for the expression of other people's ideas, dancers are most usually collaborators in the working process of making those ideas physical. In-depth explorations in movement which are made in class during their training and which they understand intellectually as well as physically, will aid them in this respect. The effort not to separate the intellectual from the physical is explored in detail and the conclusion which is drawn is that effective training for today's

dancers must include concepts of education which were once excluded from the training arena.

(2) The 'neutral body'

The challenge to prepare students for work which does not yet exist also requires that they should not be bound to a single dance aesthetic, if their future choices are to remain unlimited. With this in mind, students need to be encouraged to explore movement 'truthfully'; that is, without overlaying it with personal, physical mannerisms or changing it, whether subtly or not, into something with which they feel more comfortable. At the same time they need to find ways of bringing their own personalities into their dancing. The relationship between the teacher's logic, as presented to the students in movement terms, and the students' ability to perform the movement with integrity and eloquence, representing it in individual ways, is explored.

(3) The 'healthier dancer'.

This term is most often heard in connection with Dance UK's conference of that name (1990) which focused on important aspects of injury prevention, healthy diets and eating habits and general physical well-being. Equally important to the notion of the dancer's health is the area of psychological well-being and it is this aspect of the students' development which is addressed in the context of this paper, in relation to the learning process in which they are engaged whilst in training.

Whilst it is recognised that it would be inappropriate for teachers who do not have any detailed knowledge of psychology, and are not trained counsellors, to take on the role of therapists in relation to their students, it is suggested that a basic understanding of the relevant literature is an asset. Drawing on the findings of Rudolph Laban (1948), Marion North (1972), Warren Lamb and Elizabeth Watson (1979), Julia Buckroyd (1988) and Angelica MacArthur (1992), suggestions are made as to the positive effects of teaching which utilises the knowledge that can be gained from such sources.

Chapter 2

Teaching and Learning Strategies

The teaching-learning relationship as applied to contemporary dance students is scrutinised. The value of recognising differences in physical, emotional and cognitive development is illustrated with particular reference to the theories of Guy Claxton (1990) and Howard Gardner (1984). Different learning strategies that students might employ are analysed and discussed, alongside teaching strategies which take account of the different and complex ways in which students may approach and come to understand the work. Four guiding principles which constitute the theoretical framework, informing the writer's teaching strategies, are suggested and described in detail:

- (1) Encouraging the development of individual relationships with the physical class material.
- (2) Bringing these relationships to consciousness.
- (3) Encouraging increasingly in-depth study, through clarification of the intrinsic logic of the movement material.
- (4) Ensuring that attitudes manifest towards the students, both verbally and non-verbally, are consistent with the values inherent in the strategies above.

Chapter 3

Planning

The discussion of planning begins in the broadest of terms, by evaluating the claims exercised upon teaching by styles of contemporary dance that are currently being explored and by addressing the responsibility, that dance teachers share, to work towards extending the range of possibilities for the future. The use of traditional structures is challenged and transformations of these inherited forms, which might ensure their continuing relevance, are proposed. The pacing of work is discussed in detail, taking account of the need to be aware of emotional and intellectual as well as physical development. Three methods of planning specific programmes of work follow.

Effective observation and recording skills, together with an understanding of the four principles outlined in Chapter Two, are shown to be vital in the planning of subsequent work. The structure of the writer's teaching material, given as an example of studio-based class work that has resulted from planning in this way, is explained in detail.

Chapter 4

Video Presentation

Significant features of the teaching methodology, or theoretical framework, are exemplified in an analytical video recording of class work. The work shown is introduced in and cross-referenced with the main text. In particular the filmed sections aim to clarify:

- (1) The different ways in which physical material given in one section of the class can be related to similar movement ideas presented in a different context, thus encouraging students to make connections, both physical and intellectual, between related strands of material.
- (2) Dynamic range as an expression of the dancers' individuality. The students' propensity towards a particular movement dynamic is clearly shown, as is their ability to expand the range of movement qualities at their disposal, through meeting the challenge of different demands in terms of timing, phrasing and quality of movement.
- (3) The need to adapt dance material for different body-types, rather than to present the material as an absolute - an external model of perfection towards which all students strive with varying degrees of success. The presentation features two very different students in terms of body-type and physical mobility. They show that by relating the material to their own bodies they can give individual, eloquent performances within set structures.

In conclusion, this investigation seeks to demonstrate the effectiveness of dance teaching which is based on a coherent theoretical underpinning and thereby to present a compelling argument for dance teaching which is thoughtful on many levels other than

the physical. It challenges the tradition of class work which encourages students to participate physically without the freedom to question, to challenge and to re-interpret according to their own needs. Further, it advocates pro-active ways in which to encourage students to do all of these things without diminishing the importance of a structure designed to support the development of particular physical skills.

Results of questionnaires, given to the students who took part in a ten week contemporary technique course based on the theoretical framework described here, are presented in Appendix C. The students' views, being consistent with observations made by the writer, support the argument in favour of such a methodology.

Appendix A

Glossary of technical terms and key to the shorthand used in the teaching notes

Following on from the recognition of the importance of effective communication between teachers and students and between teachers, particularly those who share the responsibility of training students, comes the concern to initiate discussion that might result in a commonly agreed dance vocabulary. The fact that no such vocabulary exists as yet is a potential problem, particularly as students studying with more than one teacher need to make sense of information which is given using the same terms, often with different meanings or, alternatively, different terms meaning the same thing. This problem is further exacerbated when training involves students for whom English is not the first language. The terms listed include all those used in the text which have the potential to be misinterpreted, with particular emphasis on the different meanings assigned to terms borrowed from the ballet vocabulary and those that are specific to the writer's work, thereby clarifying the teaching notes.

Appendix B

Teaching notes

Notes relating to the teaching of a group of third year students, in daily classes for ten weeks, are given as an illustration of one way in which the theories expounded can be expressed in terms of physical class material. The structure of each class follows the same pattern as that described, in detail, in Chapter Three.

Appendix C

Student appraisal forms

The results of questionnaires, given to all students as normal London Contemporary Dance School practice, which were returned by all the students who took part in the course described in the teaching notes, serve to clarify their responses to the methodology discussed in this study.

Appendix D

Introductory questions

The student responses given here are examples of notes on aims and intentions made at the outset of a similar course with a different group of students. The questions are specific to this one situation, having been devised by the writer for the particular purpose of gleaning information that would serve as the basis of initial, one-to-one discussions with the students as they began work together. Different sets of questions have been given to other groups, whilst on other occasions no such strategy has been employed. Questionnaires of this kind are not given as normal London Contemporary Dance School practice.

Appendix E

Assessment Categories

The categories for assessment reproduced here are those used at London Contemporary Dance School for the assessment of all studio-based work in both ballet and contemporary techniques.

Notes and References

¹ Jane Winearls, *Modern Dance: The Jooss-Leeder Method* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968); Daniel Lewis, *The Illustrated Dance Technique of José Limón* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Julia Buckroyd, 'The Teaching of Dance', *Dancing Times*, 78 no. 931(1988), 647-649; Judith A. Gray, 'Dance Education In The Future: Trends and Predictions', *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, (hereafter *JOPERD*), 61, no. 5 (1990), 50-53 and Lauren Potter, 'Where Does Responsibility Lie?', *Dance Now* , 2 no.3 (1993), 60.

² Various means by which insights can be gained into the dance students' intellectual and emotional standpoints are proposed. The arguments presented and discussed emerge from and engage with the theories expounded by the following writers:

Julia Buckroyd, 'The Teaching of Dance' (1988);

Merce Cunningham, *The Dancer and the Dance: Merce Cunningham in conversation with Jacqueline Lesschaeve* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1985);

Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (London: Heinemann, 1984);

Judith Lynne Hanna, *Dance and Stress* (New York: AMS Press, 1988);

Carl G.Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, ed. by Carl G. Jung and others (London: Aldous Books, Jupiter Books, 1964);

Warren Lamb and Elizabeth Watson, *Body Code: The Meaning in Movement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979);

James Penrod, 'Expression in Dance: Teaching Beyond Technique', *Impulse*, 2 (1994), 3-15;

Jane Winearls, *Modern Dance* (1968).

³ Teaching strategies that are proposed as appropriate for the dance teacher's use are derived from two main sources. Firstly from the education theories of Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, 2nd edn (London: Ernest Benn, 1950); John Holt, *How Children Fail* (USA: Pitman, 1964) and *How Children Learn* (USA: Pitman, 1967); Aldous Huxley, *Adonis and the Alphabet and Other Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975); Louis Arnaud Reid, *Meaning in the Arts* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969) and *Ways of Understanding and Education* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1986); Guy Claxton, *Teaching to Learn: A Direction for Education* (London: Cassell, 1990); and Muska Mosston and Sara Ashworth, *Teaching Physical Education*, 4th edn (USA: Macmillan College, 1994). Secondly from the experience of attempting to put many of these theories into practice during twenty-two years of involvement in the dance teaching profession.

⁴ Peter Brinson, *Dance as Education: Towards a National Dance Culture* (London: The Falmer Press, 1991); Merce Cunningham, *The Dancer and the Dance*; Daniel Lewis, *The Technique of José Limón*

(1984); Ernestine Stodelle, *The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey and Its Creative Potential*, 1st British edn (London: Dance Books, 1979); and Jane Winearls, *Modern Dance: The Jooss-Leeder Method*.

⁵ In this context 'work' describes the choreographic process in which dancers and choreographers engage together, resulting in a product which may be called either a 'new work', or a 'piece'.

Chapter 1

Towards a Teaching Methodology for Contemporary Dance Technique

Introduction

For at least forty years the complex relationships between dance education, the training of professional dance students and the *expressive*¹ or *creative* element of that training have been discussed and debated, whilst the issue of how these relationships might most usefully serve the needs of the developing dance-artist has remained largely unresolved. During this time, both in America and in this country, a tendency to concentrate increasingly on the attainment of specific physical goals has been noted,² leading to the widening divide between the acquisition of *dance technique* and concerns which will be categorised as *creative* for the purposes of this thesis.

As long ago as 1958 Jane Winearls, in *Modern Dance: The Jooss-Leeder Method*, highlighted the need for concentration on the problems of training as she saw them. The concept of separation discussed here between the body, as machine, and the *expressive* qualities to be developed by the dance student, was a major concern and continues to challenge notions of training and education:

The problem in training is an obvious one; to extend the range of potential to its fullest whilst maintaining natural expression. These two aspects of training are loosely called, technique and expression, and as such, are more often than not separated. It is not surprising therefore that it is possible to establish two separate attitudes to training in the same activity. [...]

The teacher of professional dance [...] must keep up with ever increasing technical demands to meet the requirements of modern choreographers, but she must also enable her student to grow in expression and feeling as the competent machine of her body is trained. By what magic can she release or induce feeling, or will it automatically grow with the rigorous practice of daily technical routines?³

Winearls's comprehensive book has value because of both the clarity of information on the fundamentals of the technique she describes and the interesting chapters on 'Dynamics' and on 'Direction & Design'. More importantly, it presents the argument that

any teaching methodology has value only in as much as it is used simply as a tool, whilst many other points concerning education and training are taken into account:

The method of teaching or training is a useful tool to be employed by the student under guidance from the teacher, in order to produce a special result. [...] The importance of such a method is that it be realised as a tool only. The use made of this method does not automatically ensure satisfactory results in terms of education and training. There are many other points to be considered. [...] My concern has always been the unity of the person with the dance. I have found this to be quite independent of the specific training employed.⁴

Referring to the observations that she had made ten years earlier, in the first edition of that book, Winearls notes the lack of progress that was made in working towards the unity which she considers to be vital:

During the years since these words were written, I have had opportunities of seeing the separation of these two aspects getting wider and wider. The challenge to the teacher of dance to unite training and education, to develop technique and feeling, is a real one, and the most usual method employed, is to rely upon the method employed.⁵

It is hard to find the root causes of such separation, harder still to imagine why the divide between the aims of education and 'performance training'⁶, or 'expression' and 'technique', as described in the 1960s, should have continued to develop. However there are some pointers which shape the debate.

In 'The Future Is Now - An Imperative For Dance Education', Janice D. Lapointe-Crump reports on the American 'Conference on Movement' in 1961, during which the meaning and roles of dance as an art within society were debated. She suggests that the arguments put forward by the participants served as a catalyst for a comprehensive study of dance in the U.S.A. Nancy Smith Fichter outlined the goal:

To find a way of arresting quicksilver experience so that it may be possessed by the perceiver and rendered into significance. The concern is manifest: To learn how to utilize emotion, intuitiveness, the rational, the sensory - all with equal and fully realized facility.⁷

Suggested routes to achieving it included diverse subjects, the importance of which was widely agreed upon:

history and philosophy of dance; principles of human movement and their application to dance; dance notation; aesthetic principles and their application to dance; principles of the art of music and their relationship to dance; principles of dance choreography; movement skills including fundamentals, improvisation, and composition in various dance forms; and dance as a cultural experience.⁸

Lapointe-Crump comments that,

Energetic and comprehensive though they were, the ideas dissipated when the notion that dance education is foremost a preparation for the performer-artist-teacher prevailed. Little attention was devoted to the actual provinces of study or to how they might be joined to serve the whole. Ultimately, the scope of the plan was limited.⁹

The notion that such positive ideas could have been abandoned, *because* dance education was seen to be primarily a preparation for the performer-artist-teacher, implies that the value of contextual study, although interesting in itself, was felt to be unnecessary for the dancer whose principal aim was to perform. Yet it appears that the choreographers of the time were no less interested in the intellectual and *creative* involvement of their students or dancers and the problem remained as to how to involve them in the *creative* process during their training.

The choreographer Merce Cunningham echoes the concerns expressed by Winearls as he discusses the challenges involved in cultivating 'mentally supple and resilient dancers'.¹⁰ He suggests that to 'release or induce feeling' is not something which will 'automatically grow with the rigorous practice of daily technical routines' but rather that it is one of the teacher's concerns to encourage the students to bring instinct and intellect together, during the *technique class*:

In most people, there's such a split between instinct and intellect. A technique class should, in a way, within a certain scale, put them together so that both are working in unison.¹¹

Whilst clearly making the point that his expectation is for each student, or dancer, to relate the given movement material to themselves as people, at no point does he discuss the ways in which they might be encouraged to make individual contributions to the work. The fact that this has never been his main interest is clearly reflected in frequent references to his fundamental dislike of the teaching process, whilst the fact that his priority is with *technical* concerns is reflected in the comment,

The biggest problem always is that it takes so long to get the physical thing clear. There's not very much time left for the rest of it, which is unfortunate.¹²

Cunningham was not alone in talking of the need to encourage the students' *creative* input. There are other inspirational books describing particular dance *techniques* which welcome individuality, such as Daniel Lewis's *The Illustrated Dance Technique of José Limón* and Ernestine Stodelle's *The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey and its Creative Potential*. It is clear that for both Humphrey and Limón, the dancers' ability to *express* their individuality was a vital part of the training process, equally welcomed during the making of new work.

Stodelle hints at the relationship between the teacher and the student in the studio when she describes some of Humphrey's teaching strategies:

It was Doris Humphrey's custom when teaching or directing to acquaint her students and dancers first with the esthetic (sic) concept behind a series of movements before analyzing the action itself. Such a method yielded rich results. It immediately established a mutually creative working relationship between the teacher-director and the interpreters of her choreographic ideas.¹³

Similarly, Lewis describes Limón's concern to involve the dancers' *personalities* :

Students were encouraged to find the meaning of the dance movement for themselves, infusing each arch of the back, lift of the arm or drop of the upper body with a dramatic, even spiritual, quality that came from within. [...] to use every part of his or her body as an expressive tool.¹⁴

Both Lewis and Stodelle discuss the philosophical background of the *techniques* through which they trained, as well as describing the movement material, the musical structure and the *quality* or *dynamics* of the movement. Lewis's 'Notes to Teachers' give important information on the specific intentions of the exercises described and on the necessity of developing particular skills before proceeding to the next stage of work. Thereby he indicates structural concerns such as the need for sufficient preparation or repetition. However teaching methodology in a broader sense is merely touched upon and then only in order to illuminate the process of encouraging students to develop towards very particular goals.

Humphrey makes it very clear that the *technique* she devised was discovered during her search for a vocabulary which would serve her specific, *creative* vision. In her book *My Approach to the Modern Dance* she states, 'I wish my dance to reflect some experience of my own in relationship to the outside world.'¹⁵ She explains eloquently how movement, in the context of her work, is invested with a particular quality and emotional content, describing rhythm as an expression of the reaching away from and returning to equilibrium; fall and recovery as an expression of danger and excitement versus repose and peace.

To fall is to yield; to recover is to reaffirm one's power over gravity and oneself. [...]
The style of dance that emerges is, in essence, lyrical. It expresses the innate power of the human spirit to triumph over adverse forces. ¹⁶

Given that rhythm can be used to communicate other dramatic statements or for the intrinsic sense of enjoyment it can reveal, that dancers can *suspend* their movements and *fall* with an almost infinite number of emotional overtones, or with none, it becomes increasingly apparent that it was the *expressive qualities* with which each movement was imbued, rather than the movements themselves, that made them so supremely well suited to the view of the world that she wanted to convey. Logically so, as that view inspired both her physical explorations and her chosen teaching method.

Equally clearly, recognition of the wealth of possibilities in terms of movement *dynamics* and their *expressive* potential highlights the difference between, on the one hand, a *technique* or a teaching methodology which serves a specific, *creative* vision and on the other, the necessity to train dancers to be ready for a variety of different kinds of work or to enable them to make their own statements about the world. This very different focus is the one which must now inform our decisions about what, and more particularly *how* dancers should study. We can certainly learn from the rich legacy of teacher-choreographers but we need to look beyond their methodologies and discover others that are more relevant to the needs of today. None of the techniques described above could (or would claim to be able to) adequately train tomorrow's dancers, because the choreographers of tomorrow will have different philosophies and their work will need to be *expressed* in new ways. This is not a new concept. Margaret H'Doubler (1940) wrote,

A living art must be aware of the problems of its own age and discover answers in terms of that age. It cannot express feelings and ideals that have vanished or adopt techniques and aims without consideration of their pertinence. We must bear in mind that new problems confront us which demand solution.¹⁷

Although these accounts of the training process remain the only comprehensively documented examples of work which actively encouraged *creative* input from the participants, it should not be assumed that no other work of this kind was taking place. The choreographer Robert Cohan states the request that the training process prepare dancers for the choreographers' 'ever-expanding vocabulary', recognizing that although

there is a clear distinction between the dramatic choreographed movement that is performed on the stage, and the technically oriented movement learned in the dance class; [...] they should be related.¹⁸

In his book, *The Dance Workshop*, Cohan gives no clues as to how such a relationship might be achieved, still less how individuals might contribute to the process of clarifying such a connection.

The only information given with reference to the claim that the text will 'teach you how to get back in touch with yourself and express how you feel' (back cover) is that,

there are certainly no rules about style or body design; instead you use your own sense of design to form yourself as a dancer in your own image.¹⁹

Nevertheless, in his teaching Cohan continually related his exercises to the sensations deeply and individually felt in the body; this in turn led to a similarly deep sense of individual connection with the work which may be termed *creative* and which was of paramount importance in the building of confidence and self-esteem. It will be argued that the relating of intention to physical sensations is an important part of the *creative* process in which students should be engaged whilst in training.

It is difficult, then, to ascertain whether or not certain training methods were *creative* solely on the basis of the relevant literature. However, deductions can be made as to the relative importance given to the different aspects of the training process, by looking at the ways in which training courses were organised. Personal experience also provides useful, although subjective information on the relative efficacy of training processes.

In this country *vocational* training during the 1960s and the 1970s was principally concerned with the development of *technical expertise*. At London Contemporary Dance School during that time, a limited amount of contextual study was undertaken²⁰ and choreographic opportunities abounded. However the norm in *technique classes* was to work towards ideals of physical perfection which frequently involved a suppression of individuality as students were told not only what to do but also what to feel whilst performing the particular movements of the Graham technique.

The development of dance in education and of dance scholarship in this country has been expertly detailed by Brinson.²¹ He notes that it was not until 1977 when the Laban Centre's application for validation of Britain's first practically-based degree course in

dance was granted, that the chasm between the aims of education and those of training began to be bridged. Other degree and further education courses followed, aiming to continue, beyond secondary schooling, the educational concerns of prioritising the learning and development of students while, at the same time, training them for work in the profession.

The contextual subjects introduced during that time mirrored, almost exactly, the list proposed in 1967 by Nancy Smith Fichter, confirming that ideas as to the importance of a broad education for *vocational* dance students were shared on both sides of the Atlantic.

Such courses led to an increasing awareness of the breadth of *artistic* concerns being expressed choreographically and the teaching methods became less dictatorial. At the same time the value of supporting the students' individual and personal development during their physical training began to re-emerge as an important concern. However, the assumption continued that teachers of *vocational* dance students would have learned the principles of effective teaching through their experience as professional dancers and no attempt was made to define the methodology that would support them in the complex process of teaching future contemporary dance artists.

It remains the case today that there is no universally applicable methodology for the training of dancers who will go on to work in companies not yet in existence and to perform in work which is, as yet, not conceived.

The search for such comprehensive ideas is long overdue. There is now an urgent need to take positive action, to place the individual firmly at the centre of the discussion, and to acknowledge that *technical* training without such emphasis on the students' contribution to the learning process provides neither a positive educational experience, nor a useful training for the profession.

To state this is to agree with Winearls's heartfelt statement:

the only lasting good lies within each individual, and [...] until the teacher has a means for helping the student to tap this source herself, she is fighting a losing battle. No matter what method or system is employed, the final requirement is that the student be shown how to use that system to advance his (sic) own growth. The choice of system may be determined by many things and is not really the crucial point. I believe that no system can do more than the student is able to exploit within herself and I think now is the time for teachers to understand this.²²

In the belief that this is the only feasible way forward, it is proposed that some fundamental questions must be answered. These concern the method through which such a system might be found and the general, if not universal, applicability of the principles on which the method might be based.

Towards a Methodology

For a discussion of the psychology of teaching, dance as education and teaching methodologies we have to look to education theory. It is suggested that the many thought-provoking books and articles to be found within that discipline, in particular Albert North Whitehead's *The Aims of Education*, John Holt's *How Children Fail*, Louis Arnaud Reid's *Ways of Understanding and Education* and Guy Claxton's *Teaching to Learn* are inspiring and relevant texts which may usefully form the basis of any discussion on dance teaching methodology.²³ Yet the problem remains of relating ideas found in these contexts to the particular focus of studio-based dance teaching. This study will suggest relationships that can be discovered and ways in which understanding of these may be developed, through work in the studio.

Claxton's *Teaching to Learn* is particularly useful to the reconsideration of teaching methodology because the ideas presented are clearly universally applicable.

In his opening chapter Claxton explains:

The language I speak is psychological, and I see such a language as having clear functions and limitations. It is not the business of psychology to indicate what education should be, nor what counts as the 'best' form of schooling: that is the province of aims and ideology. But it can help in the process of influencing people's actions, attitudes and aims by showing what the range of options are, and what conditions are needed to achieve each of these options if chosen. It can also show which goals are compatible, in the sense that they are targets which can be hit with the same educational shot; and which require different, even conflicting approaches.²⁴

Although Claxton's theories are oriented to those involved in mainstream education, one of his target audiences is student teachers and therefore his observations are relevant to the core of this investigation. Because most teachers in vocational dance schools were initially professional dancers and, of necessity, have learned to teach 'on the job', they share many aspects of experience with student teachers and, as Claxton points out, with our students who are learning at the same time. This state of affairs is valuable for, as Claxton suggests, there are '...strong parallels between what is going on in the privacy of pupils' minds and the personal, even emotional, issues that are facing [us]'.²⁵

It is useful for teachers, from time to time, whatever their depth of experience, to remind themselves of feelings of inadequacy, clumsiness or inarticulateness, when attempting an unfamiliar activity. This need not be a complex process demanding a lot of time. We have only to attempt a large jig-saw puzzle, for example, and witness ourselves being by turns obsessive, elated, frustrated or impatient to learn a lot about the strategies that we will automatically use, to cope with these mood swings. Choose one with no straight lines at the edge or the 'mystery puzzle' variety which does not tell us either what the finished picture or what the finished shape will be and we have an experience sufficiently close to that of contemporary dance students to enable us to empathise with them as they begin, and become progressively more involved with the complex process of training.

Like them, we cannot work with an image of the finished puzzle in mind, but only continue to explore, believing that everything will 'come together' in the end. Meanwhile

we may note that when we think that we are about to 'crack' a new section, we hate to be interrupted; that when we have been searching for a long time with no positive results we feel in desperate need of a break, and that often, after that break, and returning to the problem with a fresh eye, an enormous number of new pieces may be slotted together very quickly. We may suddenly realise that other pieces, with which we have been battling for hours, do fit - but in quite different ways from those previously envisaged. The logic seems to spring out at us, when only moments before we were frustrated by what appeared to be an insoluble maze. We can bear in mind, also, how we may cope with all these things in private and contrast that with the very public situation that students find themselves in, as they battle not only to solve the puzzle, but also to retain their self-esteem in the process.

The value of focusing on self, before beginning to understand others is recognised in many educational and *artistic* spheres. The film director Kieślowski says,

I tried to fathom out what brought me to this point in my life, too, because without such an authentic, thorough and merciless analysis, you can't tell a story. If you don't understand your own life, then I don't think you can understand the lives of the characters in your stories, you can't understand the lives of other people. Philosophers know this. Social workers know this. But artists ought to know this too. ²⁶

Claxton gives further reasons for becoming increasingly aware of personal motivations and responses:

teachers themselves need to be good learners, and a central quality of the good learner is to know when to surrender to the need to explore and experiment, and when to hang on to the old methods and routines. In learning to teach, what makes you defensive and how you respond to feeling threatened (or nervous or ashamed or upset or irritated) are very much part of the process. And this involves learning about feelings and gaining insight into your own habits and reactions. [...] How you teach and how you learn to teach are bound up with your own personality, philosophy and values [...]. If a way of teaching is merely grafted on from the outside and does not take root in a teacher's system of values and beliefs [...] it will be ineffective or lead to a sense of inner dissonance and inauthenticity. ²⁷

It is this sense of the teachers' values being inherent in their chosen methodologies that dance students often recognise and describe as 'honesty'; for many students this quality comes very high up on a list of priorities.

Thirdly, and most importantly, Claxton's book is relevant because every part is imbued with his stated belief concerning the aims of education:

I believe that the prime function of education in an uncertain world should be to provide young people with the competence and self-confidence to tackle uncertainty well; in other words, to be good learners.²⁸

Nothing could be more relevant in the constantly changing world of contemporary dance. All propositions that follow are under-pinned by this shared notion; that as we do not know what the work of the future will be, the best we can do for our students is to encourage adaptability and the ability to cope with uncertainty and change.

It is important to recognise and respect the notion that everyone has different ways of organising, retaining and retrieving information. The most important factor is that the system employed is relevant to the individual's needs and interests. Claxton describes in detail many different models of the mind which serve to prove the point that there is no single, *right* way to assimilate information. Therefore there can be no single, *right* way to teach. However it is possible, if we are working towards the aforementioned goal, to highlight the methods which will be most appropriate.²⁹

Before considering the most appropriate ways to train the dancer, the question must be asked: What kind of a dancer are we attempting to train? The answer to this question lies within three different categories, namely:

- 1) The 'Intelligent Dancer'
- 2) The 'Neutral Body'
- 3) The 'Healthier Dancer'

The 'Intelligent' or the 'Thinking Dancer' are expressions often used to describe the kind of dancers we should be attempting to train. What do these terms mean and how can we best set about nurturing the dancer's 'intelligence'?³⁰

It is well known that today's contemporary dancers are usually expected to contribute choreographic ideas in many and various ways. This is reflected in the newly acquired vocabulary which has grown up in an attempt to describe the dancer's contribution to the *artistic* process, for example, 'devising', 'collective choreography', and 'joint authorship'.

Jann Parry quotes Siobhan Davies, talking about the dancers in her company:

They're longing to make their own decisions. The more they have authorship, the more they communicate their understanding of the material to the people watching. If you're working with new ideas, they have to be as clear as possible.³¹

In the same article Pina Bausch is quoted, talking of her working process:

When I start a piece, there is nothing concrete. The work is to discover its shape. In the early years, I used to prepare myself well in advance, because I was scared the dancers would ask me: 'What do you want us to do?' But then something would happen that wasn't in my plan, and I had to choose whether to stick to the plan, or follow this little thing. So I learned to trust the little thing. Now I ask questions of all the dancers, to bring out their responses, their own gestures and memories... It's a long process, finding the right questions to provoke the right material.³²

Christopher Bruce and Ashley Page, both working within the repertory company situation, prefer to maintain greater control over the working process and yet are clearly influenced by the dancers with whom they work. Bruce says,

I know what I want, but I'm very influenced by who the dancers are and how they move,³³

Page states,

If something is generated by the dancers, I might use fragments of it, but I always know what I want to say about the music or the kind of world I want to create.³⁴

Programme notes for contemporary dance performances often reflect these changing working relationships. For example, Janet Smith acknowledges the contributions of the dancers with whom she has worked in her programme for the company's 'Coming of Age' performances (May 1997),

The choreographer wishes to thank the dancers for their creative input into the work. The piece was largely developed through a devising process using improvisation, and reflects the work of the cast as a whole.

Adventures in Motion Pictures's programme for the performances of 'Cinderella' (October 1997) states,

Matthew Bourne would like to thank the cast of *Cinderella* for their dedication, support and creative contributions towards the making of this production.

It is now rarely the case that the dancer's *creative* contribution can be entirely separated from choreographic activity, and recognition of this has led to an increasing emphasis on choreography and improvisation as essential parts of a dancer's training programme. However, the skills required to make such a contribution need not be developed solely outside *technique* classes. In fact, it is essential that this is not the case.

However much contextual work, choreography or improvisation takes place as discrete studies, that work is negated unless dancers are also encouraged to think whilst they are dancing. That is, to work *intelligently* in movement terms - making sense of *corrections*, relating them to their own bodies, remembering them, and being able to apply information given or discovered to a different but related situation. An essential part of the training process is to build, into the body, almost unbreakable habits which will be carried forward into all other dance-related activities so that, unless students are positively encouraged to think while they are in class the habit that they build will be one of separating the intellectual from the physical.

To prevent such separation is a complex responsibility. However, if the issue remains unaddressed what is left is *training*, usually taking place in the morning and emphasising the physical component of dance, and *education*, scheduled for the afternoon and featuring intellectual activity. This negates what is expected of an 'intelligent dancer' which is that they should use all their capacities at once.

Practically speaking it is possible both to train and educate at the same time, but this depends largely on the teacher's willingness to encourage students to think about and discuss the process itself. Even if the pace of the class needs to be maintained for maximum physical benefit, it is still possible to hold longer discussions outside class, and to refer to these quickly in the studio, so that *connections* can be made without stopping to talk for long.

Technique teachers can also make an important contribution because of the many parallels that can be drawn between the activity of students working with their teachers and that of the dancer working with a choreographer. The teacher or choreographer assumes authority and overall control; the teacher is, at the very least, responsible for the students' physical safety and needs to take this responsibility seriously. Even in the case of work devised by a group of dancers, it is frequently the case that one of them will assume the role of director. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the student or the dancer will participate fully in the movement explorations that the teacher, choreographer or director decides to make.

The teacher, acting as facilitator, like the choreographer in group-devised pieces, always has the overall structure in mind, the original intention and the overview. Like an experienced choreographer, she or he also has an image of where certain courses of action are likely to lead, and the potential pitfalls. On the other hand both recognise the value of encouraging or facilitating the students' or the dancers' own line of enquiry and recognise that the results of these enquiries have interest value of their own.

Students would also be served well if they could be encouraged to undertake in-depth explorations in movement that would feed them both as dancers, able and willing to contribute to a working process for which they are not wholly responsible, and as choreographers, searching for an individual voice.

This can be achieved in very practical ways, the first step being to recognise that the journey of exploration and discovery is one which is best made together. Then the richness of the experience will be due in part to the sharing of thoughts along the way; in part to each allowing the other time for personal reflection before moving on; and in part to a trust and mutual respect for whatever verbal or movement contributions are made. This is not to belittle the different level of experience that the teacher brings into the studio, or to suggest that a teacher can usefully set out to teach a class without sufficient knowledge of the subject or a plan of where to go and how to get there; rather it suggests a recognition of the freshness of every new situation. Every new student possesses different physical attributes and limitations, has particular experiences, expectations and hopes, and therefore presents a fresh challenge to the teacher. In this sense each class represents a new beginning and a new journey to be embarked upon, even for the most experienced teacher.

If students can engage with confidence in this kind of a relationship with their teachers, enjoy a dialogue and feel able to use that relationship as a secure base from which to make their personal journeys, how much more likely it is that they will be able to translate these positive experiences into the working situations that they meet as professionals. Furthermore, if they sense their teachers' explorations to have been fruitful, the chances are that they will want to explore their own lines of enquiry, soon becoming independent of external input and disposed to ask themselves the kinds of questions that they will need to answer, whether they are to become dancers, teachers or choreographers.

As they enter the profession, an important part of the dancers' repertoire of mental and physical skills will be to adapt to new ways of working that will be explored by the choreographer with whom they work. To have studied a range of contemporary techniques, including release-based work and some kind of double-work (whether contact-improvisation or the traditional, ballet vocabulary), together with choreography and improvisation, will be an enormous asset. But none of these studies will be genuinely helpful unless they are explored in depth.

While a superficial knowledge might enable the student to appear confident, perhaps sufficiently so to pass an audition, it will not serve them well in the future. If they are to be involved with choreographers in the process of making work, they will need to have the resources to collaborate with them, supporting the choreographic idea from its seed-like, *imaginative* beginnings through to its fully grown, physical conclusions. To do this they will need knowledge that is full of potential, as has been previously discussed. They will need to be sensitive to their own feelings, in order that this knowledge be imbued with their own *imagination*, and also sensitive to the vulnerability of the choreographer who, unlike most other artists, has to make her or his work in a very public domain.³⁵

Thirdly, and importantly, students will need both the courage and the physical ability to explore the choreographer's ideas with integrity, without overlaying the movement with personal, physical mannerisms and without changing it into something with which they feel more comfortable. Except in the case of working processes which depend upon the shifting focus of ideas made possible by the collective thoughts of collaborators, contributions that the dancer makes need to be imbued with their own personality while remaining faithful to the logic of the choreographer's ideas and intentions. It is this ability to explore in detail the particularities of each new kind or *style* of work which characterises the kind of dancer who is described as having a 'neutral body'.

In class, the student should have the opportunity to work with this concept in mind. It is the teacher's logic that is presented in the physical material, but the dancer's intelligence which perceives it, the dancer's *imagination* which brings it to life in new ways, and the dancer's 'neutral body' which reveals it fully and clearly and makes it eloquent.

It is the developing awareness of, and ability to show physically, the nuances of every detail of movement which reveals the student's deep level of understanding of the class material. When such understanding has been reached it becomes increasingly impossible for the student to perform in ways which are stylistically incongruous. The understanding of the intrinsic logic of each style studied enables the student to adapt, in a way which remains 'truthful' and logical to them, to any aesthetic.

Guiding the students through this process, is a complex task. It is important that they relate the material to their own bodies, otherwise their understanding will be limited to the intellectual and, as such, not be useful.³⁶ And they should be encouraged to be courageous enough to explore movement with which they may not at first feel comfortable.³⁷

It is often hard to persuade students to enter new territory and it becomes impossible unless they are confident that they will be led to discoveries that have some relevance for them, that the training is, in that sense, personalised. Whitehead (1932) suggests that,

for successful education there must always be a certain freshness in the knowledge dealt with. It must either be new in itself or it must be invested with some novelty of application to the new world of new times. Knowledge does not keep any better than fish. You may be dealing with knowledge of the old species, with some old truth; but somehow or other it must come to the students, as it were, just drawn out of the sea and with the freshness of its immediate importance.³⁸

This sense of immediate importance, that every moment during a class relates specifically to them, may be derived in part from personal *corrections* and attention but, more importantly, should be inherent in the logic of the material and an awareness that this

material is applicable to all *body-types* and accessible to all personalities. Then the relationship built up will be between the student and the material itself, thereby encouraging the students' autonomy.

It is vitally important that students trust in the logic of what is presented. Reading C.V.s of teachers may tell them that they ought to know something worth teaching; admiration of dancers who have trained with those same teachers in the past may be a good indication that they were capable of teaching something of value once, but the most important question to be answered must be whether or not they trust that they will learn something that they feel it is imperative that they should know.

It is important not only that there is logic behind what we do as teachers, but also that we make that logic clear. If we require of the student, by expectation of their level of understanding, that they search until they find and grasp it, then we create a situation in which it becomes dissatisfying not to work at this very deep level of understanding and it will become the norm to look for *connections* between different sets of information in all related situations, including their own work. Therefore a standard of common and individual endeavour will be maintained, relating to an in-depth search for *connections* and logic, which will help them to discover an individual voice, whether that is made manifest in their choreography, dancing, teaching or in the context of any other area in which they may operate.

This is a kind of 'dance intelligence' that we fail to nurture if we are superficial or flippant in our choices of what to teach but, on the other hand, that we can encourage the students to develop if we teach something that is personal. By making our own logic clear we reveal past journeys that we have undertaken, showing that they have been exciting or, at the very least, useful ones. By example, we encourage the students to make similarly individual journeys and choices as they search for their own movement language.³⁹

That our movement material can serve the needs of a variety of different body types must be made clear in positive ways. The approach which suggests, "if you can't manage that, then this will do" is bound to lead any student who fails to achieve the first version to feel second-rate. On the other hand an instruction such as, "follow the line of the reach of your leg and fall to that place," (knowing and taking account of the fact that the students may all finish the movement combination facing different ways, depending on their degree of *turn-out*)⁴⁰ allows the task set to be successfully completed by all students, and the variations in visual outcome not to be seen as negative. In this sense, the material will be used always as a means to an end (or many different ends) and not as an absolute, towards which the students aspire with varying degrees of success. In this way the work of the class will be understood by the students to be something that they share, helping towards a positive group dynamic.

In this context it clearly will never be appropriate to make personal, negative remarks about physical characteristics or limitations, nor to judge the students' performance of the class material in terms of particular shapes within the body or resultant shapes in space. The students' focus on competitive notions that often have to do with their appraisal of each other in superficial ways, relating to external shapes, will also be abandoned in favour of concentration on the work being done.⁴¹

This is not to imply that there are no standards to which all students can usefully aspire, but rather that these standards relate to the way in which students work and the ways in which they are able to relate the material to their bodies and their particular learning processes.

The criteria for the continuous assessment of students at London Contemporary Dance School reflect the desire to take these important issues into account. Initially developed in 1994 by the contemporary dance faculty, in a search for criteria that would be applicable across a range of work and dance styles, these were accepted by the ballet

faculty and are now used for all technical work taught at the school. Whilst all the criteria are considered to be important, the first and the last categories are particularly relevant here, as they underline the philosophical issues discussed in this thesis:

1) Understanding of Class Principles

The ability to adapt mentally and physically to the specific principles of a technique and the movement style of the class, whilst showing a respect, understanding and responsibility for individual physical structure at this present stage of its development.

7) Quantifiable Commitment

Motivation, that is, the ability to bring both a positive energy and curiosity to the class, fully and consistently participating in the work.

Issues affecting the students' motivation are discussed in Chapter Two, in relation to their sense of self-worth. It is important here simply to note that we may help them towards a positive response to the work if we never mock them (the "this is how it is not done" approach) and never use negative mimicry. If we take on trust that they are trying to make sense of the material presented, then we will recognise any physical response as a manifestation of their thought process in relation to the given material. Therefore to mock any outcome is to belittle *them* and may be very damaging to their self-esteem, when what they actually need is to build the confidence which will allow them to engage increasingly positively with the material.

It may be the case that we work with students who appear not to think about what they are doing. When we behave as though this were indeed the case, responding, for example, to similar questions in a different manner depending on which student asked them, we help to perpetuate a situation in which the students find it hard to break out of known patterns of behaviour and of learning. Inevitably, those students who have been dealt with in a patronising manner will not be emboldened to articulate their questions in the future and an important route into their thought processes will have been closed: one that otherwise may have become open to us, had we been able to react positively to their initial enquiries.

The term 'Healthier Dancer' is most often heard in connection with DANCE UK's conference of that name, held at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London, in September 1990. The conference focused on the important aspects of injury prevention, healthy diets and eating habits and general physical well-being, which are essential to any dancer. These issues continue to be explored and discussed, both in this country and elsewhere⁴² and feature in most undergraduate programmes in ballet and contemporary dance.

Equally important to the notion of the dancer's health is the area of psychological well-being. In the context of this paper, I shall describe as 'healthy' the student who is able to come to terms emotionally with their feelings in relation to their dancing and to the learning process in which they are engaged whilst in training.

There is no longer the need to show that dancers are *technically* capable, or not, irrespective of their weight or shape, provided that they are healthy and strong. The focus of this study therefore will not be on the students' image of themselves in relation to specific *body-type*, but rather on their feelings in relation to their ability to learn and to train, with particular reference to the dynamic range through which they may reveal their personalities.

Given that dance teachers rarely have detailed knowledge of psychology, and are not usually trained in either counselling or psycho-therapy, it may be that this is an area often ignored out of fear of misplaced judgments or inappropriate action. Yet we can learn from relevant literature, realising that although our understanding of the subject will be limited, there is much that we can usefully glean from this source. Clearly, we must not attempt to take on the role of therapists ourselves; yet we must use the information that is available to us, in positive ways, for two reasons. Firstly, in recognition of the fact that the profession demands dancers who are capable of bringing the whole of themselves to their performances, 'mind and body', and secondly, for the more effective education of our

students. A greater sense of involvement with the physical material, brought about through an ability to become emotionally as well as intellectually and physically engaged with the work increases the students' sense of being in control of their learning. Frequently there is a resultant strengthening of motivation to take initiative in and responsibility for the learning process. Further, as Rollo May states:

people can more accurately observe precisely when they are emotionally involved - that is, reason works better when emotions are present; the person sees sharper and more accurately when his emotions are engaged.⁴³

Counter-arguments to his view highlight the need to be clear about the difference between being 'emotionally involved' and allowing emotional factors to override the learning process, inhibiting the ability to see clearly. There is an important correlation here between the appropriate degree of emotional involvement for effective training and the ability to be *expressive* in performance without allowing emotional issues to stand in the way of revealing the intention of the choreography. In both instances it will be useful for the dancer to have been courageous in confronting or becoming aware of emotional experiences; nevertheless the ability to use such experiences as a resource rather than to be overtaken by their effect is crucial.

That choreographers rely on the contributions of the dancers they choose to work with has already been discussed. That they chose to work with dancers who are capable of contributing emotionally as well as physically is also beyond doubt.

Lloyd Newson describes the kind of performers he likes to work with:

I need highly skilled dancers, [...] but ones who haven't had the personality trained out of them - not easy to find. [...] I want to see people, not shoals of steps.⁴⁴

Quinny Sacks describes her search for a dancer to play the part of the Indian Boy in English National Opera's production of Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*:

Then we got stuck on the Indian Boy. [...] I went and looked at the 4th Year student group at The Place, and I was very impressed. The dancers were trained but they hadn't been manufactured in the various moulds yet. That was the quality I wanted, and I found the Indian Boy there. ⁴⁵

The focus of our attention, therefore, should be on how we can train dancers in such a way that they feel both nurtured and nourished, emotionally as well as physically, in order that they may be more effectively educated and trained.

Peter Brinson concludes his chapter, 'Education for What?' in *Dance as Education: Towards a National Dance Culture*, by suggesting that the object of all dance teaching in schools and in higher education should be to realise the six objectives identified for arts education in the Gulbenkian Report, *The Arts in Schools*. Although they might be listed in a different order of priority, I would suggest that they are also applicable to vocational training schools. Further, that if these objectives were realised, we would not only have educated our students well, but also have prepared them more adequately for the profession that awaits them.

The six objectives are:

Developing the full variety of human intelligence.

Developing creativity.

Education in feeling and sensitivity.

Exploring values.

Understanding cultural change and differences.

Developing physical and perceptual skills.

Consideration of these objectives, leads to some questions, namely

- 1)What is creativity?
- 2)What is its relationship to personality\feeling\sensitivity?
- 3)What is its relationship to intelligence?

4)How, within the context of a technique class, can we encourage students to access their own creativity?

And towards some answers:

Creativity is a form of intelligence, latent in everyone and therefore capable of training and development. It is not something which blesses some people and not others but rather, as Peter Abbs points out in *A is for Aesthetic*, 'a common and everyday possession ... the condition of our existence'.⁴⁶

Brinson also discusses the answer given to this question by the *Arts in Schools Report*.

Enjoying the fact that the report is 'down to earth about a form of intelligence often held to be a gift from heaven', he goes on to explain that,

Creativity implies making or creating or thinking through something which is the personal achievement of the person concerned. It should be in some way original, different or distinctive from anything previously created in that field, including some new combination or arrangement of existing elements, and which is the result of a conscious and deliberate activity. [...] Hence the supreme role of teacher and school in achieving the difficult balance of freedom and authority within which creative potential can grow.⁴⁷

If creativity can be described as 'thinking through' in conscious, deliberate and new ways, then the connection between this activity and that which I would describe as a dancer 'working with intelligence' is clear and suggests that the first two objectives, at least, are inextricably linked.

In an attempt to find new ways of encouraging 'creative thinking' within the context of a dance class, we may usefully refer again to Whitehead. He says,

In training a child to activity of thought, above all things we must be aware of what I will call "inert ideas" - that is to say, ideas that are merely received into the mind without being utilised, or tested, or thrown into fresh combinations. [...]

The only use of a knowledge of the past is to equip us for the present. [...] Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge.⁴⁸

Arguing against the suggestion that there is useful work to be done simply in sharpening the mind, prior to using it, as if it were a passive tool, Whitehead says:

The mind is never passive; it is a perpetual activity, delicate, receptive, responsive to stimulus. You cannot postpone its life until you have sharpened it. Whatever interest attaches to your subject-matter must be evoked here and now; whatever powers you are strengthening in the pupil, must be exercised here and now; whatever possibilities of mental life your teaching should impart, must be exhibited here and now. That is the golden rule of education, and a very difficult rule to follow.⁴⁹

In much the same way, it may be argued that we cannot train the bodies of our students and then teach them to use them intelligently later on. For example, we cannot expect, if we give them a diet of repetitive exercises that have their equivalent in rote learning, that they will turn into *creative* dancers later on. We have to take responsibility for what we do here and now, in the knowledge that 'later' may be too late.

Repetition, a notion referred to by many educationalists and psychologists, is a vital part of the training process, but it can and must be used in *creative* ways.⁵⁰ Whilst we may recognise that, as Aldous Huxley writes, 'there is no substitute for concentration and prolonged practice. Except for the unusually gifted, learning, by whatever method, must always be hard work',⁵¹ we must be aware that activities which produce student satisfaction and enthusiasm also generate an eagerness for more learning. These are not contradictory statements. Students may take real pleasure in being absorbed in 'hard work' if they understand it, have clear goals within it and feel confident that they can realise them. Provided that it is not centred around 'inert ideas', the work itself produces satisfaction, a need to continue, to delve deeper and to discover more.

It is essential that we recognise and impart the importance of the process of learning in this way, giving it the equivalent value, at least, of the attainment of specific, physical goals because contemporary dance techniques are, and should be, continuously re-assessed. The goals, therefore, might well change. A further, important reason for this approach is that many students come to contemporary dance training without years of

previous experience in dance; for them the journey will be an especially hard one and it may be many years, after they finish their training, before their goals can be reached. To maintain their motivation,⁵² it must be the process which holds a fascination for them, not merely the 'correct' execution of set exercises, for much of their work and their development will depend on independent study, without regular feed-back and approbation from teachers.

A valuable spin-off from this approach, which emphasises the 'how' rather than the 'what', should be that more attention can be paid to ways of working that are beneficial to the body. As previously stated, it is not within the remit of this study to consider such methods in detail; however it is important to note that avenues other than that of sports science can provide interesting possibilities for further study in respect of their potential relationship to vocational dance training. Frederick Alexander's contribution, for example, is an invaluable one.⁵³

Phyllis Richmond explains,

The Alexander Technique [...] is about learning to be conscious so we can choose how we use ourselves instead of being bound to habit. [...] Alexander's radical idea means reordering priorities, placing the means of good use first and the ends of specific results second. It means giving up pushing for technique at all costs as the most important goal in order instead to be aware of what is happening within you while you are engaged in activity.⁵⁴

The third objective, that of education in feeling and sensitivity, is a clear reminder of Winearls' philosophy. The question of how to encourage the development of such feelings through the class work remaining the same as it was in the 1960s.

Joan Chodorow suggests:

emotion and dance are inseparable. Dance is motivated by and expressive of emotion. Emotion is the source out of which we dance, i.e. it energises us. But dance also has an effect on our emotions. It changes them. Sometimes dance leads to cathartic release; other times, dance seems to develop, refine and completely transform our emotional state.⁵⁵

This is borne out by the findings of Susan W. Stinson, Donald Blumenfield-Jones and Jan Van Dyke. Students quoted in this study describe their experience of dance as "the ultimate high" (Lily) and "above the normal plane of living" [...] "When I dance I'm more of a soul." (Elizabeth) Peggy states, "... when I ... get frustrated with life in general ... it's a real release ... I can come out so at peace with the world and ready to take everything on. [...] Sometimes I really get in touch with something ... in which case I'm so caught up with it that the whole world could crash around me."⁵⁶

The authors of this report conclude,

In regard to the theme of dance as identity, [...] we see a number of dualisms. The students perceive dance as either discipline and structure, in which the goal is to "get it right", or else a transcendence of structure, a release and/or an escape from the everyday world. [...] The students experience themselves as alternately body or soul, working hard and sweating or existing "above the normal plane of living". They feel alternately full of deficiencies and limitations, trying to improve themselves; or strong and full of power, as they meet challenges and exceed the expectations of others.⁵⁷

It would be unrealistic to imagine that we could engineer situations which would make students 'feel good' all the time, negating those expressed feelings of inadequacy, even self-disgust. In fact, it would make no sense to work in a situation totally devoid of stress or nervous tension, both of which dancers need to cope with in performance.⁵⁸ It is, however, suggested that the confident dancer is one who feels ready to take risks, physical, intellectual and emotional, and that the dancer who feels *secure* will be more able to give up known ways of working. This attitude will be essential if they are to challenge the art form, through their future contributions, whether as dancers or as choreographers, rather than trying to fit into the world of contemporary dance as we know it today.

A useful challenge must be to attempt to provide a situation in which students would be able to experience as many as possible of the emotions of which they are capable, within the same dance class, if not within the same physical activity. Accepting that dancers are

most frequently self-critical and negative about their progress, to achieve this balance will be largely a matter of ensuring that they also become aware, and are able to celebrate, the positive aspects of their dancing and of their learning progress.

If we do not make such an attempt then we run some serious risks. Perhaps the least problematic of these risks would be that students might minimise their ability to learn effectively for large spans of time, during which their focus would be on the competitive, end-gaining approach rather than on their own development. A secondary risk is that if their feelings about themselves were negative for too long a period of time, they would be in danger of losing all sense of motivation. A third risk is that this same, continued focus on the negative could lead to an obsessive concern with particular aspects of class work which will not be fruitful in the end. Far 'healthier' would be to maintain a useful sense of perspective, where negative feelings are balanced by the positive, thereby enabling the student to enjoy deep emotional involvement with the work done in class and yet to perceive it as only one of many meaningful aspects.

Angelica MacArthur warns us that dancers who are not able to explore and develop their individual creativity, within their work, might well be trapped in a prolonged state of emotional immaturity. She explains that this has repercussions which extend beyond the dancer's artistry into their appreciation of life in general and, as importantly, to their ability to cope with their lives when they are no longer dancing:

Retirement in midlife from a profession with which one's whole identity and sense of meaning in life has been bound can feel like a kind of death. It is here that the maturity of the personality with its capacity to bear the pain of loss and be able to move on in life really matters.⁵⁹

We must therefore engender in our students feelings of empowerment, so that they are not only strong and in control of their own lives, but also capable of perceiving the dance world not as something fixed, into which they might fit, but as 'a human creation which they have the capacity to expand and/or change'.⁶⁰

Judith Mackrell describes the experience that initiated her realisation that dance could be so much more than a series of steps. She talks of her first visit to see a performance given by London Contemporary Dance Theatre:

It was in the early Seventies and, like most of Britain, I'd never heard of modern dance. Watching that first performance, I had the kind of scales-off-the-eyes revelation that, in retrospect, makes you bless your original ignorance. I couldn't believe that dancing could look so serious and so strange. [...]
Until then, I'd thought of dance as an elegant re-arrangement of steps that I'd once learnt in the classroom. It hadn't really struck me that you could invent movements and build them into some personal statement.⁶¹

Similarly, students at the commencement of their training may not assume that to 'speak with their own voice' is an option open to them. As teachers we need to make this option clear to them, not only in welcoming individual contributions, but also in more pro-active ways.

A good beginning is to recognise students as people, rather than as bodies. This may appear to be an alarmingly obvious statement and yet it is so easy, even with the best of intentions, to concentrate on the students' physical make-up, abilities and limitations, without giving sufficient thought to their personalities and associated learning strategies.

Remembering that we have to begin to teach from where the student is, in terms of emotional and physical functioning, and that they may be more mature in one respect than in another, our first task will be to recognise the emotional standpoint from which they begin. It will be useful, therefore, before going on to discuss ways in which we can 'educate' the student in feeling and sensitivity, to look in more detail at how the student's feelings may be conveyed.

Underlying Rudolf Laban's movement analysis, whether applied to functional movement or that of the dancer, is the belief that each individual has a preference for moving in a particular way that can be described in terms of an attitude towards the 'effort' quality or qualitative nuances in movement. In her (subsequent) work, Marion North continued to

explore the relationship between observable movement patterns and emotional and intellectual growth, suggesting that individuals reveal their personality through the accumulation and variety of their movement patterns.

As dance teachers, we are inevitably (and more so than teachers of other subjects) in tune in a profound way with the human body. Capable of receiving the non-verbal messages that its movement patterns send out, we can use this knowledge to aid us in our sensitive dealings with students. It is important, however, that we do not make assumptions based on superficial knowledge of the people we teach, but rather that we use all the information at our disposal to build up increasingly accurate pictures of each individual within the class that we can subsequently use in aggregate to inform our teaching strategies. Mollie Davies, points out that 'to suggest that specific movement equals feeling would be a mistake'. She explains,

Although commonly expressed feelings clearly have movement connotations, it is not true to say that anger always produces tightening of the muscles and hard-hitting action while happiness is expressed by large, exuberant and expansive movement. Among any set of children there will be those whose expression of happiness is quiet and still, and those whose anger may be wild and loose-limbed or cool and contained.⁶²

Where dance students are concerned there may be even less reason to assume that their body language expresses their actual feelings at a given moment; they have learned to control their bodies to the extent that to 'over-ride' physical manifestations of inner feelings may be easily achieved. The desire to appear confident or in control may well assume a greater importance and immediacy than the need to reveal other equally valid or significant emotions, especially if they are uncertain as to how their those feelings might be received.

Expert observers, as Laban and North have pointed out, can detect contradictory 'shadow movements' which serve as subtle indicators of personality traits which might otherwise have remained hidden. Further discussions of the relationships between the 'expressive' (real) and 'coping' (over-riding the real) aspects of behaviour, presented by Allport, North

and Bartenieff remind us that the ability to understand movement signals is a very complex skill. Nevertheless, without assuming that we are being given clues as to their inmost feelings, we can learn much by observing the students' non-verbal behaviour. For example, whereabouts in the studio they prefer to stand - close to, or away from their friends - whether or not they go over the details of a combination for themselves between exercises, how they set about learning new patterns, or what their response is to a completely new challenge - interest, laughter, seriousness, or apprehension. These kinds of reactions, both positive and negative, constitute indicators of the effectiveness of learning strategies and may be easily recognised. The problem is not only to recognise such signals, but also to respond to them.

Our teaching methodology must be flexible enough to allow account to be taken of the students' responses to the material we give, allowing these to have an influence on our subsequent choices and decision making. In a one-to-one teaching relationship this would be relatively easy whereas, given a large class of students (unfortunately the norm) we cannot expect to give all those present the exact recipe that they require. Nevertheless, if we can expand our repertoire of methodologies, representing a variety of approaches to our students' problems in dealing with class material, we are correspondingly more likely to be able to respond appropriately to their needs.

If we then discuss the students' patterns of behaviour with them, making conscious that which may have been unconscious, we can help them to break those patterns which seem to be inhibiting their development. Further, we can encourage them to develop those strategies which enable them either to cope most effectively with new dance experiences, or to make increasingly significant discoveries through their explorations of repeated patterns of movement. At times, for example if the students know each other well and are experiencing similar problems in their work, it may be appropriate to have these discussions as a group. In such a situation, many will be comforted by the realisation that they are not alone with their problems and be prompted into further helpful discussions

of their own initiating. At other times it will be more helpful to go through difficulties with each student alone; although the purpose of such interviews might be to discuss uncomfortable truths, the majority of students appreciate this kind of individual attention.

Many thoughtful teachers still perceive students primarily in terms of whether or not they are able to achieve the physical tasks set for them. Teachers ask themselves why certain tasks pose problems, search for different ways of explaining or practising the material, or of breaking it down into more manageable sections in order to help the students to achieve the desired results. It would only be a matter of a single, relatively small step, also to take account of why students are not able to come to grips with it, in terms of their learning strategies or their emotional states.

If we are able to take this step, with the confidence and *creativity* that we like to see our students exhibiting, then our teaching is bound to be more effective and we will become more capable of developing responsive dancers who, after all, learn strategies for working with other people partly through their appraisal of the teacher's behaviour towards them. In this respect, as in many others, we have an enormous responsibility.

The second important way in which the students can reveal their personalities is through the *dynamics* with which they shape their movements whilst dancing; that is, through the quality that they give to each movement by changing, for example, the intensity and weight that they give to it, accenting or structuring each *phrase* as if it were a phrase of music.⁶³ This is clearly related to the timing of the movement combination in question and yet not the same as simply dividing a *phrase* mathematically and rhythmically. Different scales of energy levels are involved and these change the intensity of each moment, transforming the *phrase* into either an emotional\dramatic or at least a personal statement. Within an overall shape that a given movement combination has, there are many ways in which it can be sub-divided. Given the freedom to do so, students will invent an extraordinary range of dynamic shapings that serve to give the *phrase* an

individual flavour, at the same time giving us vital clues as to their personal range of movement characteristics. If we empower them in this way, we also give them a very important message: that we recognise their individuality and that we value the contribution that they can make.

In a basic and yet important way this serves, also, to provide them with an opportunity to be *creative* within a set structure; for by changing the *dynamics* of movement they will become aware not only of how differently they feel about it, but also of the extent to which they are in control. They will be able to decide on the precise scale of the movements within the *phrase* and thereby the exact use of space, the accents and impulses within it and thereby the emotional content. The *focus* of the *phrase* will also become clear not just in terms of their own *focus* whilst they are dancing, but importantly the spectators' focus may be directed differently as a result of the choices dancers make. For by shaping the movement differently, different moments within the *phrase* are revealed as eloquent. The student who is ready to take on this responsibility will indeed have a voice.

It is rare that students are ready and willing to take this freedom when it is offered to them. It may be that they are taken somewhat by surprise, expecting such opportunities in other contexts, but not within a *technique* class. It may be that they have not, in their previous training, encountered such a possibility or it may simply be that they are too self-conscious to make an individual statement in front of their peers. In either case an important part of the work of the class will be to lead them gradually towards taking control for themselves.

This concern needs to be balanced against working towards understanding specific, technical details which also have to do with timing and weight. It is not suggested, therefore, that this focus on individual contributions is appropriate for the duration of the class. It will be clear that varying degrees of freedom are appropriate for students at

different stages of their development and as they exhibit differing technical needs. This balance is one, amongst many, that individual teachers must weigh up for themselves.

It is a balance between the freedom of the individual and the technical work that needs to be covered in class; what Brinson calls the 'balance of freedom and authority' which provides an effective structure within which *creative* potential can be nourished. Or, one might say, a compromise. But I think an acceptable one given that *technical* skills are of very little use unless they are accompanied by the confidence to bring *expressive* and emotional resources into dancing.

Judith Mackrell reminds us of how important this is by her description of the dancers who were in Siobhan Davies' company at the time of her article 'Leap of Faith'. The image used here - of dancers as instruments to be 'played' by the choreographer - contradicts the underlying philosophy of Davies's working processes, seemingly negating their *creative* contributions to the making of new work. Nevertheless her description of their characteristic dynamic qualities is eloquent:

Every time you watch Siobhan Davies' company, you find yourself marvelling at the quality of her dancers. This is partly because she seems to act as a magnet for the best performers in town. But it's also because her choreography works so intimately on individual bodies. The lean, lopey stretch of Deborah Saxon; the dark, thrumming energy of Gill Clarke; the deft suppleness of Sean Feldman - Davies plays them all like an expert and loving composer. ⁶⁴

As with any other aspect of the students' learning, it is imperative that we begin from the same place as the students. John Holt, in his chapter 'Real Learning', (*How Children Fail*), tells a salutary tale about a child who used the most extraordinarily complicated series of manoeuvres to solve relatively simple mathematical problems, with little success:

People to whom I have described this child's work have found it all but impossible to believe. They could not imagine that even the most wildly unsuccessful student could have so little mathematical insight, or would use such laborious and inefficient methods to solve so simple a problem. The fact remains that this is what the child did. There is no use in we teachers telling ourselves that such children *ought* to know more, *ought* to understand better, *ought* to be able to work more efficiently; the facts are what count. The reason this poor child has learned hardly anything in six years of school is that no one ever began where she *was*; just as the

reason she was able to make such extraordinary gains in efficiency and understanding during this session is that, beginning where she was, she was learning genuinely and on her own. ⁶⁵

Similarly, beginning from where our students *are*, which may or may not bear any logical relation to the amount of previous training that they have received, we need to help them to build their confidence. Thereby we may ensure that whilst they expand their *technical expertise* they are also increasingly able to work on their own, using individual methods to relate new experiences to their personal stores of learning and insight, making their own important *connections* and meanwhile continuing to explore new territory, whether in intellectual, technical, *emotional* or *dynamic* ways as described above.

The first step towards encouraging an individual use of *dynamics* must be to make students aware that such choices exist. Within each class it is important to work with a wide range of qualities and to encourage every student to explore these. Because each individual has a propensity towards a particular movement *dynamic*, students find it relatively hard, or easy, to respond to the requirement to move with different qualities, dependent upon the characteristics of their personality. The student who normally exhibits a 'soft' quality may find it impossible to accent movements with any perceivable strength, whereas the one who normally goes straight for the accents and 'weighty' moments with real confidence may find it hard to explore small and subtle changes in the body. *Dynamic* changes often seem to be the hardest ones to make as they challenge students to adopt what may feel like a completely new persona.

In some extreme cases it may be that a student's inability to draw on a certain range of *dynamics* is indicative of levels of trauma that could not be influenced in the dance class. Then the teacher's responsibility is to recognise the limitations of the teaching situation and the need for a different approach altogether, possibly involving movement therapy, or other forms of counselling. However, students are usually open to the possibility of change if they are given a supportive environment. Therefore the means by which we

provide such support and encourage them to work with a dynamic that makes them feel fundamentally uncomfortable is of paramount importance. If the teacher were to shout at a student to work with more strength, or to show frustration in more subtle but equally damaging ways, when they already felt extremely *insecure* they would only enhance their student's sense of inadequacy. "Give it more weight", or "make it stronger" are useless instructions unless we are sure that it is within the student's capability to draw on these *dynamics*. If there is any doubt, we will need to approach the issue cautiously and deal with it by degrees, setting goals that are a manageable distance away and possible for the student to achieve.

The teacher's choices of vocabulary are significant in this context. It may be more useful to concentrate on basic, physical instructions (for example; 'push down through the legs to the floor', or 'make sure that you put weight on that foot as it falls to the floor, so that it is immediately ready to stand on') rather than to talk in terms of the quality of weight that is required. For the student who already feels self-conscious about a lack of perceived power, this approach may have more beneficial results. It will allow them to build the kind of confidence that helps them to *feel* powerful and enable them to express that power later in their *dynamic* choices.

Although it might appear initially to be a positive approach, we should be aware of the possible long-term repercussions of reinforcing students' feelings of being comfortable within too narrow a *dynamic range*. Students who clearly show ability, for example, in swift and sharply accented movement *phrases* and take visible pleasure in displaying skill in that area may be encouraged by teachers who want to be positive to the point at which, even though they are immensely proficient *technically*, they simply will not *believe* that they can complete an *adage* combination with sustained *ease*. And of course this belief will prevent them from doing so.

Such self-fulfilling prophecies are alarmingly frequent. But we can guard against them; not by failing to commend a student who has done something well, but by ensuring that they are given appropriate challenges sufficiently regularly to prevent them from being cast in a particular mould. This approach will also serve to guard against the students limiting themselves in more profound ways. Many students are adolescent and still very much in the process of discovering 'who they are'. For them particularly, although equally importantly for any student who is going through a period of transition in their life, it may be a very uncomfortable process to make their explorations public. The teacher's sensitivity in this area may be the key to enabling such students to make important discoveries.

It is important to recognise that the kind of changes discussed here may take months or years to evolve. On the other hand, sometimes there may be a very sudden shift in a student's approach, leading the teacher to suspect that aspects of his or her personality, previously unexplored in movement terms, have now been revealed. These are, in either case, exciting shifts to witness as we realise that students capable of using a broad range of *dynamics* have a way of involving all aspects of their personalities as they are able to draw upon, yet not be engulfed in the emotional states engendered by their dancing. We may call this developing sense of themselves, and their increasing ability to use movement as a vehicle for the *expression* of that sense, both an 'education in feeling and sensitivity' and a 'development of creativity'.

Using individual emotions is a very different thing from superimposing the dramatic ideas of others onto the body. When the dancer's feelings coincide with those of the teacher who works in this way, it may be very fruitful. But what happens when the dancer realises that they no longer share their teacher's view of the world? And how can they escape from a situation which encourages them to rely on someone else's emotional perception, if they have not been encouraged to search for their own voice?

Judith Mackrell describes her initial excitement on discovery of the Graham Technique, and her subsequent disappointment when she realised that her feelings no longer fitted in with those with which Graham's movements were supposed to be imbued:

I spent several happy years sweating through modern-dance classes carving out my own shapes of rhapsody and despair.

The classes I was taking were in the Martha Graham Technique, and I immediately discovered that the wonderful agonised movement I'd first seen was a Contraction - a movement performed hundreds of times in any Graham class. This school of dancing isn't just an exercise in co-ordination, agility or grace, it's vivid drama. Whole exercises are named after high emotional states, so when you're strengthening your back and stomach muscles, you are also doing a sequence of movements called Pleading.

But it can be hard to sustain so much sorrow. After a while, the emotions seemed less interesting to me and the movements less inspired. Maybe there was less poetry in them than I'd thought. ⁶⁶

To train students with no particular aesthetic stamp, and yet to be sure that we have enabled them, as far as is possible, to use their emotional resources, is a real challenge. If we achieve this goal then we have again become facilitators, willing to step back from the dictatorial approach and yet be very closely involved in each student's personal search for an *expressive* language of their own.

In the interest of greater clarity, I have divided the subject of this chapter into sections. And yet, as will have become clear, all the issues discussed overlap, and any attempt to separate them is futile. As it is the whole dancer, mind, body and spirit that we are attempting to train and educate, that is as it should be. We are not training technicians who have no personal input to give; nor dancers who have immense emotional resources but are incapable of using them, or who have insufficient technical skills to back them up; nor are we training dancers to be capable in every respect that we can currently imagine. Rather, the training that we give attempts to provide dancers with the learning strategies to cope with whatever they might encounter in future.

With the vision of enabling students to bring the whole of themselves to their work, teachers must take all of these considerations into any discussion of teaching methodology, allowing such considerations to shape any strategies that they use.

Confidence would then be justified that the aims of working towards more 'intelligent', 'healthier' dancers and healthier conditions for the contemporary dance of the future were being respected.

Notes and References

- ¹ See Glossary for definitions of all italicized terms.
- ² During a conversation that centred around general observations about young dancers, comparing impressions of today with those of twenty years ago (The Place, March 1996) Viola Farber, a member of Merce Cunningham's company in the early years, and a world-renowned teacher, commented that whilst 'technical prowess increases; artistry rarely does.'
- ³ Jane Winearls, *Modern Dance: The Jooss-Leeder Method*, 2nd edn (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968), pp. 139-40.
- ⁴ Winearls, *ibid*, pp. 140-141.
- ⁵ Winearls, *ibid*, p. 140.
- ⁶ A term used by Luke Kahlich (1990) to describe the movement away from dance in education and towards professional training and activity, supported by the educators Gertrude Lippincott and Nancy Smith Fichter.
- ⁷ *Focus on dance IV: Dance as a Discipline*, ed. by Nancy Smith, (Washington DC: American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, 1967), p. 5.
- ⁸ Smith, *ibid*, p. 14.
- ⁹ Janice D. LaPointe-Crump, 'The Future is Now: An Imperative for Dance Education', *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, (May/June 1990), 51-53 (p. 52).
- ¹⁰ Merce Cunningham, *The Dancer and the Dance: Merce Cunningham in Conversation with Jacqueline Lesschaeve* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1985), p. 70.
- ¹¹ Cunningham, *ibid*, p. 73.
- ¹² Cunningham, *ibid*, p. 71.
- ¹³ Ernestine Stodelle, *The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey and its Creative Potential*, 1st British edn (London: Dance Books, 1979), pp. 34-35.
- ¹⁴ Daniel Lewis, *The Illustrated Dance Technique of José Limón* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 24 and 30.
- ¹⁵ Doris Humphrey, 'My Approach to the Modern Dance', in *Dance: A Basic Educational Technique*, ed. by F.R. Rogers, (New York: Macmillan, 1941), pp. 188-89.
- ¹⁶ Stodelle, *The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey*, p. 16 and 18.
- ¹⁷ Margaret N. H'Doubler, *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* (USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), p. 29.
- ¹⁸ Robert Cohan, *The Dance Workshop* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 22.
- ¹⁹ Cohan, *ibid*, p. 22.
- ²⁰ Subjects included basic anatomy and physiology, music appreciation, percussion, dance history, aesthetics, wardrobe/costume and lighting.
- ²¹ Peter Brinson, *Dance as Education: Towards a National Dance Culture* (London: The Falmer Press, 1991)

²² Winearls, *Modern Dance*, *ibid*, p. 143.

²³ The choice of these texts, from the great many available, is made for very specific reasons. In their writing these authors reveal an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and depth of considered thinking on educational issues in general. They share the ability to communicate clearly without recourse to the technical language which can be a barrier for readers who do not share a background in philosophy or educational psychology. Importantly, they also share the belief that there are different ways of knowing and understanding, that it is important to work with a holistic view of people and to value the individuality of the personal response. For these reasons their ideas are readily transferable to other disciplines, and are particularly relevant to the education of the dance-artist.

²⁴ Guy Claxton, *Teaching To Learn: A Direction for Education* (London: Cassell Educational, 1990), p. 2.

²⁵ Claxton, *ibid*, p. 5.

²⁶ *Kieślowski on Kieślowski*, ed. by Danusia Stok (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 35.

²⁷ Claxton, *ibid*, p. 17 - 18.

²⁸ Claxton, *ibid*, p. 66.

²⁹ See Chapter Two for a detailed analysis of teaching strategies.

³⁰ These concepts are explored in greater detail, in relation to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, in Chapter Two.

³¹ Jann Parry, 'Steps are Out', *Observer Review*, 30 April 1995, p. 4.

³² Parry, *ibid*.

³³ Parry, *ibid*.

³⁴ Parry, *ibid*.

³⁵ Some of the theories expounded in this thesis are also presented by Juliet Fisher in the unpublished lecture 'The Education of the Professional Dancer'. (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 'World Day of Dance', Lisbon, Portugal, April 1991.) A shared interest in education and training issues has resulted in many informal debates, during a working relationship that has spanned over twenty years and taken many different forms (student/teacher, co-founder members of Siobhan Davies's company 'Siobhan Davies and Dancers', colleagues for over ten years on the teaching faculty at London Contemporary Dance School). In particular a shared respect for the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead leads to the expression of similar views on some aspects of learning in relation to dance teaching.

³⁶ See Chapter Three: Adapting the material for different body types.

³⁷ See Chapter Two for a discussion of personal intelligences, self-esteem and the confidence to take risks.

³⁸ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, 1st paperback edn (London: Ernest Benn, 1962), p. 147.

³⁹ See Chapter Three: Connections.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Three: Adapting the material for different body types.

⁴¹ See Chapter Two: Teaching Strategies.

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- 42 For example at 'The Healthier Dancer Roadshow', described in *Labanlink: The Newsletter of the Laban Centre* (1996) Issue 5, and through the conferences and journals of The International Association for Dance Medicine and Science.
- 43 Rollo May, *The Courage to Create*, 1st paperback edn, (New York: Norton & Company, 1994), p. 49.
- 44 Quoted in Jann Parry, 'Steps are out', *Observer Review*, 30 April 1995, p. 4.
- 45 Quoted in Emma Manning, 'Aspects of Dance - That's What I Want.' *The Stage*, 5 October 1995, p. 24.
- 46 Brinson, *Dance as Education*, p. 115.
- 47 Brinson, *ibid*, p. 79.
- 48 Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, pp. 1-3 and 6.
- 49 Whitehead, *ibid*, p. 9.
- 50 See Chapter Three: Repetition.
- 51 Aldous Huxley, *Adonis and the Alphabet and other Essays*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), p. 46.
- 52 The issues of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in relation to the teaching and learning situation are complex and will not be discussed here. The relationship between current knowledge concerning motivation in other fields, and the particular circumstances of dance education and training presents an interesting challenge for future study.
- 53 Dance students at De Montfort University, Leicester have for many years had the benefit of working with the Alexander technique alongside their dance training. It has informed the work of many teachers already, including the writers own. The suggestion here is that it could, to advantage, be more universally applied. Similarly, the Pilates method has a great deal to offer in supporting studio-based technical work. See Alan Herdman, 'Putting the Individual First', *Dance UK News*, 22 (September 1996), p.13.
- 54 Phyllis G. Richmond, 'The Alexander Technique and Dance Training', *Impulse* 2 (1994) 24-38 (p. 33).
- 55 Joan Chodorow, *Dance Therapy and Depth Psychology: The Moving Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 41.
- 56 Susan W. Stinson, Donald Blumenfield-Jones and Jan Van Dyke, 'Voices of Young Women Dance Students: An Interpretive Study of Meaning in Dance' *Dance Research Journal*, 22 no. 2 (1990) 13-21 (p. 17).
- 57 Stinson, *ibid*, p. 17.
- 58 See Judith Lynne Hanna, *Dance and Stress* (New York: AMS Press, 1988) and Chapter Two on self-esteem.
- 59 Angelica MacArthur, 'The Emotional Life of a Female Ballet Dancer' *International Society for Study of Tension in Performance*, (hereafter *ISSTIP*), 7 (1992), 19-22 (p. 21).
- 60 Stinson, 'Voices of Young Women Dance Students', p. 20.
- 61 Judith Mackrell, 'The Accidental Tourist', *Independent*, 1 August 1994, p. 17.

⁶² Mollie Davies, *Helping Children to Learn Through a Movement Perspective* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), p. 116.

⁶³ See Chapter Three: Variation of intention - student directed.

⁶⁴ Judith Mackrell, 'Leap of Faith', *Guardian*, 8 November 1994, p. 6.

⁶⁵ John Holt, *How Children Fail*, Penguin edn (London: Penguin Books, 1969), pp 125-6.

⁶⁶ Mackrell, 'The Accidental Tourist', *Independent*, 1 August 1994, p. 17.

Chapter 2

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Introduction

Learning at its most general is the business of improving our theories, elaborating and tuning them so that they keep track of the changes in the world and come to serve us ever more successfully.¹

The true test of intelligence is not how much we know how to do, but how we behave when we don't know what to do.²

Strategies for teaching and learning take many different forms, the most crucial factor determining their success being their appropriateness for the particular task in question. The following analysis therefore centres around strategies that are useful to studio-based dance teachers and students in vocational schools, and does not encompass those which would be appropriate more generally, in mainstream education.

In determining the appropriateness of any strategy, its characteristics must be discussed alongside the teaching aims. The goals of both teacher and learner need to be taken into account, in an attempt to match the two sets of objectives; if the goals are not matched in this way, teaching strategies which seem to have potential in theory, may be ineffectual in practice.³

The structure of the class work may be seen as the vehicle through which teaching strategies are presented and developed. Such a structure also carries more general responsibilities; there are three vitally important reasons for considering the structure of the class work very carefully indeed.

Firstly, as teachers we are responsible for the physical safety of the students in our classes. We should therefore be sure that we take account of all the anatomical knowledge that we have at our disposal, both in broad terms (ensuring that the students are properly *warmed-up* for class, for example) and in detailed ways as well. There needs to be careful

progression from one physical activity to another, taking account of both the increasing warmth, mobility and stretch through the body as class progresses (allowing the student to work with increasing levels of strength and stamina) and the accompanying need not to overwork unnecessarily any one area of the body.⁴

Secondly, the structure of the class can be seen as the clearest way in which we can present the logic of our movement ideas. The importance of making this logic clear has already been discussed in Chapter One, in terms of its relationship to the students' developing 'dance intelligence.' We may come closer to this ideal of clarity if the way in which we choose to organise or structure our class material, 'free from ambiguity, confusion and self-contradiction',⁵ reveals the principles on which our work is based. As Juliet Fisher suggests,

No elements should be just arbitrary; not the actual physical demands, not the phrasing, not the transitions. What we give the students to do, the way we demonstrate it, the way we verbally clarify it, should, in combination, reveal our own process of thought about it. Each class, as it proceeds, should be the active outward manifestation of the process of our own teaching intentions. If we can manage this we will not be teaching just vocabulary, or setting tasks and hurdles as if training athletes. We will be educating artists. ⁶

Thirdly, if we take account of the students' personalities and the specificity of individual and group needs then their progress will inevitably influence the way in which we plan the structure of future classes. We may re-make a particular exercise, for example, so that, taking account of the aspects within it which students find hard to grasp, we may present a variation the following day which will place the particular movement problem in a different, more accessible context. We may become conscious that through our travelling combinations we have been concentrating on a particular *dynamic* for too long, perhaps emphasising the fluid and soft, thereby not giving the students who could benefit from working with more attack and emphasis on angularity in the body an opportunity to use their bodies in a very different way as they move through space; this may encourage us to set movement material for the following day which has a completely different *dynamic focus*. Or we may realise that, at this particular stage of their physical

development, a certain co-ordination is hard for their bodies to achieve. In that case we might simplify or leave out a section of material for a while, until subsequent work of a different nature has served to prepare the body in more appropriate ways.

In this sense, while the overall structure of the class will represent our logic, flexibility within it will relate very clearly to the students' needs. There will be an important and fluctuating relationship between the discipline of the structure that we impose and the freedom of the student to receive and understand it in an individual way. This in turn will necessitate a response from us which takes account of their needs. To establish and make imaginative use of such a delicate balancing act as this is an important part of our skill, providing as it does the means by which we can help the students to acquire self-discipline and to develop their practical skills.

Alfred North Whitehead states,

I hold that the only discipline, important for its own sake, is self-discipline, and that this can only be acquired by a wide use of freedom. But yet it is necessary in life to have acquired the habit of cheerfully undertaking imposed tasks. [...] It is the unfortunate dilemma that initiative and training are both necessary, and that training is apt to kill initiative.⁷

If the teacher manages to balance the structure and the material of the class with the needs of the students then the problem Whitehead identifies will be minimised. Instead of recreating the educational methods Whitehead describes as an 'unrhythmic collection of distracting scraps', an attempt will have been made to 'weave in the learner's mind a harmony of patterns',⁸ to which they may add their personal melodic lines.

Clearly such a relationship will depend upon the students' understanding of the teacher's material and, equally, the teacher's understanding of their working strategies. As teachers, having the benefit of the overview, we know what the goals are; it is our responsibility to encourage and accommodate appropriate methods through which the students can achieve them. Accepting that there may be as many different strategies employed, at any

one time in the class, as there are students present, it is helpful to check that we give information in ways that allow more than one strategy to be used; that is, to make the material accessible to more than one 'type' of student, so that our teaching is understood to be universally applicable. If we discover, through such retrospective checking, that we have tended to use one pathway or set of pathways more than another, then we can make variations which may allow more students access to the material's potential and at the same time help to keep both the material and the process of teaching and learning alive.

Claxton points to the system, built up from previous experience and largely unconscious, which underpins the ways in which a student sets about learning:

Learning always involves a modification of what you already believe or know. People's behaviour and opinions are the visible branches of an enormously complicated underground root-structure of ideas and assumptions, most of which we do not even know that we have. These 'implicit theories', as I shall call them, not only determine the way we behave: they also determine how we approach anything new.⁹

Whilst he suggests that such a system also dictates the learning strategies to be employed, he supports the view that such strategies are open to development and change; given sufficiently thoughtful teaching and positive learning experiences, the system itself may be modified over time, with positive consequences. Talking to students about their patterns of learning and of progress in class can be beneficial in terms of supporting them in their efforts to uncover some of this underground structure and in some cases to look at it for the first time. Reflection upon the ways in which the practitioner intuitively experiences movement can clarify and illuminate it. Recognising unhelpful knots in the process of learning is a vital first step towards undoing them; equally important, however, will be the will to change and to make *connections* in new ways. Claxton suggests that in order for this to be the case, there must be

some sense of personal dissatisfaction with their way of looking at things, coupled with the availability of an alternative that seems intelligible, plausible and fruitful.¹⁰

It will only be when students realise for themselves that their learning strategies are not helpful ones that they will be ready to experiment with new approaches that may be more appropriate or more constructive. They may come to such a realisation through the class work itself, perhaps at the suggestion of their teacher, possibly through watching other students approach the same work in different ways or through a process of individual experimentation. But there are occasions when working methods, having become firmly entrenched, are difficult to break down or even to recognise.

In such cases a personal interview may be the most fruitful approach and these kinds of tutorial may serve more than one function. Students who are able to analyse and re-think their working processes and behavioural patterns, whether individually or with the help of their teacher may, as a result, enable themselves to approach the learning situation with more confidence. They will have an increased number of potential strategies at their disposal and may learn to cope with the repetitive aspects of the class whilst thinking for themselves and handling free choice situations, all within the same class. Their flexibility need not be underestimated in this respect. Further, having been open to the concept of this kind of self-awareness, they are possibly more likely to be able to tap inner resources of all kinds.

There is a significant danger here, however. Louis Arnaud Reid suggests that there is a real problem in the assumption that feelings can necessarily be named or adequately expressed in words.¹¹ Similarly T.S.Eliot states that 'the poet is occupied with frontiers of consciousness beyond which words fail, though meanings still exist'.¹² Holt echoes these thoughts when he says, 'Words come out in single file...[but]...knowledge, learning and understanding are not linear.'¹³ We should be wary of assuming that students who are not able to verbalise their thoughts and feelings about their work, however much we may encourage them to do so, are not in touch, in as profound a way as they might be, with their dancing. It is very important in fact, that we accept and give value to the understanding of knowledge which cannot be verbalised.

Reid says,

It is indispensably important to have knowledge of facts of all kinds and to have, and increase, intellectual understanding of the world. But our beliefs, our beliefs in *values*, what of them? Knowledge of 'what is the case' is not a sufficient basis for knowledge of what ought to be in human relationships or of what is precious in the treasures of the arts. There are beliefs, and there is knowledge which are of the utmost personal importance to human beings in their ordinary - or extraordinary - everyday lives. Can we not validate it in experience, without reducing it to argument or proposition-making?¹⁴

To recognise the value and significance of physical knowledge and the student's intuitive understanding and yet to emphasise the need to develop language skills need not be seen as contradictory. On the one hand it suggests that dance artists should be valued on their own terms and on the other, that to encourage personal and *artistic* development is to nurture all aspects of the student's development in ways which will be increasingly satisfying and, at the same time, will make them ultimately more versatile and employable. However the timing and balance of the two concerns should be delicately judged. Unreasonable expectations to translate movement experiences into a language not its own, when the student's relationship with that movement material is in its early stages may encourage the student to categorise new experiences according to old moulds in ways which may hinder fresh discoveries. The dancer's growing relationship with the physical class material is one of the things teachers must treat with especial care. In its potential it is one of the main roots through which dancers may feed themselves as artists and, as such, is indeed a valuable resource to which they turn, as if for nourishment, for the whole of their working lives. During the early stages of training, however, when physical changes do not necessarily coincide with the development of understanding, or when physical concepts are being explored but are not yet fully understood, this relationship may feel particularly fragile or precarious. In such circumstances we should not expect that every student will be able to discuss this relationship with us, although we can assume that it will be harder for us to *help* them to develop, given fewer clues as to its nature.

What we can usefully do is to create an atmosphere which encourages them to be aware of themselves as people experiencing movement; not just giving them time and space to ask 'why' and 'how', to dissect, analyse and discuss, but also time to explore physically, taking note for themselves of their feelings within a movement or combination of movements, without always having to articulate verbally what those sensations might be. This underlines the need for *repetition* in class, but from an entirely different standpoint. It will not be akin to learning by rote, or for the purpose of doing, unquestioningly, what the teacher dictates, but in order to allow time to digest the physical sensations which will deliver their own, strong messages. The study of dance is often compared to the acquisition of language; it is useful therefore to consider that to learn vocabulary and to practice certain points of grammar is an essential stepping stone. But to become immersed in a new language sufficiently to be able to *think* in it, and then to *dream*, is quite another matter. Yet it is this familiarity and confidence that is needed if the new language is to be used in *expressive* ways. Similarly students need time to immerse themselves in a new dance language if they are to reach the depth of understanding which allows its *expressive* use to become a possibility.

If we expect the students to be able to bring their own experiences into their dancing, then we must allow them time to be aware of what these experiences, in relation to their dancing, actually are. Then their dancing will be *expressive*, being imbued with real feelings; that is those that are inherent, or which develop naturally, as opposed to those that are either contrived or learned. Real feelings cannot be imposed 'from the front', they must be deeply felt and understood by dancers in their own ways. It is largely the dancer's personal input that makes every movement seemingly significant; it is their willingness to invest themselves which will enable them to make a strong statement in performance and, for the audience, the recognition of the dancers' involvement that makes every moment fascinating to watch.

We can also ensure, through the atmosphere of the class, that the students feel free both to acknowledge and to draw our attention to fundamental gaps in their understanding, if and when they encounter them. We can require them to think about everything that they do, without dictating the form that this thinking should take and without giving them so much information that they no longer need to think. And we can encourage them to work constantly for themselves, rather than in relation to the other students in the class in a way which has the potential to be competitive in a negative sense. This we may do by giving sufficient feed-back, by making it clear that the material we give to the class is to be understood differently by all the students present and by encouraging them to,

suppress their inner critic who says, "What you are doing is not good or is not as good as what someone else is doing." [and] help them to stay focused on what they are trying to accomplish, not on what they perceive someone else's evaluation of their work may be.¹⁵

Discussion of strategies may open the door to the possibility of changes of approach, but it can only be in the class itself that students will be able to discover whether or not different tactics are useful to them; it must be in relation to the physical material that they finally decide on the appropriateness of any new approach. As Claxton proposes,

The fact that [strategies] can be identified does not mean that they can be deliberately acquired through specialised practice. This is because an essential aspect of intelligence is knowing intuitively the power and limitations of each of the strategies - having a good feel for their appropriateness for different contexts and purposes - and *this sense can be developed only in situations where learners experience real choice and uncertainty*. Like all arts, learning relies on the subtle appreciation of events that arises gradually and spontaneously out of the prolonged exercise of responsibility - responsibility which may well be guided and constrained, but which cannot be reduced too far if the art is to develop.¹⁶

Until they are proven not to work, students will rely on their previously formed physical habits. Some of these will be employed because they have already proven themselves to be viable approaches yielding positive results, others may have been built into the body out of a sense of obedience to previous training which may itself have been built on 'inert ideas'. Equally likely is the possibility that the student, even given the encouragement to question and challenge the logic of former training, was not 'ready' to do so. In any event physical habits are as hard to break as firmly entrenched ideas may be; if we accept

that the dancer is engaged in working on at least two levels at once, the physical and the intellectual, then clearly the problem is exacerbated.

The strong tendency to travel down known pathways, repeating our errors is a commonly recognised experience and it is especially important in training the body, that this is not allowed to happen. Not only is it unhelpful, but such a method also trains the body in the 'wrong' way; not simply wrong for the thought processes which accompany negative strategies, but also for the build up of physical habits which may be harmful ones and which may take a very long time to undo. It is doubly important, therefore, that teachers concern themselves with finding out why it is that certain students find it exceptionally hard to change their working methods.

It may be, particularly if they have not analysed their pathways before, that they simply need some reassurance that in venturing down a new route they will be safe in the knowledge that someone back at base camp knows where they have gone, will be aware if they go missing, and will be ready to 'rescue' them. Then the teacher's role is clear: to give the necessary reassurance whilst gradually weaning them of the necessity to look for help of this kind.

Perhaps such students have been courageous in the past, but have found themselves unable to cope with new situations encountered and now prefer to stay safely ensconced in old habits. Then it will be the teacher's responsibility not only to lead them carefully but also to make sure that they have sufficient specific information to turn the next new experience of this kind into a positive one.

Claxton suggests,

What people are doing as they learn and change can be understood only in terms of the way their previous experience has set them to construe the new situation - and therefore learning can be guided and assisted successfully only in the light of this understanding. Most importantly, any suggestions that are offered to the learner must make sense in terms of the current approach she is using. They must be opportune, speaking

to a felt need; intelligible, presented in the right terms; plausible, having face validity; and fruitful, seeming to provide useful implications and possible ways forward. [...] It follows that when teachers really *know* that what learners are doing is editing, merging, splitting and relabelling what they already knew, they start to listen, to be sensitive to 'where students are at', so that they can help them move on.¹⁷

In other words, the means by which the students attempt to cope with and assimilate new information (their learning strategies) and their responses to the efficacy of these strategies, are a useful indication of their 'dance intelligence', and provide us with further means of understanding where they begin from as they approach the material that we give them. To put ourselves in touch with that intelligence requires intuition and *imagination*, as well as *our* intelligence. It is a complex task, involving the physical, emotional and intellectual standpoints of both the teacher and the student.

We know where they begin from physically, because we have the evidence of it in front of our eyes. For example, we will recognise that a certain student has an area of stiffness in the back, or a limited degree of rotation in the hip sockets. We must be careful however, not to misinterpret superficial indications of ability: students with a natural *ease of co-ordination* and *loose* joints may be able to weave their way through complex movement combinations without understanding them at all. If they have been dancing for a long time it may even be the case that they can do so without thinking. Such a skill may be a great asset, however it might also prevent the student from comprehending why it is necessary to think more deeply about what they are doing. Only when they find that their skill falls short of what is required will they be ready to make changes. Similarly the student with immediately apparent physical limitations may have been forced, by their inability to make sense of physical material at speed, into working with extraordinary intelligence, which will serve them well in the future.

If we also take account of the observations that we can make of their non-verbal behaviour patterns, then we may glean useful information about their emotional states, remembering that there are two strands of information here that need to be disseminated.

Laban, North and Allport all discuss the 'expressive' and the 'coping' movement patterns that an individual will reveal, pointing out that whilst the 'expressive' patterns may reveal 'definite traits of personality',¹⁸ these same patterns tend, with growing maturity, to become confined to limited regions of the body. This will inevitably affect our judgment as to how significant readily observable patterns are, and in what respects we can learn from them.¹⁹

For example, we may note as we watch students travelling through space that some students find it hard to bring their full energy to their work; perhaps they never reach fully through their limbs, never cover as much ground as we imagine they could, or never accent their movements with visible force. We might say in such cases that they were *marking*. But *why* are they *marking*?

A possible explanation would be that they were anxious to 'get it right' before they committed their full energy to the material. Their chosen strategy was to work out all the counts, the directions in space, to think through all the teaching points that they could remember as they *marked* through, in the hope that when they finally committed themselves to it, their performance would be as close to perfect as possible. Perhaps they felt that they were not as able as others in the group and wanted to 'hide' their perceived lack of ability, or perhaps they genuinely worked without reference to their peers but were dependent upon approval from their teacher; not feeling confident that they had 'got it right' they might be *marking* as if whispering, and hoping not to be heard. In the first of these examples it could not be denied that they were working thoughtfully or 'with intelligence' even though what was visible was a disappointingly shadow-like version of the dance material that had been set. But in the other cases described here, it is possible that the students were working without much thought or care, their main concern being to attract as little attention as possible, whilst passing the time with a minimum of physical exertion.

Different students might exhibit all the same symptoms with a completely different underlying explanation. Perhaps they had previously been made to feel self-conscious by other students in the group who considered their former, more extrovert dancing to be attention-seeking behaviour. As a response such students might *mark* whilst at the same time making internal notes as to what potential the material held for them, but wanting to hide such knowledge in the fear that its physical manifestation would be misconstrued.

Finally, other students might be *marking* because to work within this *dynamic* was the only one that they had experience of, and therefore felt to be appropriate, in such a context. Perhaps having received very limited previous training, travelling sequences that they had encountered had always been 'soft', whilst clearly accented and more obviously energetic movement material had been reserved for jumping combinations.

Teachers would need to discover what the underlying causes of such similar physical end results were, before they could hope to respond in ways which would be appropriate and useful to all these students in their different situations.

Having tried to recognise the students' different physical and emotional starting points, there remains the problem of finding ways to ascertain whether or not students understand intellectually what it is that we are asking them to do. The students who are, themselves, aware of what they do or do not understand and can therefore ask the appropriate questions, in order to help themselves, pose no problem in this respect. Their questions are very revealing and helpful to us and, as previously stated, constitute another good reason for providing a working atmosphere in which students feel free to verbalise their concerns. But how do we find out both the content and the context of the other students' lack of understanding?

In the simplest of terms we could say that they have grasped the movement concept if they can physically reproduce the patterns of movement that we show them, but this is far

from an intelligent engagement with the material, although it is of course a useful skill and a valuable place from which they may begin. If they are able to show, by their subsequent performance of the movement or *phrase*, that they have remembered the exact and detailed characteristics which make it unique then they have successfully climbed another rung of the ladder. But it is only when similar *co-ordinations* or movement-based problems are placed in a new context, and we see whether or not they are recognised or solved again, that we can tell how deeply they were originally understood.

The concept of useful knowledge being transferable is widely agreed upon. Claxton describes the learning process as being in two stages, the first concerned with developing learning strategies within particular 'scripts' and the second being centred around liberating those strategies for general use. He proposes that a goal for education should be

to help these localized learning amplifiers to become disentangled from their original contexts, and to come to form a more powerful, transportable and flexible set of learning strategies.²⁰

Holt, affirming Whitehead's propositions concerning knowledge that is full of potential, suggests that a student who has

really learned something can use it, and does use it. It is connected with reality in his mind, therefore he can make other connexions between it and reality when the chance comes. A piece of unreal learning has no hooks on it; it can't be attached to anything, it is of no use to the learner.²¹

He goes on to suggest that, as teachers, it would be helpful if we had a picture in our minds of what we mean by understanding. This may seem to be an obvious requirement for anyone setting out to inculcate useful knowledge, nevertheless I believe that it is very good advice and that we may gain from checking our personal lists against his:

I feel I understand something if and when I can do some, at least, of the following: (1) state it in my own words; (2) give examples of it; (3) recognize it in various guises and circumstances; (4) see connexions between it and other facts or ideas; (5) make use of it in various ways; (6)

foresee some of its consequences; (7) state its opposite or converse. This list is only a beginning; but it may help us in the future to find out what our students really know as opposed to what they can give the appearance of knowing, their *real learning* as opposed to their *apparent learning*.²²

Our classes can only be useful, if they enable the students to engage in 'real learning', developing the 'real' understanding that they will be able to carry with them and use in any other situation, whether that be another class, with another teacher, or with a choreographer in the process of making work. Classes that are not 'useful' in this way may still be functional, in the limited sense that they may provide a means by which the student can retain fitness and *ease* of co-ordination, but they will not provide the means by which a student can develop intellectually, physically and emotionally within the same context. As Fisher suggests,

it is often only through the effort to apply knowledge gained in one situation to what is required in another that students become aware of what makes sense for them individually, both physically and intellectually. We all need to encourage them to think deeply about what they do in every class. If students think deeply, and are encouraged to work consciously, intelligently and specifically they will eventually take the imaginative leaps necessary for them to understand what they individually need and wish to know.²³

Holt's list would appear to be thoroughly applicable to dance teaching. We might wish to add a few items that are more specific to our particular context, for example to be able to: (8) retain the intention of the exercise whilst working with an individual understanding of the way the body works, to make it personally useful, and (9) retain the integrity of the movement yet imbue it with an individual quality, or meaning. There might also be a list of secondary importance, containing such specific challenges as the ability to redirect the material in space, the ability to perform a combination at varying speeds or to vary the *dynamics* within it, in all cases without losing the overall shape and logic of the original.

To give due thought to what our concepts of 'real learning' are and then to check whether or not our teaching provides the means by which students can engage in such learning, may help us to be increasingly specific about the methods that we employ and their relationship to the process that we are trying to engender. The use of lists like the ones

above is clearly only one of many strategies that could be employed. Just as students need to develop ways of working which will help them towards their goals, so teachers also need to look for strategies that will aid them in the search for more effective teaching methods, always remembering that they should be specific enough to be relevant to their particular needs, for borrowed strategies, unless they can be made to serve the logic of their material, may be as ineffectual as borrowed material can be.

For the sake of greater clarity, the following more detailed analysis of strategies is divided into two sections. The first deals with the methods which teachers might employ; the second with the different approaches to the work that are revealed in the students' behaviour. Such a division does indeed exist, but as previously stated, it is recognised that the relationship between the two sets of methods is what is most crucial, constituting an enormously influential factor in determining whether or not the teaching and learning situation can be effective.

Teaching strategies

One of the very few clear accounts of teaching methodology is given by Muska Mosston and Sara Ashworth (1986) in *Teaching Physical Education*, in which they analyse and describe in detail eleven different strategies ('styles') for the teaching of physical education, grouped together under the collective title of *The Spectrum*. Their analyses are useful for dance teachers who seek to broaden their repertoire of available strategies, although not all the styles they describe are applicable to the dance technique class.

In their overview they clarify their thoughts on teaching:

It is the ability to behave, in a *deliberate* manner, using a style that is most appropriate for reaching the objectives of a given episode [or section of the class]. Skillful teaching is the ability to move deliberately from style to style as the objectives change from one teaching episode to another.²⁴

Their main focus is on the cognitive and physical aspects of the learning process, although social and emotional factors are also taken into account and discussed. Therefore to combine Mosston and Ashworth's thoughts with those of other writers who have dealt in more depth with emotional development, personality and motivation, and to combine those insights with our own, gleaned from years of professional experience, seems to be a useful and appropriate exercise. There are many issues on which all these educators agree and a combination of the fundamental principles gathered from various sources, re-applied to the particular teaching and learning situation that we encounter in a *technique class*, is proposed as a fruitful starting point.

Claxton expresses his views on teachers' application of appropriate strategies very clearly:

What I am going to argue in general is not that the 'traditionalists' have got it all wrong and the 'progressives' have got it all right. What seems obvious to me is that different kinds of learning need to be approached in different kinds of ways. Sometimes there are facts to be learnt and skills to be mastered. I would not want my body to be operated on by someone who did not know the names of the major bones or how to make a clean incision. I am perfectly happy that the person who flies my jumbo jet has been put through thousands of hours of careful training that he or she was probably not consulted about. But equally I do not want the educational psychologist who is called in to help with my daughter's learning problems in school to be trying to sort her out according to some cook-book method. I want him to have developed a warmth and openness when dealing with people that cannot be trained in any mechanical way. [...] Too often debates about teaching methods are conducted on an antagonistic basis [...]. Discovery learning is good, rote learning is bad; free play is good, desk work is bad; experiments are good, note-taking is bad; and so on, as if the issue were a moral and absolute one. [...] Teaching styles are *never* good or bad in any absolute sense; they are appropriate or inappropriate.²⁵

Similarly, Mosston and Ashworth argue for a range of approaches from the 'Command Style A' with its fixed subject matter, representing a single standard, through to the styles I - K in which the students are engaged in various types of independent study, describing the significant change of emphasis, when teaching methods concerned with reproduction of the known shift to methods that encourage discovery and production of the unknown, as the 'threshold'. They also note that debates about teaching frequently centre around these two approaches that are so often seen to be contradictory.

They say:

Many of the philosophical conflicts about teaching methods occur because of anchorage to one side of the Threshold, to one cluster and, at times, to one style.

The Spectrum calls for a nonversas reality [where teaching styles are matched with teaching objectives] in our schools where deliberate mobility along the Spectrum, in both directions, is a daily occurrence.²⁶

The different teaching styles in the Spectrum are all characterised according to the degree of decision making by the learner and the teacher, which could also be seen as the degree to which either party assumes control of the learning situation, and in some cases the learning environment. Given that the dance *technique classes* under discussion here always takes place indoors, in a dance studio, with a minimum of eight students (more usually between twenty and thirty students, with the obvious space limitations that this implies), the environment is pre-set so that comparisons on this last point cannot be made. However, whilst the most usual format is to work in unison, facing the mirror, for ninety minutes without a break, we do still have choices concerning these, and more detailed internal structures of the class, and in this respect learning to apply some of the strategies described in the Spectrum may be very helpful.

Mosston and Ashworth do not suggest that all the styles in the Spectrum are appropriate for the dance teacher's use. Rather, that the style of teaching selected must be determined by what each teacher seeks to accomplish. The implication, however, is that each style serves a particular purpose for all the students in the class. This view is contrary to the notion of encouraging individual, *creative* responses to all the physical material given, as is proposed here in relation to dance teaching. Consideration of the suggested separation between the styles which encourage the use of memory and recall (styles A-E), and those which are presented as methods which have 'discovery' as their main objective (styles F-K) serves to clarify the point. These latter methods invite the learner to participate in the discovery of 'new movements' and concern themselves with an extensive list of activities

all of which could be grouped together and termed '*creative*', while the former are more akin to rote learning.

This list of '*creative*' activities is a valuable one, but I would argue that all of the components can be, and should be expected of the dance student engaged in 'real learning' in the context of all aspects of the *technique class*, although in some instances they may only be possible to achieve in limited ways. As already argued in Chapter One, if we work towards encouraging our students to be intelligent, *creative* and healthy, then we should teach in ways which engage them in problem solving, comparing, contrasting, categorising, creating, hypothesising and all kinds of critical thinking *whilst* they also *do* and *feel* the movement that they are engaged with in class. This is possible even if such movement is performed in unison, with the same orientation in space, and the same guiding intention behind it. The division of teaching styles into ones which only involve reproduction of known facts and others that lead students towards *creative* solutions to the questions that they are encouraged to explore, will not facilitate the training of dancers who are able to bring all the aspects of their intelligence and creativity to their dancing *whilst they are actively engaged with the movement*.

By dividing their proposed strategies into separate styles of remarkable clarity, the approaches to the working situation that Mosston and Ashworth suggest become accessible. Yet their proposal that the Spectrum is based on the 'nonversus notion', that 'each style of teaching can accomplish a particular set of objectives that another style cannot'²⁷ appears to contradict the idea that we should take account of the students' differing personalities and differing intelligences in order to discover 'where they are at' and to devise methods which make the material accessible to many different types of student.

The idea that the teacher should take the students' starting point into account is clearly expressed, but this starting point is analysed only in physical or intellectual terms. An

attempt to apply their suggestions to the planning of a *technique class* serves to highlight again some important distinctions between the teaching of sports and that of dance. In physical education the methods can be clearly differentiated because the skills that they focus on are, in the main, similarly clear-cut.

Many of the skills taught in physical education rely on fundamental principles (for example the relative size, weight and speed of travelling objects that can be applied to the control required in ball games), but in dance there is seldom one correct answer. To meet our needs, we could interpret as 'correct' the one answer that relates to the individual's body. Then we might ask a question such as, "Can you find out how much impetus you need to give to your leg, *initiating* this turn, in order to go round twice, and to land gently facing the corner?" The impetus that the students find appropriate will relate to the weight of their leg, the strength and sense of *centre* that they have in the rest of their body, making it more or less easy to hold the turning position, and their ability to 'land' gently by absorbing the force of the turn through careful and gradual *placement* of the foot of the *working leg* onto the floor.

Some of these challenges clearly do relate to fundamental principles based on the laws of physics, but it will also be necessary for dance students to search for answers to individual problems related to the particular build of their own bodies, their musculature and so on. The answers that they find may not serve others as effectively. During this process each student will ideally be aware of the value of their own *creative* contribution, participating in a process in which the teacher acts only as a verifier of workable solutions. As well as exploring the mechanics of each action, dance students should be encouraged to transcend the physical and to involve the *imaginative* world that they inhabit, each in their own time and in their own way. No teacher can prescribe the method for these explorations, although the environment which is created, the imagery which is used and the interpersonal relationships which are developed within the class are more, or less, conducive to such *artistic* processes. Furthermore, it is clearly not reasonable to assume

that all students will reach the stage of transcending the physical material at the same time; rather it should be assumed that different students will respond to teaching styles in such individual ways that while some learning outcomes may be predicted, none can be guaranteed.

As Brinson points out, it is important to continue to distinguish between the aims of physical education and those of dance as an art form, in order that the 'historical error' which linked the two should not be perpetuated:

The emphasis of the two subjects is different. To combine them misleads students and creates disparate emphases in which dance is presented as one part only of a range of physical skills. The emphasis of dance is on knowledge of body and mind through the acquisition of specialist techniques which facilitate the communication of feelings, emotions and situations, especially those which cannot be communicated in words. [...]

Dance, like the other arts, is not an appendage to physical education but a particular form of knowledge and experience on its own, a way of organizing and communicating individual perceptions of the world. [...] Dance is an art which physical education is not.²⁸

Teaching Physical Education is an important book because of its plea for teachers constantly to assess and re-evaluate their methods and to search for unifying principles that govern all teaching, in order that there should eventually be a unifying philosophy, providing a constructive framework through which student teachers might be taught, and practising teachers broaden their knowledge. Mosston and Ashworth also call for recognition of the importance of a three part process: planning, teaching and evaluating the class work. They remind us that it is crucial not to miss out either the first or the last of these stages, and that both must be considered in depth. The *Spectrum* suggests a valuable structure of unusual breadth for the process of teaching in a variety of situations and for serving differing needs, but it does not represent the whole picture.

Before describing in detail the styles which may be most appropriate for the dance technique class, it may also be helpful to consider another check-list of broader aims which are particularly relevant to dance teachers, and against which methods and the

likely responses of students can be analysed, thereby arriving at the styles which may be most appropriate for the dance *technique class*.

We may think of the 'ideal' dance student as one who is able to bring their full physical energy and intelligence to the working situation, every day, with a curiosity for the explorations that they will embark upon, a willingness to take risks and 'cheerfully undertake imposed tasks', and to make individual, *creative* contributions to the work. We also know that it is rare to encounter such a person, certainly one who can exhibit these characteristics on a daily basis, even in the context of vocational training institutions in which one might assume a high level of personal motivation towards the subject. Therefore it is appropriate that we should question whether or not our strategies are ones which help to lead the students towards greater self-motivation and the subsequent ability to work for themselves, in ways which will lead to the ideals stated above.

I propose that there are four positive ways in which the teaching process may be approached with this aim in mind:

- (1) Encouraging the development of individual relationships with the material.
- (2) Bringing these relationships to consciousness.
- (3) Encouraging increasingly in-depth study, through clarification of the intrinsic logic of the material.
- (4) Ensuring that the teacher's attitudes to the students, as expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways, are consistent with the values inherent in the strategies above.

All of them may be seen as guiding principles which could apply in general terms to any learning encounter, although the detailed examples of their application to a dance *technique class* will clearly not be transferable across different disciplines. If the goal is accepted to be that the students, through their training, should become increasingly autonomous and therefore eventually able to work constructively in any class, with any

teacher, then these suggested principles may also be described as ones which will help to guide the student from their more dependent beginnings to their independent maturity.

(1) Encouraging the development of individual relationships with the material

I try to give the movement clearly, so that it will be done clearly, each dancer in his own way. [...] It isn't only training, although that has a great deal to do with it. It has to do with temperament and the way they see movement, the way they are as persons and how they act in any situation; all that affects the dancing. It's all part of it.²⁹

The aim will be to re-affirm continuously the prime importance of the student's individual relationship to the given physical material by:

- (a) making it clear that the tasks set are to be interpreted individually by each student in relation to their present stage of physical, intellectual and emotional development:
- (b) encouraging and accepting individual choice and *creativity* within given boundaries.

(a) Individual interpretations

If we seek to create an atmosphere in which all students feel similarly valued as they undertake tasks which they recognise as being suited to their individual needs, then we must ensure that such an atmosphere is non-competitive, repeatedly reaffirming the importance of working towards individual goals. The student who does not feel supported by her or his environment may well associate with Angelica MacArthur's description of the dancer in the ballet class, who is,

constantly exposed to the fact that her own work exists in comparison to, and in competition with the talents and abilities of her peers.³⁰

On the other hand, students who feel supported by a sense of common endeavour will be able to watch the progress of the people around them and use what they see there as just another learning tool.

The competitive nature of athletes is one characteristic which differentiates their prevailing attitude from that of the dance artist. Yet to imply that dancers are never competitive would be to fail to recognise an important, sometimes driving force in their personalities. Such a force may not be incompatible with the main goals discussed here, provided that students are encouraged to balance their need to judge themselves against their peers from time to time, with the goal of becoming increasingly self-reliant and self-motivated.

In this context, the importance of setting individual goals is paramount. We will encourage the students to work within the capabilities of their own bodies and in ways which are individually relevant, if we offer a choice as to the degree of difficulty within the same task. For example, we may set a *grand battement* exercise which is clearly defined and explained to the students before they begin. Working on it, in unison, they may decide individually on the height of the *working leg* taking many different factors into consideration.

(1) Before the exercise begins: choices may be made individually in relation to the students' present physical priorities (perhaps deciding that they should follow up previous work on the brushing action of the foot against the floor, used as the *initiating impetus* for the *battement*, allowing for the possibility that the leg might not achieve its maximum height on this occasion) and, in relation to the requirement to make a particular rhythmic connection with the music, balanced against the *dynamic* which they have chosen for the movement.

(2) During the exercise: individual physical considerations may be taken into account that might be underlined by their self-checking. This might alert them, for example, to allow the leg to come down earlier than planned if they felt that there was more *tension* in the muscles than was useful or appropriate.

Such choices, which must be made clear to the students in advance, have the potential to involve them on all levels, physically, intellectually and emotionally. Their ability to take responsibility for the choices is another matter, which will be discussed later under 'Learning Strategies'.

Whilst the philosophy behind teaching in this way is one of inclusion, there may be times when the *focus* on a particular task necessarily excludes certain students on the basis of ability. For example, in order to give students with strong elevation the opportunity to jump slowly and work on the particular strength that allows the jump to be *suspended* in the air, a musical *tempo* may be set which would be impossibly slow for students who do not yet have such strength. These kinds of situations, if handled sensitively, need not be detrimental to the overall philosophy of the class; indeed in an atmosphere in which all students' achievements are valued, it may become an asset for the students excluded from this particular activity, to be able to learn from watching their peers, *provided that they feel confident that the situation will soon be reversed* and that their work, on different skills, will become the focus of attention in due course.

Mosston and Ashworth describe the negative results of singling students out for demonstration, but there can be positive results also, provided that it is not always the same students who are perceived as being 'correct'. Indeed we may reiterate the point that there is no single 'correct' answer if we single out a student who has thoughtfully and imaginatively dealt with a task in an individual way.

(b) Individual choice and creativity

The almost infinite possibility of playing *differently* [...] while playing well and beautifully [...] is a phenomenon that has always filled me with admiration; the same happens in other arts also, the same thing happens in nature with its infinite variety of forms of life.³¹

The importance of the balance between the structure that we impose and the individual contribution of the dance student has already been mentioned. In the context of this analysis, some examples may be useful.

In setting a travelling movement combination, it might be appropriate to ask the students to find different ways to make the material cover more ground; within a different series of movements the task might be to change the movement where necessary, in order to make a certain quality in the body more feasible, or to explore different transitions between movements simply for the sake of welcoming individual contributions. In any of these circumstances there would be a wide variety of responses. Answers to the first task might be to insert more steps, to perform the whole combination with a completely different dynamic, or to stretch each movement within the original combination to its physical limits and in such a way that both the dynamic and the bodily shapes were altered. Clearly the students would need more preparation time than might be usual, and the teacher would have to allow a more flexible class structure to emerge, but this may be done in very simple ways and still be effective.

For example if the students have been asked to explore some variations to a travelling sequence which moves across the floor, it will need to be recognised that different people need different amounts of time to make decisions about what they are going to contribute. Some would prefer to take a considerable amount of time to think through their choices, others would want to experiment whilst moving, without undue deliberation. Within the spirit of this kind of enquiry it would therefore be counter-productive to expect everyone in the class to 'come across the floor' in the same order, completing two crossings each, within a pre-determined time-span. The teacher would need to let them

know that it was all right to work individually at the side of the studio until they felt ready to try something. Further, the teacher would need to stand by that decision even if it meant that, for whatever reason, students did not try it at all, or preferred to remain physically involved but to repeat the original version of the combination, as given by the teacher, and not make an individual contribution at this stage.

The teacher might discuss, with a student who makes the latter choice, their feelings about limited choice opportunities, outside class. With equally positive results, the teacher might make a mental note to give them further encouragement to explore possibilities of this kind in less conspicuous situations, perhaps during work on unison movement material, when they were less likely to be watched by their peers. All such choices as to how to respond are affected by our understanding of the students and influenced therefore by the analysis of their individual learning strategies, as discussed below.

This method is an enormously valuable one as it represents one of the clearest ways in which we can invite and welcome individual contributions within a structured framework, but it will only be constructive if we are sure that we are able to follow the process through to its natural conclusion. It would clearly be counterproductive if we were to invite contributions only to make negative comments about them, when the divergent solutions presented by the students did not correspond with our particular aesthetic judgments.

Fundamental physical principles will still be considered to be of the utmost importance as we encourage the students' explorations, and yet will be recognised as only a fraction of the whole story, as the students are encouraged to look for ways in which to bring all aspects of their intelligence to the work, making it personal and therefore meaningful to them. Claxton, describing one of many 'models of the mind' suggests that,

meaning is always something that people make. It is as if the best anyone can do is to give us an outline sketch, and it is then up to us in what way, and to what extent, we flesh it out and colour it in.³²

Depending on their *focus*, intellectual or emotional, they may choose to search for the most efficient movement to suit a particular requirement, thinking predominantly of physical and anatomical principles, or they may choose to explore the movement on an entirely different level, searching for meaning which can never be 'cut and dried, neatly packaged in an idea or a formula that one person can give to another.'³³

Apologising in advance for being 'pompous', Brinson gives us his view that,

dance, or any work of art, should be about truth, however widely or imperfectly this is represented. Truth does not mean the 'truth' of naturalism, with its symptoms of the surface of things. It requires a search for deeper causes within one's life experience. Nor does it imply cosmic themes. Rather, the best understanding comes from simple situations and personal relations.³⁴

Whilst Brinson is discussing dance in the theatre context here, his remarks are equally appropriate for the class situation, on which he also comments. Having described the vision of The Place Theatre's first Turning World season, he remarks:

That sort of vision stirs excitement. No wonder young people fill The Place. It is the sort of vision I would like to see translated into student choreography and the dance class.³⁵

I propose that we will have worked towards this aim, in 'simple' ways, if we allow the students the freedom, and the time, to search for a personal 'truth', through the material that we have given only as an 'outline sketch'.

The recognition of the importance of the students' input that is implied here will inevitably influence their sense of self-worth; the satisfaction that may be derived from their own awareness of their potential to explore movement productively can become a catalyst for vital changes in their attitudes to, and relationship with, the work, reinforcing their wish to seek further ways in which to make individual contributions.

It is recognised that the structure of the technique class imposes certain strict limitations, yet for many students it is only within the confines of a structure with which they feel

secure that they can begin to explore physical possibilities in ways that might more naturally be part of a composition, choreography or improvisation class. For them this method will serve an even more important function, possibly representing their first realistic chance of exploring movement consciously, and developing a sense of intimacy with, and ownership of the material.

(2) Bringing these relationships to consciousness

The aim will be to encourage 'self-checking' mechanisms that will serve to maintain and develop the relationships described above. These mechanisms can be described as the 'inner voice' (as a subconscious personal critic, and as a messenger for sensory perception) and the 'external observer' (as a conscious critic).

Through discussion outside class, the students may be encouraged to listen to, and discourage the 'inner voice' that acts, usually uninvited and in negative ways, as a personal critic. By becoming increasingly conscious of the characteristics of the occasions when these negative thoughts begin to disrupt the learning process, students may be helped to quiet their negative influence. This kind of discussion can only be fruitful on a one-to-one basis, as there are so many different ways in which students hear and interpret the thoughts which come to disturb and challenge their motivation.

It would be excessively simplistic, for example, to imagine that only those who felt that they were not achieving well were plagued by negative thoughts; the questioning which interrupts the students' work may just as easily be prompted by feelings of boredom, that they are insufficiently challenged on some level, that they have failed to understand some aspect of the work that they are loath to ask about, or that they simply cannot stop thinking about other unconnected aspects of their lives. Individual solutions would need to be sought and regular feedback given on the results of different methods, giving opportunities for affirmation of any positive results, together with the sense that the

subconscious is an important part of the personality which will be listened and responded to.

The ability to use the 'inner voice' as messenger of sensory perception, effectively and positively, will depend upon the students' ability to 'listen' to three sets of messages: their own physical sensations, coming to an understanding of how a movement feels in relation to what it looks like and to their intellectual understanding of its intention. Ideally these three sets of messages, kinaesthetic, visual and intellectual will correspond, however it may be a very long time before this is the case and in the meantime students may experience feelings of real conflict or a lack of comprehension which can be worrying. It is important for students to know that this is a usual occurrence, so that they are not continually dismayed by suggestions that they have not achieved something that they thought they had understood, or made physically clear.

The teacher's role in this respect will be to help the students to align these messages in order that, in the future, they may increasingly depend upon reliable signals. These signals may be as varied as a conscious thought which tells the body what to do (and the body's subsequent ability to do what it is told), the recognition of kinaesthetic stirrings (and the students ability to value these as an important source of knowledge), or stronger messages of muscular *effort*, or pain, which will necessitate a physical response. The acknowledgement of accurate visual cues which might inform students that they were not physically engaged in quite the way that they had imagined or 'felt' themselves to be is equally vital.

In 'The Alexander Technique and Dance Training', Phyllis Richmond highlights the need to be aware of the possibility of physical sensations delivering inappropriate messages:

The problem is that our kinesthetic mechanisms are calibrated to the standard of the familiar. We call familiar sensations "right," even though they may be very inefficient and harmful. Alexander called this universal phenomenon "untrustworthy sensory appreciation." Nobel Prize winner Nikolaas Tinbergen explains that...

the correct performance of many movements is continuously checked by the brain. It does this by comparing a feedback report that says "orders carried out" with the feedback expectation for which the brain has been alerted. Only when the expected feedback and the actual feedback match does the brain stop sending out commands for corrective action....what Alexander has discovered is that a lifelong misuse of the body muscles...can make the entire system go wrong. As a consequence, reports that "all is correct" are received by the brain (or perhaps interpreted as correct) when in fact all is very wrong. A person can feel at ease, for example, when slouching in front of a television set, when in fact he is grossly abusing his body. (Tinbergen, 1974)

The calibration of sensory awareness to the standard of the familiar means that we cannot depend on our kinesthetic sensations to tell us what we are really doing.³⁶

An important part of the teacher's role will therefore be to act as an outside eye, letting the students know when 'feeling right' is in fact wrong. This is different from telling them when an action is 'incorrect' from a physiological point of view, or an aesthetic standpoint. It relies on an awareness of their sensations, an awareness which the teacher will have only if students are able to verbalise them, and the teacher is prepared to take the time to understand their very individual responses. An eventual short-cut for this time-consuming work will be the use of the mirror as a guide, less as a means to check that the 'right' effect has been achieved than as a means by which the student can be sure that the appropriate work is going on:

Alexander found that it was extremely difficult to inhibit his ingrained habits of use. Although he intended not to pull his head back and thought that he was not pulling it back, observing himself in the mirrors he found that he actually was doing the opposite of what he thought he was doing! He learned, much to his surprise, that he could not tell with accuracy what he was doing!³⁷

In order to help students to become aware of these mixed messages, and to begin to align them, we may work through a five-stage process:

- (1) The teacher determines the intention of the exercise and explains or physically demonstrates it.
- (2) The students interpret it as accurately as possible, but in relation to their own bodies, and 'listen' to the sensations felt whilst performing it.

(3) The teacher notes, and points out, any physical problems that seem to stand in the way of the students' ability to perform the movement in a way which is appropriate for them.

(4) The students respond to this information by describing any conflict that they experience, between their understanding of the movement's intention and the 'orders carried out' feedback that they have received internally, and the information that the teacher is now giving them.

(5) The teacher uses whichever method is deemed most appropriate - more verbal information; use of the mirror; 'hands-on' correction - to highlight the difference between what each student *thought* she or he was doing, and what she or he *actually* did.

The image of themselves in the mirror that most dance students confront on a daily basis may be presented as a destructive influence. In as much as it prevents them from ignoring aspects of their body, about which they may have negative feelings, this may be true. Further, if the focus on their image is for too great a proportion of the working life of a dancer, then there may be, built up over time, an 'arguably rather dependent relationship with her own visual image in the mirror.'³⁸ However students can be encouraged to use the mirror to focus on quite different aspects of their work, and it is important to note the potential for it to be used positively, becoming part of the students' working tool-kit for self-correction, affirmation, and as a guide towards more consistent application of the principles that are, at times, erratic.

A further and equally important use of sensory awareness will be as a guide to fatigue, physical stress, or pain. Whilst the physical well-being of the students is the teachers' concern, it cannot be entirely their responsibility. Different students react to the material in such differing ways that they need to learn to 'listen' to their bodies with respect to physical exertion also; they should not assume that they can automatically perform in exactly the way that their peers do, whether in terms of strength, stamina, or frequency of repetition of an exercise.

Dennis Child discusses the 'level of stimulation below or above which we are not aware of [a physical] stimulus', naming this the 'threshold'. He points to the variations in threshold levels between one person and the next which seem to imply, for example, that 'some people have low pain thresholds and soon succumb by showing marked anxiety symptoms',³⁹ whilst others are able to withstand far greater degrees of pain and therefore, we can assume, work at the 'edge' of their physical limitations for longer. Part of the process of learning to 'listen' to the messages that the body sends will be concerned with becoming increasingly aware of these signals. As teachers we can actively discourage students from working when they are in pain, but we must rely on their acknowledgement of it in the first instance. The majority of students are loath to stop working unless it is imperative for their long-term fitness that they do so - knowing when to stop is a very important lesson that we must encourage them to learn.

The 'external observer' can be described as the deliverer of messages, or 'notes' that students may give themselves, on their own performance, whilst they are working. This ability to 'comment' on their own progress, is different from the 'inner voice' described above. Here the students will be making an attempt to align what they are doing physically with what they understand intellectually the intention of each movement to be, and 'commenting' to themselves, consciously, on the achieved result. This commentator may not always agree with the 'inner voice' who describes the feelings and the sensations of the dancer at work. The student who is able to use such an 'objective' view of their own progress, may also do so independently of the teacher's input; therefore this may be seen as a progression towards autonomy, from the five-stage process described above.

If we encourage the students to observe each other closely we may help them to develop the skills which they will later be able to apply to a critical examination of their own work, becoming their own 'external observer'. Having set a movement combination, and perhaps having performed it a few times, we may decide to divide the class into pairs. Taking turns to be the 'performer' and the 'observer' the students are encouraged to offer

feedback to each other, based on the teaching points previously explained by the teacher. Thus the students will need to observe closely and compare the performance that they observe with the teaching points, concentrating very accurately on the problems that have been set in ways which are not always possible when working with one's own body. They will arrive at a conclusion as to whether or not the performance was satisfactory, and communicate with their partner, giving feedback as appropriate.

Discussion between the two students, taking many different forms, can include the differences highlighted between what was felt to have been achieved by the performer and what was recognised to have been achieved by the observer. Thus the relationship between what we feel, what we understand, and what we see is again clarified.

There are useful side-effects of working in this way from time to time, as the students are encouraged to engage in a socializing process which is unusual in the context of a technique class. It may be particularly useful when a class of students do not know each other very well, when there are new students coming into the class who have not yet been assimilated into the group, or when the group dynamic is thought not to be very positive. In any of these situations it may be recognised that to encourage the students to work together, discussing their progress and problems could be a catalyst for positive change.

It is very important that the teacher does not use this method unless she or he trusts the students to give accurate and objective feedback, expressing their attitudes in ways that are not contradictory to the overall philosophy of the class. (See strategy (4) below.)

Once students have formed the habit of both commenting on their work and listening to these comments, as well as to the information that they receive from other sources, (including those not yet mentioned in this context, such as the music or the teacher's more general remarks), they will be able to develop the ability to think increasingly laterally. As they work they will make *connections* mentally and physically between the

exercises' structures and their physical sensations, (see strategy (3) below), and they will make the material increasingly meaningful to themselves, emotionally and physically, (see strategy (1) above).

In other words they will have at their disposal, the ability to think about what they are doing *whilst they are doing it*, at the same time *being conscious of their feelings*, both physical and emotional. They will be capable of being 'engaged' with the material on every possible level. At the same time, the negative influence of the 'inner critic' may gradually be replaced by the more affirming nature of the 'external observer' who is prepared to work consciously towards increasing the student's own self-esteem.

(3) Encouraging increasingly in-depth study, through clarification of the intrinsic logic of the material

Bell avoided the trap of making the music, difficult though it is, sound too easy, though with his wonderful technique he surely could have. Moreover, his confidence was matched by an intensity of feeling and sense of structure that made even the vast opening movement coherent and cogent.⁴⁰

The aim is to present the material in ways that are structured in order to emphasise the *connections* between series of ideas, both intellectual and physical, thereby leading the students through processes which they will later be able to discover, develop and use for themselves. The 'understanding' implied is one of the relatedness of things, in this case the *connections* between physical sensations and structures, which we may call the logic of the material and which will be expressed by the dancer as a 'sense of structure'.

There are two approaches to this clarification which may be used in tandem, or in differing proportions depending upon the exact nature of the physical work and the learning strategies of the students in the class. The first will be non-verbal, or 'letting the material speak for itself', and the second will be a process of clarification through discussion, question and answer and the giving of information.

The students are bound to respond more or less positively to these strategies, depending on the ways in which they most readily comprehend movement; therefore to use both methods will be an important way of ensuring the general accessibility of the material. It is possible for a student to sense these *connections*, and understand them, purely physically and without analysis, revealing such an understanding in the way in which the related strands of material are performed, but this is rare. Those who arrive at an intellectual understanding of *connections* and are able to verbalise these, but who are not yet able to show such relationships in movement are also uncommon - but the variations in approach and method of comprehension, between these two extremes, are many and diverse.

The first approach clearly cannot be described verbally, any more than it can be understood intellectually. It is not suggested that each class is presented, or indeed conceived, as a work of art, however class work does share the same problems as 'artistic form'. Louis Arnaud Reid proposes that,

our conceptual discourse, though to some degree inept, is necessary in order that our minds may be prepared to come to understand the nature of form which is experienced in art.⁴¹

Yet, describing the concept of structure as 'artistic form,' as discussed at length by Susanne Langer in *Problems of Art* L.A.Reid agrees with her suggestion that such knowledge is not communicable in words:

she works towards the conception of artistic form as form which is not discursively communicable or in the strict sense logically thinkable, yet can be known in experience. Genuine knowledge, she rightly says, is considerably wider than the range of our discourse.⁴²

The two methods described here, verbal and non-verbal, are presented as a combined strategy to lead the students to a greater understanding of form. The strategy encompasses the two concepts outlined above. Firstly that there is a knowledge of form to be understood through experience, and secondly that we may use language as a substitute neither for physical intelligence nor for the understanding to be gained

through physical experiences but, rather, to clarify details and *connections* intended to broaden that understanding.

With respect to the first method, examples of the kinds of details and *connections* referred to here are given in Chapter Three, and recorded on film, but it is suggested that the only 'real' way for the reader to comprehend the method - 'letting the material speak for itself' - is to work physically with the material.

The second method, that of clarification through the giving of information and discussion, may be approached in several different ways. The most basic of these will require the teacher simply to give 'pointers' which indicate that one sensation should relate to another, previously explored. "You can use the same reach here; the one which helped you to bring the body's weight forward last time" or; "Try to counterbalance this spiral with the weight of the opposite leg, rooted into the floor - it's the same sense of the weight pushing down that you found helpful as a brake at the end of the turn". Such information, given regularly to the class as a whole, should help the students to make sense of the material as they encounter it, and encourage them to look for similar *connections* themselves.

If they find such an approach to be both helpful and interesting, they will search for ways in which to cross-relate material encountered in different classes. As well as serving to clarify particular points and to highlight physical *connections*, these verbal pointers may often be sufficient to help the student switch out of a habit of thinking, or doing, that precludes advancement into a new pattern or approach to learning which encompasses routes for positive change.

A more complex, and a more individual approach, will be to guide the students through a series of mental steps, or thoughts, which will lead to an understanding of a particular physical concept selected for attention. The goal may be one which the teacher has

chosen, or one that has been agreed between teacher and student;⁴³ in either case the students will be involved in the same physical process, but might need different kinds of information in order to understand it fully.

The teacher, having the experience and the expertise to keep the goal in view, will need to analyse the physical problem and present it in stages of a manageable size, through approaches that are flexible enough to take account of variations in the students' technical ability. Whichever route is followed it will be important to stress the predominant value of the search, and the relative unimportance of achieving the goal; the students will be more likely to enter into the inquiry if they understand that they can learn as much from a 'wrong' answer as from a 'correct' answer, that all information gleaned will be treated as intrinsically valuable.

Here again self-confidence is an important factor. Those who do not have a positive sense of themselves may repeat known patterns, probably sub-consciously, in order to boost their self-esteem by ensuring that they receive 'correct' answers most of the time. Courageous or confident students on the other hand, who know that the 'correct' answer is well within their grasp and do not need to 'hear' it repeatedly, are able to stretch themselves beyond the known, allowing themselves to make 'mistakes' and thereby teaching themselves something new.

An example of this kind of verbal prompting is as follows. We may wish to encourage a student to analyse why a certain physical *coordination* was not being achieved, rather than to allow constant repetitions of the same unhelpful response. It might be that the 'incorrect' response was seen to be building inappropriate habits into the body, or that we knew from experience that this particular student would become unduly self-critical very quickly, unless she or he began to understand a more fruitful approach. Then we might ask a series of questions such as:

"What do you need to do to make this work?" (This' being a specific technical idea.)

"Can you figure out why it isn't working?"

"Can you remember what you did that made it so easy before?"

"Can you rediscover that sensation?"

"Try thinking of 'x', earlier on today; can you relate these two sensations?"

"This involves the same co-ordination as 'x', it's just that you're turning now. Can you apply the same logic?"

If at any point during this exchange the students are able to answer in the affirmative and continue on their own to explore a positive solution, then they might be left to do so; it would not be necessary to go through the whole list. On the other hand, if all the answers were negative, then the teacher would have to 'step in' and provide an alternative route to the same goal, perhaps the same physical sensations within a simpler movement *coordination* or through more information given verbally. The teacher's decision in this respect would depend on the 'type' of student and their perceived learning strategies.

The teacher cannot plan such steps in advance; they have to be tailor-made for each new situation and for each student, relating to the problems that each encounters individually. Knowing that students are bound to respond to the same questions in different and sometimes unpredictable ways, there cannot be a 'successful formula' to be followed, although experience is bound to lead to the recognition of some patterns which seem to be more widely useful than others. If different students are to be encouraged to take different routes to a goal, then many complex factors, which necessitate alterations to the detail of such routes, will need to be taken into account.

This image of steps on the journey towards a desired goal is used by Mosston and Ashworth in their description of the 'steps' or 'ladder' of 'guided discovery' and are closely paralleled in Claxton's image of stepping stones, through which he also emphasises the importance of clarifying intermediary stages of cognition, in order that the student

should be able to cross safely to a new area, or depth of knowledge. His description of exasperated teachers who, with 'sighs of disappointment [...] narrow their attention to a diminishing proportion of their pupils',⁴⁴ as they become aware of the majority's lack of understanding, seemingly doing nothing to help them, is all too familiar an image. He asks,

What are you to do when someone is calling to you from the other bank with increasing exasperation, but you can neither see the stepping stones nor swim? [...] It is not surprising that some children give up looking for [...] analogical stepping stones, and crouch down in the long grass on their side of the cognitive divide until the teacher gives up shouting at them and turns away.⁴⁵

If we are to ensure that all our students receive the help that they need, in order to cross this divide, we must be prepared not only to place sufficient stones that are close enough for a safe crossing but also to place them strategically for each student; we must allow them to lean on us if they need to from time to time (assuming that *our* feet are firmly on the river bed), and furthermore we must be prepared to cross and re-cross many times before they all have the courage to go alone. It will take courage on our part, also, not to play safe and place so many stones in their path that the journey ceases to be exciting - they will learn more if we also take risks, judging the moment carefully and dropping the stones into the water just in time to help them, before they fall.

Sometimes there will be a need to lay a large enough stone to sit on for a while, lest the journey should be too exhausting; at other times the students may lean forward and arrange the stones for themselves. When this happens we know that they are on the verge of real independence, but it is still our responsibility to ensure that they do not slip; it is all too easy to ignore the ones who begin to take responsibility for themselves, in favour of the more apparently needy.

Mosston and Ashworth describe the possibility of a 'guided discovery' situation being particularly successful when the students involved have very limited knowledge, or no knowledge at all, of the matter at hand; it is comparatively easy then to lead the student

through a series of stages, progressing from one to the next only when the teacher is certain that all important concepts have been grasped:

They respond almost uninterruptedly to the sequence of clues and are not pulled astray by partial knowledge or dim memories of some movement detail. Learning is fresh, clear, and flowing.⁴⁶

This is rarely the case in the dance class situation, however; normally the 'guided discovery' method will require a significant investment of time, studying the movement's structure and underlying principles, and preparing the appropriate intermediate stages to ensure that the prescribed steps are logical ones. And it will involve close observation of, and ability to enter into, the world of the student if the unpredictable questions which they ask are to be answered in ways which are both relevant and helpful.

If the teacher is to be genuinely willing to wait, allowing sufficient time for thought or physical exploration, and giving time to the students to respond in their individual ways, then it must be assumed that this particular strategy will be most useful in brief episodes within a larger framework or, equally positively, with only a few students at a time while other members of the class have a different *focus* on the work which requires less of the teacher's attention.

To be proactive in seeking methods through which to help students to solve their personal difficulties in this way demands extraordinary energy from the teacher, and relies on a genuine interest in the teaching process. There is a significant difference between giving classes which may be inspirational to dancers who already have enough knowledge to make sense of the physical material, and a teaching process which aims to enable less accomplished students to work towards a fuller understanding of the material given. Merce Cunningham's comments, which reveal his attitude to teaching as he repeatedly explains that he does not enjoy the process, serve to highlight the point.

This is one of several examples:

Ideally if I could, I'd just work with my company, I wouldn't give classes, I don't like them.⁴⁷

Talking of the relationship between the physical and the intellectual in class work he says,

I would explain three times for elementary classes. For others I'll explain once, if they don't get it, forget it.⁴⁸

This lack of interest in the teaching process does not prevent Cunningham from giving classes which are, in many ways, appropriately challenging and thought provoking. He treats the dancers in his classes with respect, and celebrates their individuality. *There is a* deeply rooted logic in his work, and the material is given with clarity; nevertheless he expects dancers to make what they can of the material with little or no explanation or discussion. The fact that he has chosen not to teach inexperienced students very often is, perhaps, an acknowledgement of the fact that his approach is less fruitful for inexperienced dancers who cannot interpret the material without considerable help from the teacher.

(4) Ensuring that our attitudes to the students, as expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways, are consistent with the values inherent in the strategies above

Apart from French or chemistry or music, what is it that you are teaching or transmitting during your daily encounters? The answer, of course, is that you are teaching yourself - who you are, what you believe in, what you stand for [...] Underneath the melody of the lesson content there are always the harmonies of your attitudes and beliefs.⁴⁹

Dance students are very vulnerable: unlike any other student at work, they are nearly naked and are seldom invited to speak. They rarely like their own bodies because it is so inhumanly difficult to fulfil contemporary ideals of physical perfection. They are often intrinsically shy and private people yet their chosen art is public performance. Such considerations must be born in mind and respected. [...] What matters is what a student does in his maturity - in five and ten and twenty years time. We are going to influence that by the way we deal with students in their beginnings.⁵⁰

Our attitudes to our students, expressed both in verbal and non-verbal ways, are bound to have an enormous effect on their ability to learn and to train. As students they inevitably look to their teachers, as authorities on their subject, for affirmation of their perceived

talent, the appropriateness of their working methods and so on. Whilst the process of training will ideally be one of gradually weaning the students from such a need, it is also necessary for the teacher to recognise that such a need usually exists, in some form, and therefore to take responsibility for the influence that he or she may have, the repercussions of which may spread far beyond the confines of the dance studio.

Cunningham says,

if you think there's something interesting, you try to encourage them, not to defeat them, because it's simple enough to knock the balance out of them. They're usually so frightened, insecure about whether they're doing ill or well. If you give them something so difficult they can't do it, it will make them sad, and that doesn't interest me very much. Lots of people think that's the way to push people. That's not the way I work.⁵¹

Buckroyd, in 'The Teaching of Dance' discusses the importance of the work of behavioural scientists, in relation to dance teaching. Talking of 'what has been learned about learning over the past hundred years' she says,

It takes a brave woman to condense a century into a sentence, but I would like to suggest that what has been discovered is that we learn best when failure is ignored and success is rewarded, that is to say when achievement is followed by positive reinforcement: "Well done; you got it right."⁵²

She goes on to suggest,

To point out only what is right and what is to be strengthened and supported, implicitly points out what is wrong and agrees better with learning theory. That is not to say that the occasional expression of dissatisfaction or anger may not be salutary [...] but as an ordinary means of education I think it is unhelpful.⁵³

With the determination not to 'knock the balance out of them' in mind, it is important that we become increasingly aware of the varied ways in which negative attitudes to students may be expressed. As Fisher points out,

We have all seen pictures of dance teachers flourishing canes over fearful students. It is relieving that this is no longer fashionable. But there are other ways to exercise power and these are still regularly employed in dance teaching. Teachers often bully, humiliate, deride, compare unkindly, and are condescending toward their students. In so doing they sooner or later destroy all love and enthusiasm for the subject and any

chance of success in the profession. The tough students who survive such treatment are not necessarily the finest contributors to the art.⁵⁴

Apart from such general bullying tendencies there are often more specific forms of discrimination, which may be particularly harmful if they coincide with forms of oppression that are socially sanctioned; in this respect we have, as teachers, a great responsibility. It should never be necessary to embarrass a student in class or to single them out publicly for negative comment, but especially not on the grounds of their race, physical characteristics (including weight), ability, or gender. And yet, whilst such a statement may seem to be obvious it remains true that students, even in supposedly 'enlightened' institutions, sometimes have cause for concern over such issues. Buckroyd has a further list of what she identifies as common 'complaints',

What I do know is what students – and not just from my own institution but over a wide range of vocational schools and professional dance colleges – tell me about their training. They say that their teachers seem to behave as though they had forgotten that their students are volunteers and not conscripts: that they want to dance, love to dance. Yet their teachers bully and harass them as if they were there under duress. They say their teachers seem to enjoy undermining their confidence by their relentless criticism. [...] They say they are not helped by a constant attention to what they cannot do. They say they fear and loathe and are contemptuous of sarcasm and insults. They long for encouragement; they are desperate for a word of praise. They find themselves very, very often discouraged and despairing. And they say "Dancing is hard enough anyway; why do the teachers have to make it harder?"⁵⁵

How can it be, that although we imagine ourselves to be increasingly thoughtful and sensitive to the issue of the students' self-esteem, these kinds of comment remain commonplace? Claxton's discussion of 'implicit theories', mentioned previously, gives some insights into this problem:

Another feature of these implicit theories is that they often have greater control over some aspects of our behaviour than others. For example, it is not unusual for people to show a dissonance between what they say about an issue and the way they actually deal with it. We may profess a love for the classics, but spend most of our time reading thrillers. Teachers may concur with a pupil-centred view of teaching, but in the heat of the moment, in the classroom, behave quite differently. Adolescents may subscribe to one theory about AIDS in personal and social education [...] lessons, and quite another on the river bank in the dark.⁵⁶

We may recognise contradictions similar to the ones described above in our own behaviour. It may be that aspects of our teaching methods are entrenched in old ideas, even though intellectually and in discussion with others, we may concur with a view of teaching which takes account of more recent thoughts on training and education. An example might be of claiming that our teaching methods take account of different body types, although in class it is clear to the students that we expect an ideal to be achieved, or that we make value judgments about the students' work which repeatedly reveal that only one type of body, perhaps the "18, anorexic and with high insteps"⁵⁷ variety ever gets praised.

In order to be sure that our theories are carried through into our practice, it is imperative that we become increasingly conscious of all the messages that we send out, intentionally or otherwise. We must think very carefully about the language that we use, not only so that careless remarks do not cause unnecessary distress, but also in order that we may use it to encourage the students to work for themselves, independent of the teacher's standards or values. To describe a movement executed by a student as "not very attractive", for example, is to imply the same response to the student her or himself. To state, having watched a sequence performed by the class, "I'm very disappointed", is to imply that they should concern themselves with the teacher's emotional response to the learning situation, when in fact our feelings are not what is important here.

To encourage the students' autonomy, we should concentrate upon, and by our comments encourage them to concentrate upon, the more important issue of whether or not they have achieved what they have set out to achieve. In this connection neutral statements are usually the most appropriate, being descriptive but not judgmental of the student's performance. For example, "That was clear," or "See whether you can maintain the stretch of the extended leg next time; then it will be easier to hold the position for the duration of the turn."

Further to this, we should check that our choices of vocabulary do not imply that we know what they are feeling better than they do (which can never be the case). "You want... to do such and such" or even "You need... to do such and such" are not necessarily true statements. If we want the students to trust us, then we must be very sure not to say anything that could lead them to question our judgments. Much more useful would be the suggestion "Try to do...such and such, and see whether or not it helps you to feel...so and so", or "If you want to *phrase* it like that, then I think you'll need a bit more impetus at the beginning of the turn."

Not only do these kinds of comments not cause arguments, but they also make it very clear that the individual student's response is the one that is of paramount importance; they remind students that they are in control of their dancing and their learning, and they will lead the students to believe that what the teacher has to say is worth listening to, in the sense that it has direct relevance for them, and yet is non-judgmental.

Through the language that we use, we may also make it clear that the students' thoughts on the working process are invited; dependent upon how we act subsequently, we may prove that these thoughts will be taken into account. For example we may ask, "What do you think of this tempo?" If the response leads us to think that it was too fast for them, we may slow it down. On the other hand, if it was only slightly too fast we may decide to leave it, explaining "I don't want to slow it down, because I think it would be useful for you to work on..." Clearly if we ask a question like "How fast shall we take this?" then we must respond by trying out the tempo chosen by the majority of students present, whether or not we judge that it is an appropriate one, otherwise we risk damaging the trust on which the teacher-student relationship is based. Such trust may be more securely established if we are able to maintain a critical and analytical approach in our verbal feedback, rather than one which relies on our impulsive or emotionally charged responses; this will enable us to be consistent in ways which are bound to be reassuring.

Just as we ask questions of them in the expectation of receiving an honest and thoughtful response, so the students should be invited to question the teacher, ensuring that the teacher does not discriminate between students in her or his responses to the students. Any question asked deserves to be answered with the same seriousness, in the belief that each student's search for answers is as valuable as the teacher's. By encouraging dialogue, within the limits imposed by the need to retain the pace of the class, the communication skills are encouraged that students will need as they join the profession, whether as dancers, choreographers or teachers. Their ability to challenge will be developed and the hierarchies which were once the norm, in the studio, will be replaced by a relationship which is built around what Neuhaus calls 'a pure form of communication':

In such conversations [...] the teacher ceases to be a teacher in the narrow sense of the word and becomes a senior colleague endowed with greater experience and knowledge, talking to his younger brothers-in-art of their favourite subject. It is precisely this aspect of teaching that is most attractive, most engrossing and satisfying. Not only because here professional teaching is gradually turning into real education, but mainly because [it brings] people together on the basis of their common devotion to art and the ability to create something in the field of art.⁵⁸

In all these examples the students will have been made aware of their ability to participate in a discussion of the working process, as part of a group, and therefore without too much pressure to comment if they choose not to. The questions, being short in themselves and not requiring lengthy discussion, will not interrupt the class for long, and if this strategy becomes an inherent part of the class work then students will feel increasingly able to analyse and comment on the methodology which affects them. An expectation will have been made clear - that they can and should eventually expect to lead as well as to follow. And, at a later stage, most students will feel comfortable reflecting on their work with their teacher outside class time because they will have gradually become accustomed to an involvement of this kind.

Excessive praise has the potential to be as damaging as negative verbal feedback. Not only can it be embarrassing for the student to be regularly singled out in this way, but it may serve to build a relationship between student and teacher which encourages the

student to rely increasingly heavily on external validation for their sense of self-worth. Such a student, when encountering a 'bad patch', will feel proportionately more discouraged and worthless than they might have done, had they been able to focus more consistently on their own, internal sense of themselves. The teacher's relationship with the rest of the class may also be damaged by a sense that she or he is not able to deal fairly with all students.

The teacher should also be aware of the tendency to slip into habitual patterns of phraseology which, when applied repeatedly to all students, will not help them to feel that they are perceived as individuals. Such patterns may become part of a more general background stimulation if used regularly enough, and may then not be noticed at all. Awareness of Child's 'threshold' in terms of aural stimulation should remind the teacher to vary the inflection and volume of the voice in order to be effective.

No discussion about language would be complete without noting the important influence of the imagery that is used in class, together with the attitudes that are expressed implicitly within it. If the teacher is sensitive to the different levels of emotional maturity experienced by students, then it will be possible to use imagery in ways that are accessible to everyone and which therefore concur with the overall philosophy of inclusion. It is important, for reasons already stated, that the students believe that all the feelings and emotional responses they experience in class are equally 'valid'; we may contradict this notion if we indicate that a movement, or series of movements, must always be representative of a particular emotional state, as this implies that if they do *not* feel emotionally involved in the prescribed way, they are somehow 'lesser' people, or have failed to do the movement 'properly'.

If the teacher asks that a movement should be executed with passion, for example, when the students might never have experienced such an emotion in their own lives, they can feel nothing but inadequate. On the other hand less emotionally loaded words may help



them to arrive at the quality of movement that is sought, by a different approach. The teacher could suggest feelings of increased weight, strength, or a sense of 'drive' and all those students who have felt passionate may bring these feelings into their dancing, whilst others who have perhaps experienced such an emotion without naming or recognising it will reach a deeper understanding of themselves as they tap their past experience and use it if they choose to. Others may simply give the movement the weight that is required and remain confident in their ability to achieve reasonable goals.

In our search for images that all students can relate to, we may still find potent symbols. To describe a feeling of 'liquidity' in the joints, for example, to help to find the sensation of stretch without tension in the joints, as a limb reaches away from the torso, might encourage the sense that there is always the possibility for movement at the slightest change in breathing or posture, like the passage of breath that shimmers the surface of a hot drink as you blow on it, to cool it down. Therefore, although the arm or the leg is reaching away from the torso, requiring muscular *effort*, the muscles will not 'grip' to immobilise the joints in an unhelpful way; rather it will be possible to retain the feeling of a constant potential for further movement. These kinds of image are ones that all students can relate to, because they rely on such simple shared life experiences.⁵⁹

There are movements that students find particularly hard to achieve if they are lacking in confidence, the clearest example of this being an arch of the upper back which necessitates 'opening' and 'freeing' the chest. Given a situation in which students find it almost impossible not to continue to 'hide' themselves in a posture characterised by rounded shoulders and a 'shrinking' in the chest it may be particularly destructive to use the common emotion-laden imagery connected with 'rejoicing' (etc) and relatively more helpful to discuss the problem purely in anatomical terms - softening the muscles in the upper back, lengthening the neck and reaching the top of the head out into space - so that students are able to concentrate on positive courses of action that do not relate so directly to their feeling selves, requiring them to focus on aspects which they recognise to

be inadequate. Clearly the key in all such cases is not to be prescriptive about the emotional content of the movement, but rather to ensure that all students may be included in this important aspect of class work, dealing with the symbols which can help them to extend the depth of their emotional involvement with the material.

Apart from these messages, carried verbally, there are other clear communication channels through which the students may understand the teacher's attitudes towards them. They may note that whilst teachers are usually encouraging, they talk to some people far more often than to others. Perhaps the teacher touches some people during discussion on a particular technical point, yet with other people she or he stands a distance away. The teacher may say similar things to everybody, but the tone of voice may vary to the extent that it remains clear that some comments are made out of a sense of duty whilst others are initiated by a sense of genuine involvement with the student concerned. Perhaps the teacher will demonstrate physically for some people but expect others to glean their information through other channels.

If such behaviour is analysed these patterns may be seen to be conscious and related to the needs of individual students, some of whom have made it clear, for example, that they want to try to 'sense' the movement first without being given too much prior information, or that they do not want physical contact, or that they need to concentrate on remembering *phrases* without repeated demonstrations. The teacher will know when these patterns are based on careful judgments, and when they are indicative of a willingness to make more of an effort for one student than for another. No-one else is party to the discussions that the teacher may have outside the studio, nor to the ongoing process of work that takes place within it. Therefore no-one else can properly judge teaching in relation to these issues; but the teacher can develop an increasing consciousness as to their potential, both positive and negative, and may develop a willingness to be self-critical and to alter patterns of behaviour when it is appropriate.

In 1988 Buckroyd put forward her strongly felt views concerning the teaching of dance in vocational schools, from the point of view of a student counsellor, and asked some important questions as to how consideration of these views might affect future studio-based teaching. She acknowledged, however, that while she could pose the questions, and identify some of the problems, she was not in a position to answer them herself.

Two years later Judith A. Gray, writing about dance education in America, called for a 'complete reform of dramatic proportions' and described an alternative model for the teaching of dance which

would embrace the principles of diversity, individualization, cognition, problem-solving, exploration, customization, and integration.⁶⁰

The issues discussed above, under the heading of Teachers' Strategies, may be a useful starting point for continued discussion amongst those in the profession who *ought* to be able to find the answers to Buckroyd's questions. It is likely that such discussion would lead to a model very similar to the one described by Gray above. Considerable progress has been made in this respect, since 1988, but there is still a fair distance to go.

Learning Strategies

If the teacher can increase her or his understanding of the many and various ways in which students gain access to what is taught, then they will be more likely to be able to match their teaching methods with the students' learning needs. This is not to imply that it is never useful to encourage them to reach beyond what they presently know in terms of learning methods, or to present the material in ways which encourage them to expand their pool of strategies; rather that the teacher may help them to do just that, if they come to a deeper understanding of the students' different starting points and can therefore help them in the realistic setting of achievable, individual goals.

Carl Jung describes his search for 'peculiarities that might serve the purpose of giving some order to the apparently limitless variations in human individuality'.⁶¹ Seeing personality in terms of how an individual approaches the world in general, he proposes four main categories which would define their overall characteristics, recognising that there are many others which affect the person's 'orientation to experience', such as will-power, temperament or imagination. These four categories: sensation, thought, feeling and intuition, were evolved as a result of many years' observation of the people he met through his work in psychology:

It soon became clear to me [...] that the people who used their minds were those who *thought* - that is, who applied their intellectual faculty in trying to adapt themselves to people and circumstances. And the equally intelligent people who did not think were those who sought and found their way by *feeling*. [...]
When I use the word "feeling" in contrast to "thinking," I refer to a judgment of value - for instance, agreeable or disagreeable, good or bad, and so on.⁶²

Separating the voluntary from the involuntary, that is Feeling (rational) from Intuition (irrational), Jung goes on to explain the process by which individuals relate to the world around them,

Sensation (i.e. sense-perception) tells you that something exists; *thinking* tells you what it is; *feeling* tells you whether it is agreeable or not; and *intuition* tells you whence it comes and where it is going.⁶³

James Penrod rightly suggests that the use of such a model can help to clarify what may already be known from experience:

there are dancers who are more inclined to learn and perform dance after thoughtful consideration, others who operate out of a feeling for the movement, others out of a kinesthetic sense of the movement, and others who have an intuitive sense of what the movement means for them.⁶⁴

He proposes that all four categories need to be explored in the search for 'authentic' movement, within the context of student choreography classes. Clearly they will be similarly useful to the technique teacher who is also concerned to explore ways of encouraging a deeper, or more 'authentic' relationship between the student and the class material. Jung suggests that the categories are also useful in understanding one's own

prejudices, and that it is important to isolate our own characteristics from those of the people with whom we work. Although he refers to his patients in this respect, and specifically to the interpretation of dreams, his points are equally applicable to the dance teacher:

Thus, if you want to understand another person's dream, you have to sacrifice your own predilections and suppress your prejudices. This is not easy or comfortable, because it means a moral effort that is not to everyone's taste. But if the analyst does not make the effort to criticize his own standpoint and to admit its relativity, he will get neither the right information about, nor sufficient insight into, his patient's mind.⁶⁵

The work of Warren Lamb and Elizabeth Watson is also briefly discussed in Penrod's paper, reminding us that to be increasingly informed by those in related disciplines may be a very productive exercise. As Lamb and Watson suggest, some people seem to have a natural gift for 'summing up others' - but 'whatever your present facility of perception', it can be enhanced by the knowledge of what they call the 'body-language key'.⁶⁶ Like Laban and North before them, they recognise the distinction *between movement patterns* that are learned, providing excellent cover-ups for real feelings, and those that are revealing of personality, through 'posture profiles [which] can be adjusted but not changed'.⁶⁷

Discussing motivation, they divide people into three categories according to the ways in which they behave, or prepare for action, in any given situation; Penrod applies their findings to dance teaching:

They explain how some people operate in a manner that shows organization, planning action, doing, or investigating. This can be observed in students. When it is time for the student to move in some classroom combination or choreography, we recognize those who prefer to *organize* movement phrases into their discrete parts, others who investigate the phrases by *analyzing* and asking questions about the movement phrases, others who like to *plan out* how they are going to accomplish the phrases, and those who immediately *do* the movement phrases without a lot of reflection.⁶⁸

Penrod describes the ways in which keeping these models in mind also helped him to devise appropriate movement problems for his choreography students who would therefore be more likely to access all the learning resources that were available to them.

Lamb and Watson suggest that these behavioural patterns are unchangeable, implying that students are incapable of adapting to new learning patterns. Experience leads me to believe that this is not the case; however, their view gives additional weight to the argument presented here that it is vital for teachers to present information and engineer learning situations in ways which do take account of the different motivational types that are described above, lest certain students are left with very limited access to the class material.

Howard Gardner's view of 'multiple intelligences' is a more optimistic, as well as a more comprehensive one. He suggests that at least some of the forms of intelligence he describes are ones which 'every human being has the opportunity to develop and merge'.⁶⁹

The truth as to whether or not different areas of the 'mind' can be consciously encouraged to develop may be a matter for debate for many years to come; we may never understand its workings sufficiently to be able to describe its functions properly, and there are aspects which will inevitably remain mysterious. Jung reminds us, for example, that the area of symbolic thought cannot be discussed - nothing that is the result of logical thought or 'rational intent' can properly be called symbolic:

To the scientific mind, such phenomena as symbolic ideas are a nuisance because they cannot be formulated in a way that is satisfactory to intellect and logic. They are by no means the only case of this kind in psychology. The trouble begins with the phenomenon of "affect" or emotion, which evades all the attempts of the psychologist to pin it down with a final definition. The cause of the difficulty is the same in both cases - the intervention of the unconscious.⁷⁰

While debate on such issues continues, the more optimistic and positive of these views are the ones which might most usefully be embraced. Then the teacher would seek to increase their knowledge of the students' 'intelligences', 'action-profiles', 'strategies' or 'stances' in order firstly to understand 'where they are' but secondly to help them towards their goals by whatever means. Those means would include ones which are presently available, together with others which might become available to the student given sufficient opportunity to explore in a non-judgmental, nurturing environment. Such a teaching philosophy would acknowledge the fact that students may learn the same things in markedly different ways and contexts; or that they may discover different things that are relevant to them, although perhaps not to others, through the same physical material. Further, it would be based on the belief that students are capable of enormous and positive change and that we should not limit them in this respect. As Browning says:

A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?

Taking Gardner's theory as a starting point we may analyse the ways in which our students gain access to the movement material according to his six categories of intelligence. Like Jung, Gardner makes no value judgment when he suggests that people exhibit their intelligence in different ways. He is at pains to point out that the specific kind of intelligence known to the dancer is as valuable as any other:

A description of the use of the body as a form of intelligence may at first jar. There has been a radical disjunction in our recent cultural tradition between the activities of reasoning, on the one hand, and the activities of the manifestly physical part of our nature, as epitomized by our bodies, on the other. This divorce between the 'mental' and the 'physical' has not unfrequently been coupled with a notion that what we do with our bodies is somehow less privileged, less special, than those problem-solving routines carried out chiefly through the use of language, logic, or some other relatively abstract symbolic system.⁷¹

Finally to witness the recognition of knowledge which can only be understood with and through the body, as an 'intelligence' is worthy of considerable celebration, but we would be missing the point if we thought that people who did not base their work on the acquisition of particular physical skills were necessarily excluded from this category, or

that dancers were capable of using only this type of intelligence, which Gardner labels the 'Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence.' It would seem to be more likely that for dancers to achieve the range of skills required, they should have potential in all the areas which Gardner describes; in fact his proposition is that, as individuals, we *do* have the capability to exhibit intelligence in all these forms, that in some people certain of them will be further developed than others, and that they appear as 'potentials' in the sense that other factors will determine the extent to which they are developed or used.

Some of these other factors have been described in detail by Claxton, in his chapter 'Learning to be in School,' and could be classified as emotional, motivational and sociocultural. He proposes that the multifaceted predicament that a lesson or class presents necessitates the development of more general strategies, as well as those purpose-built for learning, and these Claxton calls 'stances.' Although the situation of students at a vocational training institution is a vastly different one from that of the pupils at a secondary school, from which Claxton takes his examples, our students may exhibit similar symptoms to the ones described, especially when their motivation is waning.⁷²

Gardner also recognises the importance of factors external to the learning situation. He describes the crisis which can occur in young people's lives when knowledge that has, up until a certain point, been intuitive is replaced through formal training with the need to 'assess and classify everything according to a formal mode of analysis - to superimpose propositional knowledge upon figural intuitions'.⁷³ He takes a talented young musician as his example, but we may recognise the problems of many young dancers in this passage:

At a certain point [...] it becomes important for them to supplement their intuitive understanding with a more systematic knowledge of music lore and law. This bringing-to-consciousness of what was previously assumed (or ignored) can be unsettling for youngsters, particularly for ones who have depended simply upon their intuition, and who may have a resistance to propositional (linguistic or mathematical) characterizations of musical events. [...]

Up till the age of eight or nine, in a manner reminiscent of the young literary Sartre, the child proceeds on the basis of sheer talent and energy: he learns pieces readily because of his sensitive musical ear and memory,

gains applause for his technical skill, but essentially does not expend undue effort. A period of more sustained skill building commences around the age of nine or so, when the child must begin to practice seriously, even to the extent that it may interfere with his school and his friendships. This may, in fact, occasion an initial 'crisis' as the child starts to realize that other values may have to be suspended if his musical career is to be pursued. The second and more pivotal crisis occurs in early adolescence. In addition to confronting the clash between figural and formal ways of knowing, the youth must ask whether he actually wishes to devote his life to music.⁷⁴

This 'crisis' is one which many dancers experience as they begin a formal training. We often ask ourselves whether they have chosen the right profession, when we recognise their apparent lack of motivation, as it seems to us as though they have 'got their priorities wrong'; we may think that the transition from 'big fish in a little pond' to 'little fish in a big pond' is at the root of the problem, or we may even decide that they are lazy - but it may equally well be that the students are grappling for the first time, and to the best of their ability, with a complex and upsetting transition process similar to the one described above. Understanding the importance of this transition, as a major step in the development and training of the young dancer, may help us to guide them sensitively from one method of learning, based on intuition, to another, which is increasingly systematic and analytical, without losing the intuitive connection with themselves that they have previously experienced through their dancing.

Before continuing with a more detailed discussion of the ways in which an understanding of Gardner's theory of intelligences may fruitfully inform the dance teacher's work, it is important to note that Gardner himself has described his method of presentation as descriptive, allusive and speculative and that clearly his ideas remain unproven. He states that, 'Only time can tell whether the grouping [of intelligences] that I have proposed here has long-term validity',⁷⁵ and in a different context,

It is necessary to advance a hypothesis, or a theory, and then to test it. Only as the theory's strengths - and limitations - become known will the plausibility of the original postulation become evident.⁷⁶

It is particularly difficult then, to relate these same ideas to those of educational practice in vocational dance schools, with the expectation of arriving at some objective or factual 'truth':

The number of variables entailed in describing educational systems is so enormous that any hope of controlled experimentation, or of scientific modeling, may be suspended.⁷⁷

The thoughts that follow are therefore equally, and inevitably, speculative. Elliot Eisner, discussing the role of philosophy within American educational research, makes his view - one which I share - very clear:

Many appear to believe that it is better to leave the unanswerable questions and unsolvable problems alone and get down to brass tacks. I regard such attitudes as short-sighted. [...] Why neglect to examine them, even if their examination will never yield a single unassailable meaning?⁷⁸

It is in this spirit then, that the attempt will be made to bring Gardner's theories into the domain of dance teaching, in an effort to broaden our understanding of the people we are trying to reach.

The 'theory of multiple intelligences' proposes that there are six categories of intelligence: Linguistic, Musical, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic and Personal. Gardner does not suggest that these intelligences exist independently of one another, rather that they may interact with and inform each other. Yet, as suggested in Chapter One in relation to the intrinsic logic which dance possesses, each one has its own distinct characteristics, which may be recognised as 'logics', operating according to their own rules:

Each intelligence has its own ordering mechanisms, and the way that an intelligence performs its ordering reflects its own principles and its own preferred media.⁷⁹

(1) The Linguistic Intelligence

For the dance technique student, linguistic intelligence may be the least crucial to development. Dance, after all, exists as its 'own language,' and our ability to comprehend it does not depend entirely on our ability to verbalise our relationship to it, as previously argued; it would be logical if students were able to comprehend the work largely on its own terms. Yet there will be a vast amount of information, given in class, to which a student who does not have a good command of language will never gain access. They may be capable of compensating for this in other ways - if they have particularly well developed observation skills, for example, together with an intuitive sense of the movement; but there is bound to be some detailed and specific information needed, and yet unobtainable. Further, students whose language intelligence is not well developed might find the use of imagery confusing rather than helpful and would need to find other starting points for their imaginative journeys. Their lives as students would be very hard, but not impossible.

In terms of such students' relationships to the suggested teaching strategies, mentioned earlier in this chapter, there would need to be a greater proportion of teaching time spent outside class, in discussion and on a one-to-one basis, to ensure that they understood both the underlying philosophy of the class work, and the more detailed expectations of each strategy.

For example, if the teacher's overall plan for the week was to deal with fast changes of direction she or he could build the material in such a way that each exercise led towards the skills needed in order to move in that way. Students who were willing to take the preparatory work 'on trust' and to try to make sense of it in their own ways, without verbal information, could benefit from such careful structuring, relying heavily on the material's ability to 'speak for itself', as they sought to clarify its logic. Nevertheless there would be an increased benefit for the student who understood that the perhaps seemingly

unconnected and unnecessarily complex *tendu* exercise that had been given at the beginning of class was chosen because the clarity aimed for there, in the directions of the 'working leg,' was a pre-requisite skill for the work to be done later, travelling across the floor.

Without any discussion, or verbal clues, it might be hard for the student to understand why, in a class that was designed primarily around the notion of moving at speed, there was a long time spent on other issues such as *adage* work that concentrated on the problems associated with being 'on the legs'. For most of the members of the class a quick comment about the need to feel *centred* before moving at speed, and especially where fast changes of direction were concerned, would be sufficient to make the point. However, for the student who does not have good command of the language, such explanations would have to be made outside of class time.

This becomes a particularly crucial issue when students, who may be less readily assimilated into a group because of a lack of language skills, find themselves questioning their motivation. A sense of connection with the material of the class will assume an even greater importance in these circumstances; it is easier 'cheerfully to undertake imposed tasks' when you understand their place in the context of the overall intention. Similarly, the teacher's attitude as expressed in non-verbal ways during class would assume a far greater importance than might otherwise be the case.

(2) The Musical and Logical-Mathematical Intelligences

Gardner clearly separates 'musical' from 'logical-mathematical intelligence', but both are necessary for the dancer and need to be developed concurrently if she or he is to develop an understanding of all the varied ways in which music, or sound, can be used for dance. Musicality is widely accepted to be a vital quality in a dancer; it will be discussed here as the dancer's ability to understand and reveal her or his relationship to the music or sound

with which she or he dances, whatever that relationship might be. The range of possibilities here is broad. Dancers need to develop the ability clearly to connect their dancing to music in terms of rhythm, *phrasing* and quality, to co-exist with music, and yet not to ignore it (perhaps picking up and making connections with it at key musical moments), or to dance without reference to the music at all, working against, or in spite of, its influence.

It is not uncommon for dancers to hear or feel the *expressive* qualities in music, comprehending it in the sense that Gardner describes, and yet to have little understanding of its structures and the ways in which these can be harnessed for the dancer's use. We might then say that they had 'musical intelligence' but not the 'logical-mathematical' intelligence that would enable them to make the relationships between the music and the actions of the body clear.

Similarly, students are often able to dance with an understanding of the structures of a movement combination, demonstrating a clear relationship between their bodies' actions and the counts, or the beats of each bar of music with which they work, and yet seemingly not respond to the music's *expressive* qualities, that 'universally acknowledged connection between musical performance and the feeling life of persons'.⁸⁰ Then the 'mathematical intelligence' would be showing itself to be appropriately developed and manifest in rhythmic accuracy, whilst a 'musical intelligence' was less apparent.

The dancer who has developed both of these intelligences, alongside the 'personal intelligences' which will be discussed later, and of course the bodily intelligence which must be assumed, will have the ability to create the varied textures with their dancing which we may associate with *artistic* maturity. The logical intelligence, which enables them to be aligned with a rhythmic structure, may be recognised as the first strand - it seems to us to be thoroughly unsatisfactory if a dancer is incapable of being, at the very least, 'on the beat' when it is required. Musical intelligence, in its relationship to the

expressive or 'feeling' qualities, would provide the second strand, and be recognised as a sensitivity to the *phrasing*, timbre and 'spirit' of the music. A third strand, determined largely by the choices a dancer makes in terms of the *dynamics* of movement, and therefore closely related to the personality of the performer, completes the weave. The different ways in which a dancer threads these colours together makes their dancing richly textured, personal and 'intelligent'.

If they are to develop a real understanding of the relationship between their actions and the mathematical uses of music, dance students will need to pass, in logical progression, through stages which relate the body's actions to basic time structures. Unless they have an intuitive sense of *phrasing*, they will need to understand these structures fully, before they can progress to working on *phrasing* which goes over the bar-lines. The idea of separating the music into two strands, as Doris Humphrey reportedly did, imitating the metre with the legs and the melody with the upper body, may be a useful exercise towards analysing musical structure and training the ear to hear different aspects of its make-up, whilst maintaining a physical involvement.

When students do not have a deep understanding of rhythmic structure in relation to their movement, they may exhibit this by 'losing the counts' when the tempo changes, although they may be able to stay with the rhythm of the music for as long as the tempo remains constant. It is as if the music, being slower, is assumed to have more beats in it. In one sense of course it does - more seconds would have gone by, or more ticks of the metronome - but rhythm as in music, the number of beats between the beginning of one bar and the beginning of the next, has to be *felt* as an underlying pulse, or *understood* logically; the number of beats, remaining the same whatever speed is given, is comprehended by either an intelligence which is 'musical', or by one which is 'mathematical.'

In either case it would be useless to progress to complex rhythmic structures without such an understanding, otherwise the execution of these rhythms would not be founded in 'real' knowledge, and as such would be dictated by chance more than by understanding - diminishing both the student's confidence and the teacher's, who might doubt whether they will be able to retain a clear relationship with the beat. We recognise a dancer who can 'show' real understanding, often describing them as '*secure*' with the music, as if their knowledge were built on strong foundations. When we watch such a dancer we do not consider the possibility of their being 'off the music', rather it is as though they dictate the rhythm of the music from within their own body.

Heinrich Neuhaus, in *The Art of Piano Playing*, describes the distinction between metre and rhythm, comparing the former to the swinging of a pendulum or the ticking of a clock, and the latter to the pulse of a living organism - 'breathing, the waves of the sea, the swaying of a wheatfield'.⁸¹ Through his statement that metre is 'a particular case of rhythm - its mechanical regularity'⁸² we may understand that the logical-mathematical response to metre may enable us to comprehend rhythmic structures, but it is a musical intelligence that enables us to 'feel' a rhythm, as if internally.

The speeding up or slowing down of an exercise is revealing of many other facets of the students' understanding. If they 'lost the counts' we might ask whether or not the relationship to the music was understood, in either of the two ways described above, or whether the content of the movement material was sufficiently clear to them to enable them to alter its quality (as is frequently inevitable when the speed changes) while retaining the same physical intention. For example, if the intention is to reach forward with the back then that intention can be retained whatever the speed - but a slow reach and a swift reach have very different bodily sensations. Before making quick decisions as to the cause of the problem, we would need to discover which of these explanations was the appropriate one for the student in question; the effectiveness of our future planning

would depend on our ability to see beyond the student's 'failure' to the problem's root, whether it was a physical, logical or a musical one.

Developing the dance student's 'musical intelligence' is a rather different matter; the logical approach, befitting the development of logical-mathematical intelligence, will not be appropriate. Confining this discussion to means that are achievable within the dance class, a first and important step towards developing musical sensitivity must be to encourage the students to listen to the music which the accompanist plays for them, rather than to treat it as a back-cloth of sound, in front of which they move, without any real sense of a relationship with it. This is harder than it seems, as there are so many important things that the students are concerned with, from moment to moment, that they may increase their ability to concentrate partly by focusing inwards, to the point at which they find it extremely hard to be aware of the 'outside world' and therefore to hear the music except on a subliminal level.

For the student with a highly developed 'musical intelligence' this might not be problematic; their comprehension of the music will not depend on their ability to bring it into the foreground, but for the student who needs to develop such an intelligence, the stage of 'bringing-to-consciousness' will be an important one. To make this possible it will be necessary to make fewer demands on the students in terms of intellectual, physical or rhythmic complexity, in order that they should be confident enough with the movement material to be able to listen attentively to the music.

Once this becomes a habit it will be possible to make reference to the music, when appropriate, bringing aspects of it to the students' attention, so that the *phrasing*, the quality or the structure, may be brought into sharper focus. Lengthy discussions are clearly not appropriate in this context, but if we search for ways to connect thoughts about the issues discussed, for example the *phrasing*, to their movement equivalent, then we may use the dancer's bodily intelligence as a channel through which to increase their

musical understanding. We may not be able to help the student who does not already possess musical intelligence as a 'potential', but for those in whom this intelligence is merely dormant, the methods described can be fruitful.

The ways in which the dancer can exercise choice in terms of movement *dynamics*, and yet maintain a clear relationship to the music, will be partly determined by their understanding of the structures of the music with which they work. The shifting of physical accents within a movement *phrase*, together with the variations in quality of movement that the dancer may explore, all relate to the musician's use of *rubato*.

Neuhaus again:

I have frequently had occasion to tell my pupils when confronted by a rubato, that *rubare* is the Italian for stealing and if you steal time without returning it soon after, you are a thief; if you first accelerate the tempo, you must subsequently slow down; remain an honest man: restore balance and harmony...the greater the pianist's awareness of the rhythmic structure, the more freely, the more logically does he depart from it at times and thus the greater the intensity with which he conveys its powerful regulatory force.⁸³

As he states, it is important, in order to work towards a greater eventual freedom, to understand the basic rhythmic structures on which the *expressive* use of such freedom depends.

Other parallels exist, between the teaching of dance and that of music, and it can be helpful to explore these in an attempt to discover new ways to approach recurring problems. For example, Neuhaus describes the immature pianist's propensity to associate volume with speed, slowing down as the volume decreases and speeding up when the volume is increased. An easily recognisable equivalent in dance terms is for the student to slow their movement down as it becomes increasingly 'weighty', and a very common mistake is to imagine that to cut corners, or to perform the movement in a superficial way, will help to speed it up. In fact the reverse is true - to perform a dance *phrase* with full weight given to each movement will enable all subsequent moves to be initiated as if from

a sound base; we are more likely to be able to move quickly if our body's centre of gravity is close to the floor.

Whilst the musician must learn to disassociate speed and rhythm from volume, so the dancer can clarify the difference between speed, rhythm and the body's weight through the use of differing *tempi* for similar exercises, in order that habitual associations of certain movement qualities with particular *tempi*, or rhythms, are not formed. For example many students find it easier to 'suspend' a jump in the air if they use a syncopated rhythm in their preparatory steps before the leap. These kinds of physical and rhythmic connections, which make the movement much easier to perform, are often unconscious - it will then be a matter of working in order to separate the physical from the rhythmic, in order to make such future connections a matter of choice rather than of habit.

It may also be particularly useful on occasion, to slow down work which is often done at a faster speed, in order to focus on, and have time to appreciate fully, the details of a movement *phrase*. Many dance students find it hard to switch from one tempo to another, taking a long time to sense the 'spirit' of one tempo and the 'feel' of the quality of the whole; then it will take proportionately more time to learn to switch swiftly from one to another, in a manner which might at first feel more like a crude edit than a gradual acceleration or deceleration.

Further, changing tempi and exploration of all the different ways in which this can be done in movement, as well as with movement in relation to the music, are an important part of the dancer's *expressive* tool-kit: 'the emotional content and significance of a gradual or a sudden effect is entirely different'.⁸⁴ Equally important are the stillnesses in movement and these need to be focused upon as a means of clarifying the movement material and *focusing* differently on the preceding and following moments; like the

pauses in music they are a significant part of the dance material. Again, awareness of their musical equivalent may serve to develop the students' understanding:

My advice to pupils: silence, pauses, etc., should be heard; they, too, are music. The act of listening to music should not be interrupted for a single second. Then everything will be convincing and true.⁸⁵

Provided that there are logical *connections* to be made, inherent in the material that we present, dancers whose 'logical intelligence' is developed will be able to think through the information that they acquire from various sources during the class, and are likely to be able to apply such knowledge in related situations - understood to be so related because of their *logical connection*. Thus they will expand their existing theories, making them increasingly versatile by using them in related and yet different situations; they will also develop the confidence to test them, experimenting with similar ideas in circumstances which we do not direct. It is unlikely that they would have problems in terms of comprehension of the material's logic as perceived through its structure, once a few clues as to possible methods of analysis have been given.

Those students who do not respond to verbal analysis of the material, but rather come to understand its logic through the movement itself, may be recognised as the ones who prefer to 'get on with it' - not asking questions prior to trying it out for themselves. We may help such students to develop their 'logical intelligence', through the application of the teaching strategies described above. The first 'logic' to be comprehended will be that of the relationship of the material to the individual, and once this is understood the students can be encouraged to treat any other dance material that they encounter in the same way. Having demonstrated a sequence of movement that the students will subsequently work on for themselves, we may emphasise the requirement that the individual should consider both their understanding of the movement combination and the work to be undertaken through it, by means of the kinds of questions that we ask.

For example,

"Do you need to see that again?"

"Do you need more information?"

"Have you got the rhythm?"

"Can you think about the changes of *dynamics*, as you do this?" or

"Could you try to show the *phrasing* exactly as I did it?" or

"Can you 'play' with the *phrasing*, but make sure that you finish, in (x) position, by the end of the eighth bar?"

These sorts of question, asked regularly but not repetitively, can serve to remind the students of the kinds of things that they can usefully be thinking of as they learn the basic pattern of an exercise, prior to doing it; they can help to reduce the likelihood of beginning to dance without thinking about what it is that they are doing, and why. On the other hand, because in most instances no specific answer is required, the student must take responsibility for the way in which they respond to the questions.

As they come to understand that they have choices to make, and to take responsibility for, they may be better able to do so if they are able to keep such choices and their possible repercussions in mind. Their logical thought patterns will aid them in the deductions that they try to make; through self-directed experiments in making the material 'personal,' and regular reminders, in the early stages of working in this way, they should build up habits of 'self-checking' and using that 'inner voice' which asks, "...will this work, if I use the same amount of impetus again?", or "...if (x) was effective in all those different situations, why doesn't it work now?"

Similar teacher-directed logical steps towards the discovery of relevant answers are described in detail by Mosston and Ashworth, who also point out that,

Psychologists believe that when this process is employed frequently and purposefully, the learner will begin to ask the same questions by himself

or herself whenever a new situation arises; the learner will be able to transfer this thinking and discovery process.⁸⁶

The 'musical intelligence' may also help the students in their individual journeys, especially in terms of experimentation with different qualities of movement. Dancers who are lucky enough to work with musicians as accompanists know how inspirational their contribution can be. Much of the drudgery of repetitive or simply strenuous exercises is removed, and a sense of vitality can be restored to a flagging spirit. The clarity of structure or *phrasing* that the musician can emphasise, especially when having worked with the same teacher for a long time, may stand as an example to those who can hear it. The majority of musicians are at a different level of maturity in relation to their own work, from that of the student, and are able to underline the teacher's points whilst adding their personal interpretations. We may use their example, therefore, to clarify similar choices that we encourage the students to make, particularly in terms of movement *dynamics*. It should be recognised that it will be harder for those who are not intrinsically musical to assimilate information from this source, and it is inevitable that they will take longer to feel sufficiently *secure* with the music to 'play' with it, as discussed above, in relation to *rubato* playing.

(4) The Spatial Intelligence

Gardner's 'Spatial Intelligence' is one which dancers also need, in order to develop an awareness of their relationship to the space around them, their place in a spatial relationship which encompasses others (from the simplest of arrangements in class, when students are normally equidistant from each other in lines to the complex patterns that they may be part of in a piece of choreography) and their continuing awareness of this relationship when patterns shift in space, as the dancers move. These are all aspects of work which can be developed in the studio on a daily basis, especially if we build into our travelling combinations the requirement that the students should interact with each other.

This may be done very simply at first, perhaps only through their *focus* on a partner at 'key' points in the *phrase*; later students might be asked to use the material differently in order to overlap with each other, taking it in turns to inhabit the same area of space; later still they might be expected to move around each other while they are dancing, sometimes in unison and sometimes in canon, giving the added complication of unpredictability to each student's sense of where the other is likely to be, at any given time.⁸⁷

Phrases of movement which have direction changes as their underlying theme provide a way for students to work on similar problems as individuals. Such movement combinations may then also be used in ways which demand an awareness of the students' spatial relationship to each other. Again it is possible to build tasks with a range of complexity, from the simplest to the most complex of possibilities, and therefore to work on the same theme, at appropriately different levels.

We may recognise a highly developed spatial sense in the behaviour of students who try to come to grips with a travelling combination firstly by understanding where it 'goes to' in spatial terms before they work on clarifying the rhythm or even the physical details of the movement material. Conversely, it will be hard for the student who does not have a developed sense of their relationship to the space around them and to the other dancers who inhabit that space with them, to clarify the material in this very important dimension. As a means of helping those who do not naturally work in this way, relatively simple movement combinations which repeatedly shift their directions in space will be particularly useful. When the movement material is simplified, such students can reasonably be encouraged to work initially on the spatial aspects of the phrase, clarifying other details later on, and as their confidence develops they may choose to concentrate on this aspect of the work, without being directed to do so.⁸⁸

The relationship between this intelligence and the first teaching strategy, that of encouraging the development of individual relationships with the material, is a particularly important one, as dancers who understand how to work in ways that are 'truthful' to their own bodies also know that this may result in their movements having a different bodily shape from that of their peers, and a different orientation in space.⁸⁹

(5) The Personal Intelligences

It is the man who is fully and at all times himself who has attained the ultimate creative freedom.⁹⁰

Gardner's 'Personal Intelligences' are described as the 'Intrapersonal' and the 'Interpersonal':

On the one side, there is the development of the internal aspects of a person. The core capacity at work here is *access to one's own feeling life* - one's range of affects or emotions: the capacity instantly to effect discriminations among these feelings and, eventually, to label them, to enmesh them in symbolic codes, to draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behavior. In its most primitive form, the intrapersonal intelligence amounts to little more than the capacity to distinguish a feeling of pleasure from one of pain and, on the basis of such discrimination, to become more involved in or to withdraw from a situation. At its most advanced level, intrapersonal knowledge allows one to detect and to symbolize complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings. One finds this form of intelligence developed in the novelist (like Proust) who can write introspectively about feelings, in the patient (or the therapist) who comes to attain a deep knowledge of his own feeling life, in the wise elder who draws upon his own wealth of inner experiences in order to advise members of his community.⁹¹

The development of such an intelligence will be profoundly important to student dancers who attempt to make sense of the work in which they are involved in individual ways, connecting their feelings in terms of physical sensation, whilst moving, and their feelings about themselves and their dancing, whilst they are training.

The Interpersonal, on the other hand, is described as turning outward, to other individuals:

The core capacity here is *the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals* and, in particular, among their moods,

temperaments, motivations, and intentions. [...] We see highly developed forms of interpersonal intelligence in political and religious leaders (a Mahatma Gandhi or a Lyndon Johnson), in skilled parents and teachers, and in individuals enrolled in the helping professions, be they therapists, counselors (sic), or shamans.⁹²

Gardner suggests that the two personal intelligences are intimately intermingled in any culture, and that neither may be developed without the other. Further, that it may be appropriate to think of them as,

a more integrated form of intelligence [...] an overall metaphor for the rest of the person, and one that can, as part of its 'duties', come to understand and to modulate an individual's other capacities.⁹³

In this context a 'sense of self' is described as the relationship which each individual builds, between their 'inner feelings' and their responses to other people. The bringing together of these two sets of feelings, as each set matures, is seen as the growing sense of identity.

As Gardner points out, different cultures express their attitudes to the sense of self in different ways:

The Japanese [...] cherish and dignify *jikkan* - 'real and direct' feelings - and revere the person attuned to his own *jikkan*. Proceeding along a rather different path, the Navajos place a special premium on the ability to be a good listener. Keen listening is seen as the key to proper decision making; those who can listen well are considered to have special gifts.⁹⁴

He observes that in 'modern secular schools' interpersonal intelligence as a requirement has been reduced in response to the diminishing value placed on the individual's ability to get along with others in our Western culture. Conversely the individual need to monitor and evaluate our own reactions, and to plan our own courses of study, has increased the requirement to develop intrapersonal intelligence. This is an imbalance that dance teaching can redress through the expectation that students will work not only on their own bodies but also in relationship to their peers in every technique class, through working on spatial relationships as previously discussed, or by such means as maintaining the rhythm of a movement phrase performed in unison, without or against musical

accompaniment. These relationships will be developed further in the context of other physically based work, whether choreography, improvisation or performance, ensuring that the students become increasingly sensitive to the feelings and the contributions of others, as they develop their own sense of self-worth.

The fourth strategy (concerned directly with teachers' attitudes to students) represents the most obvious way in which the teacher may influence the students' sense of self-worth. However the philosophy underpinning all of the four teaching strategies discussed above, is one of respect for the individual; their appropriate application is crucially important to the students' developing self-esteem. Claxton discusses some further issues involved in attempting to enhance this sense of self:

There is much talk in education today about the importance of establishing or enhancing 'good self-esteem'. [...] This can mean two quite different things. One view is to leave the implicit theories where they are and to try to ensure that children are shielded from experiences which conflict with them. If pupils are upset by failure, give them a special diet of constant success, for instance. The trouble with this approach, as Dweck has shown, is that it is like making sure that someone who is agoraphobic has a nice house and plenty of food in the freezer. Constant success does nothing for your ability to cope with the inevitable, eventual, failure. In fact it may well make you even less able to keep your cool. A good measure of well-intentioned niceness does not cure the problem; at best it just postpones it, and at worst it exacerbates it. The more radical way to enhance self-esteem is to tackle the underlying beliefs which are rendering esteem vulnerable in the first place, by helping - training, if necessary - pupils to interpret their experience differently.⁹⁵

He goes on to describe Carol Dweck's experiments with eight to thirteen-year-old children who were encouraged through training to read a failure as a signal that they should have tried harder, rather than to assume that it was due to a lack of ability. This resulted in failure being seen as '(1) less of an attack on their self-worth, and (2) something they could actually do something about (by 'trying')'.⁹⁶ Bearing this in mind, careful guidance that we give to our students should ensure that they have a clear idea as to the specific nature of the work that will lead them towards their goals; then their effort, rather than being generalised, will increasingly relate to the details of the movement material, so that their 'trying' will be specific and appropriate as well as empowering.

In view of her findings, it would seem all the more important to give due consideration to the pace of the class, as well as to its content. The material cannot always be within the students' grasp, otherwise no real development would be possible, but the amount of demanding work (which the students might 'expect' not to achieve immediately) should be carefully balanced against that which is more readily manageable, in order that the dancer is encouraged to work both towards goals which are possible to achieve in the short term and those that are bound to require a longer time span. If discussions between teacher and student concentrate on the student's choice of strategies and their degrees of success, together with alternatives which may be more profitable, the students may be educated in the belief that they can affect their own development. Without being over-protective of their sense of self-worth, which might lead the teacher to be unrealistically positive about their progress - therefore not preparing them well for possible future failures - the teacher may ensure that they do feel empowered to meet the challenges that are given to them, through honest and practically helpful means.⁹⁷

Following on from this sense of increased control of their own learning, the students are more likely to develop the ability to make choices whilst they are dancing, both about their approach to the learning situation and about what they choose to make visible, in terms of *dynamics* or quality, emphasis of weight, *focus*, and so on. Then movement will be seen less often as something that seems to happen *to* them, and more often as something which happens *because of*, or is *made more expressive by* them.

Part of this *expressiveness* may be understood as an 'intelligence' at work - that the dancer is trying to tell something, to reveal, to make known. The audience is invited in, and wants to listen, when there is a sense that the dancer has something individual to say. It is vital therefore that, with Penrod, we look for ways in which to 'give the students a sense of their own identity, self-confirmation, and confidence to speak with their own voice'.⁹⁸ This self-confidence will come partly from the depth of the dancers' understanding of the movement material itself, and partly from a self-assurance which is bound to build when

students are given the opportunity to take control of their own learning. To take proper responsibility for this control only becomes a possibility, however, when the students' maturity matches the opportunities that they are given; we should ensure that we do not add to their levels of stress by expecting them to take on aspects of decision-making for which they are not prepared.

For example, to give the students choices, as described in the first strategy, would seem to be a good way to encourage in them feelings of control and self-respect, however this will only be the case if such choices are ones which the students are capable of making with intelligence. The point of the strategy will be entirely lost if students do not have sufficient information at their disposal to inform their decision processes appropriately. For instance, it would not be a useful application of this strategy to ask students which dance techniques they wanted to study at a stage when they were not sufficiently educated to know one technique, its distinctive characteristics, strengths and benefits, from another. The choices given need to be limited, and carefully chosen.

Claxton describes a possible further impediment to the development of self-confidence when he discusses the implicit theories, 'buried in many people's belief systems' of 'what it means to be a mature, worthwhile person' - belief systems which we will need to encourage the students to dismantle if they are to be willing to give up known ways of working, and to risk feeling 'wrong':

1. Worthwhile people do not make mistakes. Worth is contingent on competence. Incompetence is unworthy and must be paid for with guilt, shame or a loss of self-esteem.
2. Worthwhile people always know what is going on. Worth is contingent on clarity. Confusion and feeling out of control are unworthy and should be paid for with a loss of self-esteem.
3. Worthwhile people live up to, and within, their images of themselves. Worth is contingent on consistency. Acting unpredictably, out of character or in defiance of one's precedents and principles is unworthy and must be paid for with a loss of self-esteem.
4. Worthwhile people do not feel anxious, apprehensive, fraught or fragile. Worth is contingent on feeling cool, calm and collected. Feeling nervous, overwhelmed or ill-tempered should be paid for with a loss of self-esteem.⁹⁹

He goes on to explain that the person who is 'subject to these unconscious programming instructions' may feel threatened by situations which, to others, may be challenging or exciting.

Instead of being a precarious and difficult transition from a limited competence to an expanded one, the whole process can also come to feel like an assault on one's belief in oneself. People feel threatened by learning, and the rational response to perceived threat, for people as for animals, is defence. Instead of dealing with the unknown by engaging with it and mastering it (choosing a learning strategy), the threatened person judges the situation too dangerous to explore, and opts instead for a strategy that is designed to preserve or maintain what they already know, or can do, or are.¹⁰⁰

We need to be aware of the different ways in which students respond to feelings of vulnerability or excitement as they approach new situations. Dance training is inevitably a stressful process and some individuals cope very well under stress. However it will be particularly important for those who find it harder to operate in such circumstances to build their self-confidence, and one effective way in which we can help them to do this will be to find ways to encourage them to accept that positive progress does not preclude feelings of fear of failure, of apprehension, or lack of control.

Learning to deal with stress, rather than to avoid it, will help students to deal with performance nerves and with the inevitable difficult times when the lack of work opportunities challenges a positive sense of self-worth. It may reduce the likelihood of stress-related injuries, or the instances of 'opting out' which occur when students on the verge of completing their training or of a major opportunity of some kind have injuries which prevent them from facing the audition circuit or the performance situation which would put their abilities to the ultimate test. They will be better prepared to fulfill the expectation that all dancers involved in contemporary dance are capable of being soloists, and to collaborate with choreographers whose work explores the extremities in terms of physical possibilities. If we are successful in this, there may be positive repercussions for the students as people, as well as as dancers.

Penelope Hanstein states,

Meaningful engagement with dance works, whether as maker or perceiver, requires a willingness to explore new territory, a tolerance for ambiguity, and a commitment to an active rather than passive encounter.¹⁰¹

Later she points to the wider benefits of learning in this way:

Dance is as much an intellectual pursuit as it is a physical one. A dance education which concerns itself with critical and imaginative ways of seeing and opening up the space for new ideas will provide students with a viable and relevant means of reckoning with a changing world.¹⁰²

Through such an education and training, students will hopefully come to a better understanding of themselves, as well as of the world around them. They will have the 'tools' necessary to deal with a changing world, but they will also have a greater sense of themselves within it and are more likely to be able to define what their *artistic* choices might be.

It is common, at the time of writing, for freelance dancers to work with many different choreographers, moving from one company to another almost from month to month. Given that the dancer's contribution to the finished work helps to define it, as has previously been discussed, it is not surprising that much new work does not manage to retain an individual sense of identity. It would be easy to blame this state of affairs on the lack of funding that most small companies have to contend with, and thereby to make an important political point, but the economic dimension is only one of the reasons why dancers move from company to company, and from choreographer to choreographer; equally important is the *artistic* choice that they make in so doing. Many students finish their training without a sense of their *artistic* or professional aim or even where it is that they might 'fit in'. By helping them towards a more confident sense of themselves, we may also help them towards a clearer understanding of their own *artistic* viewpoint and towards increased courage in the search for others who share their views, eventually enabling them to define the environment in which they will discover their own *artistic* truths.

Through these training methods, the students' internal motivation will assume paramount importance, and we may avoid the trap of doing so much for our students that we deprive them of opportunities for *creative* growth. As Buckroyd states,

Many teachers take entire responsibility for what goes on in the studio: for energising the class; for motivating the students; for the pace of learning as well as for every scrap of instruction and information. The teacher takes responsibility for driving the class on to the ever greater efforts demanded by the world of professional dance. Yet this kind of giving is exhausting to the teacher. It can also give so much that it can feel to a student like oppression and persecution to be on the receiving end of it. Alternatively this kind of pushing from the teacher can produce a kind of frenzy among the students, a high that enables them to overperform on a blast of adrenalin. It can be a kind of seduction. Yet the sober fact is that no professional dancer can rely on that kind of pushing. In the real world dancers have to motivate themselves, in season and out of season. If they do not have that kind of inner drive then it is best to find out sooner rather than later. Some students need to be allowed to fail through lack of commitment rather than be pressured to succeed on the strength of the teacher's energy and passion.¹⁰³

Later she warns of the possible repercussions of a teaching and learning environment which does not encourage the students in their development towards autonomy:

Some of our students will surrender all of their will and initiative to us. But mostly we have an inexorable trend to emotional growth and we will hate and despise those who hold us back. When teachers use their power to control and coerce they earn the hatred and resentment of their students. When they use their energy to seduce, they create dependency (sic). These dynamics produce a classroom atmosphere of slavish idolatry or poisonous loathing. In either case the work of teaching and learning dance is subordinated to the working out of interpersonal relations and so the creative opportunities are lost.¹⁰⁴

(6) The Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

Although it is increasingly often the case that students are introduced to dance through academic study of the subject, if they want to become dancers they will need, first and foremost, to have a genuine interest in, and potential for movement. This potential, recognisable even when dancers have very little previous training, is the root from which all other aspects of their dancing can grow, and possession of it must be assumed in any discussion of the training of dance students in vocational institutions.

This potential may be recognised in the dancer who clearly demonstrates a physical vitality: pleasure in working the muscles deeply and in using space with energy - characteristics which depend, to a large extent, on physical health and fitness. Such health will also be a contributory factor in determining the degree of resilience in the muscles, thereby affecting the dancer's ability to move in a co-ordinated way, and the level of strength and stamina that is exhibited by the body in motion.

Whilst the bodily intelligence, as described by Gardner, goes further than the concept of physical vitality or fitness, beyond descriptions in terms of the execution of motor actions, or 'a dizzying variety of neural and muscular components in a highly differentiated and integrated fashion' to include the 'intelligent use of the body,' in ways which underline the arguments of this paper, he also recognises that it is usually the

concrete and physical aspects of dancing, the use of the body in all kinds of unusual but satisfying ways, that serve initially to attract an individual to the dance.¹⁰⁵

This attraction is often manifest in a physical curiosity for movement, its *dynamics*, shape or *expressive* qualities, and is recognisable in inexperienced students long before they are able to perform the movement with anything approaching expertise. It is different from an intellectual curiosity and results in the students exhibiting such a seemingly insatiable appetite for movement that it is commonly called a 'hunger'. It is as if the student wants literally to eat their movement experiences - to make them a part of themselves.

Gardner's description of bodily intelligence suits the athlete as well as the dancer, but he too recognises that there are crucial differences between the dancer's 'appetite' and the appetite exhibited by athletes, who also use their bodies with intelligence: differences which relate to the *expressive* or *artistic* qualities of dance. Buckroyd has noted the fact that a large proportion of dancers do not seem to be interested in any form of physical activity other than dance, rather they are attracted to the dance precisely because of the *creative* potential it contains - that 'use of the body in all kinds of unusual and satisfying

ways'. Awareness of this should ensure that the different intentions of the movement material, separating the dancer from the athlete, are maintained in the training process and that every class has elements within it which allow for the expression of individual creativity.

Whilst acknowledging that there is a hierarchy of necessary intelligences for the dancer, at the summit of which must be the Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence, no performance can come about simply through the exercise of a single intelligence, and in fact *all* of the other intelligences described by Gardner may be developed by the dance student. In combination and with differing emphases, they contribute to the personality that is eventually revealed on stage. Perhaps it is because all aspects of the individual may be developed through dance in a uniquely satisfying way that it contains the potential for us to feel increasingly 'alive',

when we feel connected up to ourselves and the rest of creation; when we experience life with a colour and intensity that is not present all of the time.¹⁰⁶

Communication

Having discussed teaching and learning strategies, it remains only to underline the point that it will be only when the two are successfully brought together that the goal may be achieved. If it is understood that sources of conflict can arise when students and teachers do not share the same goals or disagree about how to achieve an agreed goal then the importance of communication between students and faculty is further emphasised.

The range of dance courses is much broader than in the past and long-term aims can now more readily be matched to appropriate course choices. We can therefore reasonably assume that students embarking on a dance course, being cognisant of its overall structure, focus and philosophy, will have chosen their courses because they share the

same views on dance as the institution in question, or because they wish to emulate the dancers who have been trained there in the past. The detailed training procedures may not be understood in advance, however, and methodology is rarely discussed. Therefore the possibilities for mis-matching of goals and methods abound.

When students begin a training course following on directly from their school life, where they may have experienced the kind of teaching that does not involve negotiation, nor the sense that their opinions are sought or valued, it is especially common for them to react adversely to teaching methods which rely heavily on the assumption that students will, for the majority of the time, do what they are told. They feel mature and they do not expect, or want, to be patronised as they look forward to being treated finally as adults. For older students who feel that they have long since left such learning situations behind them, perhaps having been working or studying on other further education courses prior to beginning their dance training, this kind of a situation is equally difficult. While dance teachers, again with the broad picture in mind, may have assessed the value of a limited time span given over to repetitive, simple exercises which lead towards a particular interim goal, they may find that they have forfeited such students' willingness to participate unless they can discuss their methods and make the value of them understood.

Equally common is the opposite state of affairs: perhaps the students have chosen a training course on the basis of its reputation, believing that if they 'put themselves in the hands of the teachers' they will be trained well. Such students are expecting to be told what to do, and can become angry when they realise that their questions are not always answered clearly or, even more unsettling, that they are told there is no single, 'correct' answer. They do not want to experiment and explore - they feel that there must be a formula of some sort, and they expect to be told what it is.

This situation poses a real dilemma. The teacher may want to encourage the students to take responsibility for their own training, believing that their self-esteem will thereby be

enhanced, and that respect for them as individuals is shown by so doing. Meanwhile the students want to be told what to do, sometimes implying that the teacher does not know her or his job if they do not give them sufficient direction. Such students are simply not ready to take the responsibility that is offered.

All such problems can be dealt with although not always avoided if the teacher decides on the goals and key aims and matches appropriate teaching methods to those goals, taking account of the students' starting points and chosen learning strategies. It is important that the teacher communicates adequately with the students, in order to minimise the kinds of mis-matching described above.

Because of the nature of physical activity, the teacher is naturally aware when students are not able to work with the material that is set - although as previously suggested the reasons for this cannot be presumed. In fact any lack of comprehension is usually immediately apparent because it is very difficult for the dance student to 'pretend' to work in ways which might be possible in other subject areas. Although this puts the dance teacher in an advantageous position it is impossible to know in detail what the students are thinking. To an extent their comprehension of the work is manifest in the way in which they perform it; just as the logic of the movement may be understood by them in purely physical terms, so the teacher may recognise that understanding also without words. But their detailed thought processes, which can usefully have an influence on the teacher's future planning, can only be understood through discussion.

Teaching is bound to be most effective when the teacher and the learner are engaged together in the shared experience of working towards an agreed goal, but experience suggests that dance teaching is rarely neat and tidy, and that many factors to do with personality and motivation will alter the teaching plan. The teacher may spend a great deal of time and effort in planning classes and in choosing appropriate strategies, but however thoughtfully plans are laid, the teacher cannot dictate the ways in which material

will be interpreted. But this is as it should be; clearly the teacher does not want to tell the students what or how to think, or to clone physical mannerisms. To recognise that the teacher does not have ultimate control over the students' learning processes, is not to assume that the situation is necessarily a negative one.

The teacher may, for example, set an exercise close to the beginning of the class which is well within the capabilities of all the students present. In the teacher's mind its purpose might be to reinforce some physical patterns that had been introduced the day before, while giving the students the opportunity to warm their bodies thoroughly without having to think too deeply about what they were doing. The teacher might have a particularly complex exercise in mind, to follow the one in question, and therefore decide on this undemanding example, which would nevertheless benefit the student, reinforcing ideas that had already been explored.

In the teacher's planning such an exercise would come under the heading of repetition, but some students might receive it as an ideal opportunity to let their *imagination*s fly whilst they are not being overstretched, searching for sensations that they can relate to those of other movement situations, making *connections* in their minds with the material that they dealt with in the previous class, or imagining how they would restructure the exercise if they were teaching. In fact accurate replication of the movement given might well be the furthest thing from their minds as they turn an exercise which was designed under the heading of 'reproduction of the known' into a *creative* journey of their own. As previously suggested, this does not necessarily constitute a problem, although it might do so if the workings of the *creative* mind were to stray so far away that the student was unaware of physical 'mistakes' that they began to make.

It is important that we recognise that when students move within the course of one day, between a number of different teachers, methodologies and sets of expectations, the requirement upon them to be adaptable and to shift their focus from one extreme to

another, in terms of learning styles, is considerable. We may help them in the ability to understand the need for different methods and to adapt with ease from one to another, if we take the time to explain, with clarity, the philosophy underpinning each one.

As previously suggested, teaching methods inevitably reflect the teacher's attitudes. Therefore, and particularly because teachers teach by example, it is important to show that they are open to change, to 'put themselves on the line', if they expect the students to do so - realising that unless they are prepared to do this mentally, they will probably never be similarly *courageous* physically. Teachers should be asking, continually, what their goals are, whether or not they are appropriate ones, and questioning whether the physical material that they make is helping students to reach them. Having checked that certain movement combinations are not being given simply out of habit, teachers should go on to ensure that the students' changing levels of understanding, psychological needs, or indeed other important factors, continue to be taken into account.

Finally, having concentrated on the individual in terms of personality, 'intelligences', motivation and attitudes to the learning process, it is important that the teacher also considers the powerful effects of the dynamics of the group. It is, after all, a relatively small amount of time that is spent with students on a one-to-one basis, as compared to the amount of time with the class as a whole. Because teaching is about relationships as much as it is about subject matter, the teacher must be willing to experiment until she or he finds a way of working which seems to be beneficial for the group as well as for the individuals within it. If the teacher works at the relationships within the class, as well as with the physical material and teaching methodologies, then the challenges, the excitement of new discoveries, the satisfaction gained from reaching people in new ways, through the work, will be mutually advantageous and stimulating for both teachers and learners alike.

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- 4 Detailed teaching notes referring to the physical progression of work in daily classes for ten weeks are given as an example of a response to these and similar points in Appendix B.
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- 33 Claxton, *ibid*, p. 54.
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- 43 See Appendix D. These questionnaires were given to a group of students at London Contemporary Dance School. The questions were set with a view to encouraging the students to set personal goals for their term's work and with the intention of discussing these aims further during individual interviews.
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- 70 Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, p. 91.
- 71 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 208.
- 72 The relationship between learning strategies and other influences (emotional, motivational and sociocultural) is recognised as a vast and important topic which cannot be adequately addressed within the context of this paper. The reader is referred to the following works:
Dennis Child, *Psychology and the Teacher*, 4th edn (London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973);
Carol Dweck, 'Motivational Processes Affecting Learning', *American Psychologist*, 41 (1986), 1040 - 48;
Dweck, C.S. and Leggett, E. 'A Social - cognitive approach to Motivation and Personality',

Psychological Review, 95 (1988), 256 - 73; Hamachek, D. *Encounters with the Self*, 3rd edn (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1987).

73 Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, p. 111.

74 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 111 - 12.

75 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 168.

76 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 59.

77 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 332.

78 Elliot Eisner, *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Enquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice* (New York: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 4-5.

79 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 169.

80 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 124.

81 Neuhaus, *ibid*, p. 30.

82 Neuhaus, *ibid*, p. 30 (footnote 1).

83 Neuhaus, *ibid*, p. 31.

84 Neuhaus, *ibid*, p. 38.

85 Neuhaus, *ibid*, p. 40.

86 Mosston and Ashworth, *Teaching Physical Education*, p. 181.

87 See Video reference [1].

88 See Video reference [2].

89 See Chapter Three: Adapting the material for different body types.

90 Lamb and Watson, *Body Code*, p. 116.

91 Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, *ibid*, pp. 239 - 40.

92 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 240.

93 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 276.

94 Gardner, *ibid*, p. 274.

95 Claxton, *Teaching to Learn*, p. 139.

96 Claxton, *ibid*, p. 140.

97 Further discussion of the importance of pace will be found in Chapter Three.

98 Penrod, 'Teaching Beyond Technique', *ibid*, p. 15.

99 Claxton, *ibid*, p. 137.

100 Claxton, *ibid*, p. 137.

101 Hanstein, 'Educating for the Future: A Post-Modern Paradigm for Dance Education', *JOPERD*, May/June 1990, 56 - 58 (p. 57).

102 Hanstein, *ibid*, p. 57.

103 Julia Buckroyd, 'The Teaching of Dance', *Dancing Times*, 78 no. 931 (1988), 647 - 49 (p. 649).

104 Buckroyd, *ibid*, p. 649.

105 Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, *ibid*, p. 225.

106 Buckroyd, 'Step Lively There!', *Dancing Times*, 77 no. 913 (1986), p. 45.

Chapter 3

Planning the class material

Introduction

If we owe any duty at all to the future - and this after all is the whole meaning and implication of educating the young - then it is our duty to work for the continued progress of the race in sensibility, feeling and intelligence, rather than to look only for what is expected in the short term to be the most profitable in material benefits.¹

Osborne reminds us that as teachers we have two options available to us that relate to the world at large and our attitudes to *life in general*. *These are important points to consider* as we plan the class work that we will use as the basis for our physical explorations. We may choose to train our students in preparation for the work which is currently being made, in the hope that they will therefore be more employable within the profession as we recognise or comprehend it, but if we do this we may have a problem: seeking to prepare our students for the profession, we may find that by the time they have graduated, the profession has moved on; different demands are made of dancers and different skills required.

Alternatively, we may choose to take a risk in terms of foreseeable 'material benefits', educating the mind and *imagination* as well as the body in ways which will help our students to shape the dance of the future; however if we choose this option, our task is no less difficult. How can we prepare students for either a range of work, or for work that does not yet exist if, in fact, we do not know exactly what it is we are aiming for? What underlying logic will be relevant to our students as they prepare to work with artists whose concerns have not yet been expressed?

If we look to the tried and tested techniques of the choreographer-teachers who have, in the past, developed their own vocabularies and methodologies and trained dancers to meet the specific needs of their own work, I propose that we will find principles of

movement that are enduring and that will continue to be relevant as part of a training programme. They have contributed vast amounts to the wealth of knowledge that now exists concerning dance training. The areas of particular interest that they were concerned to explore are clearly reflected in the techniques that they developed and as such provide inspiring starting points.

Mark Morris says,

There are four different dance techniques - ballet, in several different flavors, Humphrey/Limón, Graham, and Cunningham and that's it. There aren't any others.²

In his opinion "the makers of those techniques worked out, [...] certain truths about dance that do not need to be reworked out."³

Whilst agreeing with Morris's assessment of the value of these techniques, to rely on them and them alone for the future is to deny the possibility of deepening our pool of knowledge and of propagating different species of *truth* within it. If a *truth* in the context of technical dance training is accepted to be both a guiding principle or key concept and an idea of immediate and lasting value, then we have a responsibility not only to pass on whatever *truths* we have inherited, but also to teach in such a way that students are encouraged to search for their own. Jane Dudley, talking to the students on her course *How to Teach at The Place* during the Autumn of 1976 enjoined them, "Teach from what you know". Her suggestion was not to rely on what is already known, implying no growth or personal input, but to use existing knowledge as a base from which to move out in new and *imaginative* ways, keeping the class work fresh and relevant and retaining the potential for positive change.

The critic Nicholas Dromgoole, limiting the list of useful dance techniques still further than Morris, has frequently implied that only those who are ballet trained are capable of adapting successfully to any other dance style.⁴ He is perhaps the most vociferous of the

advocates of a method which involves using the ballet technique as a 'base line', but by no means the only advocate of such a system.

Joan Acocella, in her book *Mark Morris* describes Morris' conversation with an interviewer in Belgium, during which he said, "We use ballet as a sort of Latin". Acocella explains:

in other words, not as a spoken language but as a substructure. [...] Ballet is the most precise and articulate of Western dance forms, and the whole trend of Morris's modern dance choreography in recent years has been toward greater precision.⁵

It is clear by her description of the concerns underlying Morris's work, that for him to use ballet in this way is a thoroughly logical decision: the technique and his work share the same logic. But this is rare in the contemporary dance world. One of the principal aims of the modern dance has been to challenge values expressed by the ballet, and it is unlikely that many contemporary choreographers working today would describe their philosophies in terms of shared ideas with such an established, academic movement vocabulary.

Practical considerations, however, lead to the use of ballet in a range of contexts which appear to contradict this view. Auditions for a great many contemporary companies involve a ballet class as their starting point, either implying a basic knowledge of the technique as a pre-requisite for entry to the company in question, or recognition of the continuing use of ballet in most training programmes, leading to the assumption that the ballet vocabulary provides a language which is commonly understood. It is also the case that many professional dancers working in this country take regular ballet classes as their basic training programme. While this is often in the regrettable absence of a company class which might relate more closely to the ideas of the choreographers with whom they are working, it may also be the simplest solution to the problem of finding some common ground for technical training, so that dancers from a variety of backgrounds can work together effectively.

Clearly it would be irresponsible not to prepare our students for these practical aspects of their future professional lives. However, apart from the recognition of such uses of the ballet technique, there are more fundamental reasons, relating to its own merits, for retaining its place within a contemporary training programme.

The benefits of a technique which encourages such precision and subtlety - in terms of physical *phrasing*, strength and *musicality* - are potentially enormous, if taught with reference to individual *body-types* and *sound* principles of *alignment* which correspond with the principles underpinning the contemporary work studied. However, when ballet is taught with an emphasis on the aesthetics of the style and a concern for the shapes being made rather than on careful anatomical considerations, the contradictions (both philosophical and in terms of body use) between this training and the contemporary work may be disruptive if not specifically harmful. Such contradictions may hinder the learning process by introducing confusion about fundamental principles and be potentially dangerous when the aims pursued within the ballet class are inappropriately applied to areas of contemporary study.

The use of physical ideas, incorporated within the techniques of Humphrey, Limón, Graham and Cunningham, which were explored sufficiently long ago and have been retained for long enough to be aptly named traditions, as well as the ballet tradition, and the use of more recently explored physical concepts are not mutually exclusive. Having isolated the 'truths' which, by definition, have been recognised to contain ideas of lasting value, the next and most important task is to transform that knowledge to ensure their continuing relevance in ways which do not violate their essential character. It has already been argued that one of the most important aims of dance teaching is to enable the students to learn in such a way that their knowledge can be re-applied to new contexts.⁶ There are three principal methods through which this aim can be pursued:

Firstly by example, openly acknowledging the teacher's sources of physical information and explaining the ways in which physical ideas have been adapted for present use. Secondly, by actively encouraging the students to re-apply the knowledge that teachers pass on to them, by adapting the movement material to the needs of their own bodies.⁷ And thirdly, through encouraging the search for *connections* between physical and intellectual ideas in each class, in each area of technical study⁸ or in historical terms, in order that varied examples of the ways in which material can be adapted may be experienced.

This process of transformation is vital if teachers are to use traditional structures and yet introduce more recent ideas about anatomically sound training methods, or the valuable knowledge to be gained from alternative body techniques. Other important influences on the transformation process may be more personal, relating to teachers' own development in dance or to their present involvement with work that is currently being made.

Teachers may also reinterpret their personal experience of training, both prior to becoming performers and within the classes which formed a daily part of their professional routine. The recognition of the value of certain exercises, structures or methods will inevitably influence their decisions as to what to retain, discard or adapt as they plan their classes.

One of the positive outcomes of many years of teaching experience within the same training institution is the advantage of witnessing the physical transformation that many students undergo during a three or four year training programme. Further, as they go on to become professional dancers the teacher may see performances which highlight the fact that their training has served them well, as well as those for which they were clearly not adequately prepared. All these experiences, relating to the teacher's personal histories in dance, the development of the students they have taught and the performances of their former students, through which their progress may be witnessed with greater objectivity,

may influence the adaptation of methods and material in the search for greater effectiveness of training.

If teachers retain an interest in contemporary choreography, it is inevitable that they will be influenced in some way by what they see in performance, as well as by what they already know. Class material may be re-thought in the light of new developments which may prove to be an important source of new ideas, helping teachers to keep in touch with what is fresh and exciting. To this extent, new work can impinge on their ideas with positive consequences. Indeed it is important for all teachers to be aware of the broader context in which their work exists - not just an historical perspective, given by an awareness of the roots of their work in relation to the teachers with whom they have studied and the thoughts and ideas that have influenced them - but also knowledge of the broader social, political and economic context into which their students will eventually have to locate themselves. Teachers should be in touch with the ideas that are currently being explored, as well as with the physical manifestations of those ideas, if they are to build on their work in ways that may continue to have relevance.

However, the fact remains that it will never be possible to predict future developments in choreography. Although teachers may recognise themes which seem to recur in cycles, such cycles never have the regularity that might encourage predictions as to the particular skills required by tomorrow's dancers. Therefore, the argument in favour of attempting to project towards what *might be possible* in the future, by exploring as wide a range of possibilities as possible, whilst retaining the logic and integrity that underpins their work, is strengthened. Indeed teachers may limit themselves, and the development of their students, if they do not take this long-term view.

There are further potential problems with the notion that teachers could continue to teach only the techniques of those choreographers who have contributed significantly to their pool of knowledge, as mentioned above, thereby adequately training dancers through

inherited and unchanging technical structures. It might be possible, by such a means, to enable students to train their bodies to an extraordinary level of technical *expertise*, but as none of these techniques are written down in any detail (Lewis's *Illustrated Technique of José Limón*, previously mentioned, representing the exception) we have to rely on memory, which is apt to be selective. When first-hand information is involved, the use of extensive notes may be an invaluable asset, but second-hand information is apt to be inaccurate, so that teachers cannot be sure that what they are teaching is in fact the technique *as labelled*. In either case they have to rely on instinct to help them to re-make the work or invent variations of it, in order that it should be appropriate for the students they teach.

It frequently follows, therefore, that 'Limón-based', 'Graham-based' or 'Cunningham-based' classes are often watered down versions of these choreographers' techniques, not necessarily retaining the same logic, sometimes so dilute that one cannot even be sure of the flavour and sometimes - although seemingly having the outward appearance of the same substance - being made with a different concentrate *altogether*.

Just as the student will make *connections* between sets of information given verbally, understood physically, or in other *creative* ways which are harder to describe, teachers will have of necessity arrived at their own movement language through a host of complex routes, including the digesting of material from other teachers' sources. The question of 'ownership' of material derived in this way is one which is increasingly discussed, in much the same way as with choreography. The dancer's input to the choreographic process is not wholly new, but is now recognised and credited appropriately. Borrowing teaching material has, similarly, been going on for a long time. It is one of the important ways in which teachers can help each other build on ideas that otherwise might become stale. It may be justified, if the source is credited, the material is understood deeply and is assimilated into the teacher's way of thinking to the extent that it contributes to the logic of what is presented. However, it is never justified if isolated exercises, shapes or *co-*

ordinations that seem to be superficially attractive are simply borrowed without taking account of their relationship to the rest of the material of the class.

An honest approach together with intensely thoughtful work on the techniques that form the basis of new physical explorations is the only viable answer. Two principles are proposed here: firstly that teachers should not pretend to teach a technique of which they have limited or superficial knowledge and secondly that they should not borrow from other techniques unless they have understood the principles which underpin them and have both identified and clarified the relationships which each borrowed exercise has with their own thoughts, concerns and beliefs. Only then will such structures have the capacity to represent a *connection* between the logic of the choreographers who made them and the more recently discovered logic of the teacher who continues to use their forms.

Inevitably teachers have different strengths and areas of specific interest. To take their students on journeys that are interesting for them as teachers, as well as for their pupils, is an important way in which the teachers' individuality and creativity can be expressed through the teaching process. One of the advantages of a teaching environment which encourages a diversity of approaches and teaching methodologies is that all members of the teaching faculty can be free to emphasise their own areas of *specific interest* and knowledge.

Whilst not ignoring the importance of maintaining the students' general development, the boundaries of their knowledge may be stretched in different directions and through contrasting methods, provided that teachers can be certain that other aspects of the students' development will be emphasised when they go on to study with different teachers.

Clearly communication between faculty members is crucial here in order that teachers who share the training of students at any particular time can be sure that the combination

of physical concerns explored has a general logic, even if that logic is to approach the work from two quite different places. Further, it is important to check that information which overlaps is given without contradiction, that basic anatomical principles remain the same and that, where similar concerns are being explored, this does not present a problem in terms of physical strain on any single area of the body.

Structure and pace

For the purposes of this thesis it will be assumed that the ideas discussed relate to teaching that is consecutive, and to a context which allows for one teacher to teach the same group of students every day for a period of at least ten weeks. This overall structure is espoused as it allows movement ideas to be explored in very particular and productive ways.

Such a situation differs enormously from those where several teachers share the contemporary training of their students, or where the students' chain of information is interrupted by *focusing* on different techniques on different days of the week. Although it is recognised that either of these instances may have distinct advantages, it is not within the scope of this paper to make a comparative study of different methods of planning and structuring a training programme.

However, the methodology which is discussed here is considered to have relevance beyond its particular context. If it is not universally applicable, there is hopefully sufficient common ground to enable these points of discussion to be of interest to teachers who work in circumstances other than that described above.

Whilst contemporary dance may have a syllabus in terms of a summary, or outline of the subjects and physical principles to be studied it is for individual teachers to decide on both the detailed content and the structure of the class work. There can be no set

movement vocabulary if physical principles are to be woven into new patterns of movement and combined with new ideas. Nor can there be a predetermined structure if the students' response to the movement material is to be taken into account and a continual process of adaptation and transformation is genuinely to take place.

The chosen content will inevitably reflect the teachers' subjective views as to what is worth learning in dance, their perceptions of what students need to discover and, where appropriate, the practical need to prepare students for assessments or examinations. Account will need to be taken of long-term aims as the progression of each term's work and the principles that are carried through from one year to the next are planned. More detailed problem-solving strategies will become relevant as the classes are organised from week to week and from day to day. Alongside concerns for the students as a group there are the individuals' particular needs and goals to consider, if they make them known, all of which will influence the teachers' thinking one way or another. The structure will be derived in part from these concerns, responding both to anatomical considerations, and the need to be flexible and responsive to the students' learning strategies as discussed in Chapter Two.

Part of the teachers' skill will involve setting the most effective pace for the work that is undertaken and carefully establishing the balance between basic physical needs and the necessary time for assimilation of other kinds of vital information. In this respect keeping the students sufficiently warm, whilst giving them appropriate feedback is only one of many important tasks. The rhythm of their education in more general terms is an equally vital concern. Different aspects of work need to be undertaken at fitting times when it is judged that the majority of the students in the group have reached the appropriate stage of mental and emotional, as well as physical development. Having no detailed syllabus, it is helpful that contemporary dance teachers have the freedom to allow for both individual and class needs and can explore them fully and in the right time span.

On the other hand greater responsibility is theirs because of that freedom, and the lack of imposed or inherited structures that might have served to support the teaching process.

Even when students have been streamed or placed in different sets for their technical work, it is usual to find a range of ability within the class. Students can be encouraged to celebrate their individuality if it is made clear that expectations of each of them are different and that the depth of work will, of necessity, relate to their present stage of development - further, that these differences in expectation are not differently valued. Assuming that the demands made of each student, by the material, should be similarly taxing on many levels, it will be necessary to suggest different ways of working within it, for each person, depending upon their present level of understanding. For example it may be that they are capable of a depth of intellectual understanding which exceeds their physical capabilities, a situation often found in respect of mature students. Here the challenge will be to give sufficiently complex material to maintain their interest, but simple enough not to pose a problem for relatively unskilled bodies.

In such a case it might be useful to work with more repetition of material than would be usual in order that the body might maintain its work on simple patterns and achievable physical goals, whilst the intellectual and *imaginative* work involved would be more complex. Appropriate tasks for such students might involve searching for ways of working with appropriate *effort*, checking through whatever teaching points were covered in similar combinations in the past and exploring a range of dynamic possibilities within each *phrase*. To project both backward and forward in time, thinking through the *connections* that might usefully be made between one exercise and others that have been completed earlier in the class, and others still that the student knows will occur later on, as the class progresses, may be similarly useful. Thus the level of complexity of the work will increase in terms of the students' expected intellectual involvement with the material, although in physical terms it might remain simple.

The timing of the introduction of new ideas is crucial. It is at its most effective when each particular skill is given sufficient time to develop and be deeply understood, and a range of related skills come together at the appropriate moment in the week or the term, so that the culmination of detailed and concentrated work of various kinds can be seen to have brought the students to a new level of understanding. Balanced against this careful and specific work, leading to the ability to accomplish particular skills, will be the need to ensure that the material is not allowed to become so complex and finely *focused* that the students are unable to work simply, for strength or stamina, or just for the sheer enjoyment of performing well something that they have grasped in its entirety.

There are many factors to be taken into account in judging the appropriate pace of new work, in order for the optimum amount of new information to be assimilated. There is a comfort and sense of security to be derived from a certain proportion of known factors, whether the overall structure of the class, the method of presentation, or the more detailed structure of particular exercises. Choices as to how to balance the unknown and the constant factors to maximum advantage need to be made with care. It would be unhelpful, for instance, to change the whole class every day so that neither the body nor the brain had a moment to rest - however repetitions need not occur in regular or predictable sequences. Some ideas might be carried over several weeks, others for a few days before some variation or development of the movement material was added. Others might be retained for a few days even after they were well known, especially if the exercises that preceded or followed them were particularly demanding and therefore a mental 'rest' was necessary.

If the pace is not judged well and too much that is new is given, students may withdraw in a state of panic and continue to draw the same familiar boundaries around their already existing stores of knowledge. On the other hand, if too little challenging and exciting material is presented, they may withdraw in boredom, stop listening, stop watching or, in the worst cases, stop coming to class altogether.⁹

If students are to maintain an active and *creative* participation in the work, teachers must concern themselves with helping them to engage mentally and emotionally as well as physically. It must be impressed upon them that the class material will always be presented only as the physical means towards ends which will be individually realised and not as an ideal of perfection which can never be attained. Merce Cunningham, speaking to his students on the Laban summer course (July 1980), described perfection as something to strive for and at the same time to dismiss, in case it should "spoil the spirit". Whilst teaching with extraordinary and inspiring clarity and attention to the physical details of his movement material, he made the important point that personal vision could be lost if, in striving for perfection, one allowed oneself to lose sight of and respect for the qualities which make each of us unique.

The use of structural devices

Just as enduring physical principles retain their relevance in the context of the class work, so traditional structural devices (repetition, variation and development) continue to be useful methods through which to shape the internal structure of the class and the progression of work for the duration of the course. It is assumed that as with the physical material the structures will be used with reference to individual students' needs and in ways which are not pre-set, so that the teaching aims dictate the structure, rather than being subservient to its form. Specific reasons for continuing to use these three devices are detailed below.

1) Repetition

Exact repetition of the same movement material, within the same time structure.

In other forms of learning it may be futile to keep asking the same question when the answer is already known, but when dealing with physical material it is essential to do just that. By repeating movement patterns, the body builds habitual responses which, provided that they are sound, form a *secure* foundation upon which dancers can rely as they continue to explore ever more complex physical structures and *co-ordinations*.

When students have built habits which are not useful, it is particularly important to allow enough time for deep concentration on the specific ways in which movement can be performed in order to initiate physical change. For example, if there is a tendency to work with too much tension in certain muscle groups, repetition to the point where students begin to feel at ease with the material is beneficial. As the students' concentration on the shape of the combination or its rhythmic qualities is lessened their attention can be re-directed towards the immediate concern of energy usage. Unnecessary tension, often induced by uncertainty, can then be replaced by a more appropriate use of energy only in the muscle groups where it is actually required.

For advanced students repetition is no less important than for beginners if their physical understanding of the logic of the movements is to deepen, or different aspects of the work are to be emphasised. Once the overall pattern of a movement combination has been grasped, a completely different physical approach becomes possible. For example if the *focus* is on transitions, it will be observed that students can only work deeply on the preparation for each action when they already know what that action will be. In this situation repetition of the combination until it is *securely* understood is a pre-requisite for working on transitions in a new way. Similarly it becomes possible to work on *phrasing* movement in different ways once students have fully understood the relationship of the

material to the rhythmical structure, and show this to be the case in their ability to repeat accurately combinations which relate closely to time structures.

Repetition can satisfy a need for order or the feeling of being in control which ensues when known movement patterns are performed with confidence. Yet too much repetition can dull the spirit, the ability to take risks or the interest to explore new ideas; students who are not sufficiently challenged by fresh thoughts may become passive and lose their self-motivation. Therefore the logic that is increasingly revealed through repetition should be constantly challenged and students encouraged to question its validity and applicability to new situations. As previously stated, it is only when students can apply something that they have learned in one situation to a new set of circumstances that the teacher can be sure that it has been truly understood.

The use of repetition, beyond the point at which it is strictly necessary, may also be appropriate in order to encourage the students to find individual ways of keeping known material 'alive' - to search for their own fresh thoughts. This is a skill which is important to nurture as it is bound to help students to develop the ability to work with real spontaneity in rehearsal and performance.

As stated above, the amount of repetition used in a class is an important aspect of the pace of the class and the students' development will inevitably influence decisions as to when it is an appropriate device. In an effort to define how this important balance might be realised, it is suggested that, as a way of beginning each class with the majority of students feeling *secure* and therefore ready to explore in new ways, the opening few exercises *at least* should be simple, slow and repeated often enough for all students to work their bodies deeply and with due attention to sound physical principles of *alignment*. Later in the class it is vital that sufficient time is given to the learning of movement patterns for these sequences to be performed with the appropriate use of different muscle groups. This might necessitate many repetitions of the *marking* process but eventually will lead to

the ability to fulfil each moment of the combination with appropriate energy, even when working at fast *tempi*. Whilst new material might sometimes be introduced quickly and the students encouraged to perform it as best they can without much verbal or visual information, in order to develop their skill in *picking up* material at speed, the use of this method is not generally advocated.

2) Variation

a) Variation of intention - teacher directed

These variations may be of *dynamics, tempo, phrasing*, or in terms of physical sensations and principles.

To vary a movement combination significantly in terms of speed or *dynamics* leads to different physical sensations, although the shape of the exercise remains unchanged. As a first stage in the exploration of the applicability of a physical principle to new situations, variation of this sort is particularly useful as it tests the appropriateness to the new situation of the principle previously learned. As students discover whether or not they can apply the same physical rules to the new situation, they are led to understand that certain rules apply 'across the board' whilst others need adapting; in this way they develop knowledge and skill in 'as flexible and generalisable a form as possible.'¹⁰

Clearly the pace of this kind of variation is crucial. Students who have barely grasped a principle in one set of physical circumstances might be alarmed to find it ineffective in its application to a similar physical problem. In such cases it would be less confusing to present a completely different movement example in order to encourage recognition of the different contexts in which the original principle under discussion could be appropriately applied.

When making variations in terms of movement *dynamics*, it is important to note that students who have a propensity to work with a limited range of movement qualities will inevitably have difficulty in making dynamic changes when these are directed by the teacher towards those qualities that feel out of character and therefore hard to use. In extreme cases such situations can cause real stress. However provided that the teaching and learning environment is a supportive one, students can be encouraged to make extraordinary and courageous changes.¹¹

The ability to move in ways which might feel uncomfortable initially is an important part of the contemporary dancer's skill, therefore it has an important place in the student's training. To deal with the stress that ensues within a supportive class environment is a valuable first step towards coping with varying kinds of stress in performance. Further, it may be useful in preparing students emotionally for the challenge of reaching beyond what they normally do, whatever their capabilities are.

It is sometimes the case that choreographers choose to work with performers specifically because they are willing to be *courageous* in this respect. Acocella describes Mark Morris's interest in casting his dancers 'against type, against ease ', thereby exposing the *effort* involved in the dancing, whilst Mouton elaborates:

In a lot of the movement, [...] your job is to push one extremity as far as you possibly can. It's not just step right, step left. You have to bring your left leg all the way around until you can't go any further, so you have to go to the next place. It's not a decorative thing at all.¹²

Richard Alston, during his time at Rambert Dance Company, frequently remarked that he was happy with the performances about which his dancers felt least positive. The lack of control over aspects of their dancing which worried them, because they were not technically perfect, were perceived by him as being exciting because they involved so much risk-taking. Although dancers were never expected to work in this way if they found it traumatic, he made it clear that this ability to work 'at the edge ', as he put it, was one of the qualities he most admired.

To accept the responsibility of preparing students for the challenge of extending their range, in the ways described above, is not to imply that teachers should, or indeed could, prepare students for working situations which involve suppressing their personal motivations and chosen approaches to performance in favour of subservience to the choreographer's wishes. To do so would imply a return to the dictatorial relationship of choreographer and dancer which is now, almost universally, a thing of the past. However it is possible, like Alston, to encourage students to explore possibilities that might otherwise have been kept locked away, if the risk-taking which may lead to new and exciting discoveries is actively supported.

To vary the intention of the movement in terms of its physical sensation while retaining the combination's structure is a useful method by which to reveal the enormous range of possibilities that exist, in the simplest of movements, in terms of muscular *effort*.¹³ For example, the arms might lift from being dropped, to the highest position above the head; they could do so with a minimum of energy, or with the use of resistance. In both cases they could describe the same pathway and make their journey within the same time span. The quality of the movement could be the same (perhaps smooth and controlled) but the energy involved vastly different. Apart from the differences in tension in the arms, there would be alterations in the use of the torso and, in particular, the abdominal muscles. The use of changing images to aid the process of making changes in muscular tension might also be an important, although not a necessary part of such an exercise, aiding the process of learning how to use imagery to help create different physical sensations. In this example, the image of using the arms as though they were battling against a strong wind might help towards a sense of greater power and weight in the torso.

In this context, variations in *phrasing* relate to changes in the method of co-ordinating one body part to another. The changes involve isolation and *co-ordination* and their relative timing. In an *Opening* exercise, for example, the body might be *hanging* with the head towards the floor and hips to the ceiling, supported on bent legs. If the

following movement were to lift to *centre* (vertical) arriving on stretched legs, there would be various possibilities in terms of *co-ordination*, between one position and the other. One method would be to maintain bent legs until the body was upright, a second to stretch the legs first and then to lift the back, and a third to maintain bent legs until a predetermined point during the lift of the spine, completing the lift of the back as the legs stretch. In each of these examples, different physical sensations would be felt, the weight would need to shift on the feet in different ways and the sensation of *connection* through the body would be differently experienced.¹⁴

Explorations of these kinds serve well as an introduction to the idea that there is always choice in terms of *co-ordination*: that the body does not have to move *all* in one piece, nor within predictable patterns. Once such *co-ordinations* have been clearly performed, it will be increasingly easy for students to observe detailed changes of this kind and to notice the specific timing of one body part in relation to another. For instance, they will learn to give the timing necessary for a jump or a swift change of direction, which might be initiated by the back before the legs were fully stretched or, in a different context, led by the action of the legs and followed by the lift of the torso.

b) Variation of intention - student directed

If students are encouraged to invest repetitions of movement patterns with their own *imaginings*, it is certain that as dancers they will project something other than a comfortable familiarity or complacency, even when required to perform the same combinations or exercises a great many times. To do this is not necessarily an automatic response: many students need to be given examples of ways in which they can explore individually within set structures before they can make this a part of their learning strategies. Frequently it may be noted that students who have this skill at their disposal are able to work increasingly slowly without becoming dispirited, simply through an understanding of the range of possibilities (musical, *dynamic* or in terms of movement

effort) within the simplest of exercises. In other words, their emotional, intellectual and physical development has led them to be able to work increasingly effectively within simple patterns which would appear tedious to students who do not yet possess this skill. The eloquence which characterises their work is derived from physical understanding and the ability to show the movement clearly in all its details, and equally importantly from their personal, *imaginative* contribution to its structure.

To encourage students to be *creative* in this way must be at the root of all class work. Through the simplest of means it may involve the *imaginative* and emotional lives of the students in powerful ways which can properly be called poetic, thereby serving to differentiate a dance class from the work done in body-conditioning studios or exercise classes, all of which might limber, stretch and strengthen the body without in any way nurturing or inspiring the students' creativity.

c) Variation of structural details while retaining the same physical sensation at the root of the movement

When it is necessary to continue working on the same physical challenge for some time, variations in the patterns of movement combinations may be sufficient to enable students to retain their interest in the work. For example, the problem selected for particular attention may be changing the weight of the body from foot to foot, at speed. An exercise set at the beginning of the week may remain fundamentally the same for five days. Once it is clear that the majority of students are able to perform it with *ease*, changes can be introduced which require the students to develop keen observation skills. The number of *brushes* of the leg might remain constant and the accents of the movement in relation to the music remain unchanged, but the students may be required to shift their weight at a different point in the *phrase*, changing feet at unexpected moments. In this way, keeping them alert by being required to make small changes,

while working on fundamentally the same movement material, may serve two purposes well.

3) Development

When variations involve the progressive use of different skills, the teaching material is clearly being developed. The method of changing material in this way encourages the continued development of the students' technique, as physical concepts, once grasped, can be extended, perhaps in terms of complexity, time length or the use of different movement qualities, with different results depending on the nature of the challenges posed.

For example, either the addition of turns to a travelling combination, or increasingly complex choreographed movement for the arms during a *brushes* exercise, would serve as a new movement idea, extending a known combination in terms of physical and mental demand and requiring that each idea had to retain its clarity within the new complexity of material.

There might be challenges in terms of extra direction changes during a jumping combination, or for the *working* leg in *battements*; so that whereas on the first day of the week the leg worked only to the side, by the end of the week the combination extended to the front and behind as well, requiring *focus* on clear changes of direction and on the new changes of weight that are necessitated.

Perhaps the basic shape of the movement would not be altered although the number of actions changed so that the rhythm would become more complex, demanding a sure sense of the principles within the original combination which could then be put to the test in a new way.

Adage or big jumps might be slowed down, leading to development of strength and stamina and awareness of the need for a different *co-ordination* in order that the lift into the air, when jumping, continued to be effective at this new *tempo*.

The students might be required to cover more ground during a travelling combination (employing a different level of energy in the body, together with the skill of reaching more through the legs) or to consider changes of relationship with other dancers in the space, moving around them where previously everyone had worked within their own area of the studio.

The material might be re-made to incorporate sections moving up and down to the floor, perhaps extending notions of *softness* and resilience in the use of the joints to the quality needed to lower the body gently to the ground, thereby encouraging the use of the same movement concept in a different context.

As the same physical concepts recur in different contexts in class, the physical logic becomes clear to the student who is able to follow through the development of such physical challenges and make *connections* between one situation and another.¹⁵ Through careful observation the teacher can then recognise those who are not yet able to transfer their knowledge, those who did not grasp the importance of the first building blocks and those for whom more repetition of first principles is vital before proceeding further.

Methods of Planning

The following class plans are given as examples of the different routes by which teachers may arrive at material which is suitable for their teaching needs. Three models are presented here, but it is recognised that others are possible and equally valid in different

circumstances. Employing different methods will help to keep the material fresh for the teacher, which is arguably as important as the freshness that the students need to experience, and will be particularly important when teachers are not fortunate enough to receive regular input from external sources, relying instead on their own initiative to keep their work alive. Therefore it is suggested that though the methods of planning described here are all useful, their full potential will be discovered in the ways in which one method is contrasted with those that precede or follow them.

The work described was made for students in full-time vocational training during their third year of study. In each example the overall structure of the class remains the same.¹⁶

Method (A) Identifying gaps in the students' knowledge

During observations of the students' progress, we will note when they find a particular *phrase* too complex, too fast, or are unable to perform it well because they lack the physical skills which underlie its successful execution. If it is too complex, a probable response would be to edit the combination or to deal with it in smaller sections, until it has been well understood. If it seems too fast or too slow there are also simple and swift remedies; although to give a tempo which feels comfortable is not always beneficial in the long-term and there are occasions when repeated practice enables students to move at a speed which they had previously imagined to be impossible.

If certain fundamental physical skills are lacking, however, then a longer term strategy is required and the approach to planning the next few days, or weeks of classes will be with this necessary problem-solving in mind. Working backwards and in stages, it will be necessary to isolate the particular skills required and to invent further ways in which to develop them, in order that the original combination may be approached later on, with greater confidence and physical assurance. (To remember to return to the original

movement material is important, as it ensures that the students have an opportunity to recognise how much they have learned in the meantime.) When two or more problems make themselves manifest, it will be important to make a choice between trying to solve them both, as the subsequent classes progress, or to place them in order of priority and attempt to deal with them one at a time.

It is in these instances that the recording of our observations becomes extremely useful. Each new class is likely to present further possibilities for fruitful exploration which might supersede our original plans; therefore we may easily forget our original intentions to work specifically on a particular range of skills, unless a note has been made to do so. Although there may be times when an unplanned shift of emphasis would be appropriate, we should attempt to retain the overview which ensures that time is not spent in exploring minor matters which distract attention from the main path. In some circumstances we must be willing to let go of a teaching opportunity, recognising that everything cannot be solved at once, that inevitably all students will not share the same needs, or that for a while, more general problems must take precedence. It is in these circumstances that the long-term view is all-important and the value of consecutive teaching all the more apparent.

This planning strategy could be used equally appropriately in order to indicate when the students' present strategies are not being applied usefully to new contexts. Although the students' need to try out their strategies in different contexts and the subsequent value of learning by experience is recognised, this can be a very lengthy and often dispiriting process. When it becomes apparent that students are repeatedly travelling down known pathways it can be useful to present them with situations which prove their present tactics to be only partially effective, speeding up the process of realisation that their approach needs to change. Clearly it is very important that this is not done in a punitive or undermining way, needlessly picking on *co-ordinations* that they find difficult or trying to catch them out by other means, lest the developing sense of trust between students and

teacher is jeopardised. However, provided that the students are encouraged in their attempts to deal differently with the material - realising that help is at hand when needed - this strategy can have very positive results.

For advanced students it can become increasingly difficult to find real challenges to give them - but nevertheless it is very important to do so. Here again it will be the teacher who actively looks for examples of a lack of understanding, rather than waiting for such a gap in knowledge to be revealed, constantly searching for new ways to test the strategies that the students have developed.

Example (A) Fast changes of direction

The work described below concentrates specifically on building the skills required to enable the students to change the direction of their movements at speed, whether in place, travelling through space or in terms of clarity of *focus*. It represents a response to the perceived problem that the students encountered when they tried to make fast direction changes of various kinds, without the pre-requisite skills.

The exercises detailed below are given in the order that they would be encountered in the class, however it should be noted that they do not represent a whole class.

Tendus¹⁷

This is the first *exercise* of the *class* to concentrate on the reach of the legs away from *centre*, *articulation* of the feet, and rhythmic detail. The *working* leg gestures to the front, followed by a change of weight in order that the other leg might repeat the same pattern with a slight variation in terms of the *placement* of weight. The *combination* is then repeated with the leg gestures to the side and to the back. During the course of the week, the *exercise* is varied in terms of rhythm and physical complexity, requiring changes of

weight to be made more rapidly while retaining clarity in the directions of the leg gestures.

Upper Back¹⁸

These *exercises*, which involve the reach of the back in all directions, require a clear change of *focus* but remain in place; therefore clarity of directional change can be worked on without the added problem of travelling through space.

Ronds¹⁹

Clear execution of this *exercise* relies upon having the weight of the *torso centred* over one leg (the *standing leg*). The dancer is then able to *free* the *working hip* and to *swing* the *working leg*, therefore being able to use its action as the *impetus* for turning or for changing the *placement* of the weight of the body, at speed.

Battements²⁰

A swift rediscovery of *centre* is incorporated into this *exercise*, putting to the test the sureness of *placement* that will be required for changing the weight of the body, whilst maintaining a useful *alignment*. If students are unable to return to *centre* at the required speed, then they will be encouraged to make adjustments to their *placement* in order that this should become possible. Once such an awareness of *alignment* is achieved, it should follow that this *placement* will be more consistently used in other, related, contexts. This is clearly a different skill from that of being on *centre* (vertical) whilst standing still and requires concentrated *focus* in order not to bring inappropriate levels of tension into the body, in an effort to *hold centre*.

The ability to change direction at speed and with clarity very often depends upon the ability to carry the weight of the body *on the standing leg* so that full control of that weight is maintained. *Exercises* such as this, which concentrate on developing a sense of *centre* in a variety of contexts, therefore contribute indirectly to the aims described above

Quick Flick²¹

The demand here is for fast action of the feet. The joints of the hips and knees work without any unnecessary tension and the *alignment*, as confirmed during the preceding *exercise*, is maintained.

This will also serve as a specific preparation for the light *skimming combination* towards the end of *class*.

Across (A)²²

Although this travelling combination is built on simple runs, the direction changes within it make it more complex. It can be used to serve the needs of students operating at many different levels, as turns are added into the original, relatively simple structure, thereby increasing the technical demands that it makes.

The movement ideas explored here are developed in the *big jump combination (A)* below.

Across (B)²³

Again with demanding direction changes, this *combination* incorporates the added complication of a fluid and almost continuously moving upper back.

Skimming²⁴

Continually skimming of the surface of the floor, this *exercise* does not demand a high jump, nor is it complex, so it lies well within the capabilities of most second year students. However to execute it at speed, maintaining clear *focus* with the direction changes is surprisingly difficult. Setting an appropriate *tempo* for the group to grasp it with *ease*, then increasing the speed will give both a challenge and a goal that should not feel out of reach.

Big jump (A)²⁵

The *preparatory* versions allow time for the rhythmic pattern to be worked on in stages, over five days. The full version, with complex direction changes, should then be possible to approach at the beginning of week two.

Big jump (B)²⁶

This combination involves complex changes of direction in the air and therefore should not be attempted unless students are *secure* in their ability to land carefully.

A simpler example is given for students who are not yet at this stage. This *combination* contains only simple direction changes in order that the students might concentrate on the predominant changes of *focus*, as the back works through *curves*, *arches* and *tilts* during the powerful jumps.

NB: The problems of changing direction at speed and of controlling the landing of jumps are connected to the particular demands of these jumping *combinations*, as it will prove to be impossible to change either *focus* or direction with clarity if the landing of each jump is not itself clear; and this will require both strength and control. Further, the relationship of the weight to the landing leg must be clearly understood (see *battements* above). It makes absolute sense therefore to attempt to work simultaneously on the twin challenges, of directional change and control. If the students are not ready to tackle the two within the same *combination*, then some simple jumping patterns with a hold in the landing position to finish will serve as useful, further preparation before returning to this more complex material.

Method (B) Teaching the skills that will be required in order to perform a particular movement combination

In direct contrast to the example given above, the impetus for the following plan is a sequence of movement that has been selected for three reasons: firstly for its choreographic interest; secondly for the appropriateness of level (that is, that it will present a challenge for the students but that the majority of them will manage to perform it well, given careful teaching over the course of the week); and thirdly for the sake of the long-term benefits that will be derived from dealing with the problems which will be highlighted as the students try to come to grips with the material.

The sequence is analysed in terms of the physical problems it contains. The rest of the class is then built up around the exercises which will help the students to:

- (1) become aware of the particular physical challenges that are presented;
- (2) analyse the technical points which will enable them to overcome their individual difficulties;
- (3) practise those elements of technique in varied and interesting ways; and
- (4) eventually grasp these points and complete the material with a greater depth of understanding, if not with *ease*.

Satisfaction for the serious student will come about if the nature of the problem is understood sufficiently for them to comprehend that the journey they embark upon will eventually lead them where they need to go. Although they will not necessarily need to arrive there in the space of only a few weeks, there must be a belief in their ability to get there in the end; a belief that the set task is not completely out of their reach. This inevitably involves a depth of trust in the teacher, derived from their confidence that previous class work has fostered the skills which are realised to be necessary, and therefore valuable.

We may plan work which seeks to prepare students specifically for the current needs of the profession. Perhaps a performance reminds us of a range of work that we have not addressed for some time, or inspires us with new possibilities, previously unimagined. Taking into account previously discussed issues of ownership and of the need to ensure that the material presented in class still relates to our own logic, we may then work on combinations that borrow ideas from those that we see in performance, building new thoughts into the combinations that we make, which in turn provide a starting point for further explorations.

Example (B) Addressing the problems found in a travelling phrase

In the following example the starting point is a jumping combination.²⁷

Challenges that will be encountered are as follows:

- (1) fast changes of weight;
- (2) sufficient control to pause on landing from jumps;
- (3) exaggerated *suspension* before falling; and
- (4) rhythmic complexity.

Week one

Of these, the first two challenges immediately stand out as being unlikely to be improved upon significantly in less than a fortnight's work. Therefore the first task will be to plan a week's concentrated work on fast changes of weight in all manner of situations as a preparation for the second week of work, which will lead increasingly specifically to the final combination described above. Also in this first week it will be useful to work on jumping *phrases* which have been chosen because they encourage concentration on control of the weight of the body on landing.

Inevitably the exercises given will throw up their own sets of problems and the need to prepare well for those will help to shape the rest of the week's classes.

Week two

During the second week the students can build upon the knowledge gained in week one and work on more specific preparation for the jumping combination which was the inspiration for these explorations. The points below relate to the challenges outlined and similarly numbered above.

(1) Placement of weight & direction changes

The *placement* of weight and the changes of weight found in the jumping material are almost replicated in the *adage*.²⁸ To use this, on the third and fourth day, will enable students to rehearse many of the harder features of the jump combination. At the same time they will have time to build strength and to concentrate on *placement* which might otherwise be *insecure*. It would be counter-productive, however, to repeat this exercise more than twice, otherwise the final combination would lack freshness when it was presented; therefore other and perhaps simpler *adage* combinations would serve better for the beginning of the week.

(2) Building the particular strength to hold the landing position following a big jump

Through a *battement exercise*, developed during the course of the week, the students will be encouraged to develop strength in their legs, the swift brushing action which they will need in order to use the *battement* action effectively as the *impetus* for lifting into the air, and an absolutely sure sense of where the weight is placed on the feet, in order that this knowledge can be relied upon when landing from jumps.²⁹

Day 1: assimilation of pattern;

Day 2: finish with *glissé* (sharp accent out), *holding* the *working* leg in the air;

Day 3: finish with *battement* and hold as above;

Day 4: finish with *battement* (sharp accent out) and hold;

Day 5: the whole *combination* for stamina, maintaining clarity of accents.

(3) Similar tasks in a reduced form

Similar tasks to those found in the big jump are presented in a variety of different ways within these *small jump* combinations, allowing for more time to be spent on their rehearsal than would be advisable with an extended jump combination.³⁰

NB: The duration suggested for work on the final combination is ten minutes, however this is approximate and depends upon the exact level of the students involved and the number of students in the class (and therefore the number of times each small group within the class will complete the exercise) as well as other factors such as whether or not this class is their first in the day.

(4) The rhythmic problem of combining 2's & 3's with clarity

The use of this rhythmic structure can be explored and rehearsed all week in *tendu* and *glissé* patterns, as well as through travelling combinations built on 3's & 2's. Simple jumping combinations which encourage control of the body's weight on landing, as well as rhythmic clarity, will also be useful.³¹

Method (C) Planning that addresses two problems simultaneously

(Duration: Ten classes)

The motivating factors behind the following plans have been suggested by observation of a lack of understanding of (or lack of ability to accomplish) several key physical *co-ordinations*, revealed during the previous weeks' classes. Because of the complexity of these problems, both in isolation and in combination, it is assumed that work relating to them will take at least two weeks. The first two, listed below, are clearly connected whilst the third is of a completely different nature. In this respect the plans which follow are different from the first example given above in that, although both attempt to identify gaps in the students' knowledge, Example (A) seeks to provide the teaching which will help to solve one set of problems, while the following, Example (C), seeks to solve three issues within the same class structure.

They are:

- (1) finding an appropriate degree of tension in the hip socket during deep *pliés* and in *passé* positions;
- (2) using this *softness* in the hip socket to achieve a *deep folding* action of the *torso* against the leg or legs; and
- (3) allowing the weight of the body to *fall* (being willing to relinquish control).

Example (C)

Opening³²

Small *demi pliés* are used here, in order that the torso may be *dropped forward* in a *hanging* position. There is a minimum of tension in the back, increasing the ability to *fold* at the hip and passively stretch the back at the same time. Again this is a sensation which needs to become part of the students' movement memory and therefore adequate time must be given for it to be deeply felt.

Feet³³

The use of a *deep pli * in *2nd position* and as deep a *demi-pli * as possible in *parallel* and *1st positions*, encourages the use of a *deep fold* at the hip, especially when *square placement* of the hips is maintained.

Brushes³⁴

The *exercise*, which involves the use of the back as well as the legs, together with changes of weight, is set at a slow *tempo* in order that every *fall* into a *side lunge* can involve a *deep fold* of the *working* hip.

This will be the first *fall* in the class to introduce this sensation, in a very simple form.

Rebounding out of the *lunge* serves as a *preparation* for *across* (A).

Long back (A)³⁵

In this context, *falling* is used as an example of extreme changes of weight from one leg to the other, rather than while travelling or descending to the floor.

The *combination* also uses the *deep fold* of the *torso tilting* sideways onto the thigh as in the *brushes combination* above. This *connection* may be pointed out, if not immediately grasped by the students, in order that they can be sure to relate the two comparable sensations.

Long back (B)³⁶

Here the emphasis is on *falls* which take the body both forward and backwards.

This *combination* will probably need to be worked on daily if courage in executing it deeply is to develop.

The *combination* serves as a *preparation* for *across* (A) and (B) and *big jump* (A) and (B), all of which rely upon the *courageous* use of *falls*.

Pliés³⁷

Concentration is on finding the sensation of *folding*, as in the *opening* pattern described above.

This *exercise* contains the added challenge of a strong use of the legs, while maintaining a *softness* in the back and in the hip sockets. It therefore necessitates deep concentration on the use of appropriate levels of *energy* in different areas of the body at one and the same time. (See also *fondus*.)

Further, it introduces the need to rediscover *centre* at speed, following the arch and prior to the descent into deep pli , also necessitating strength in the legs.

Tendus³⁸

The *exercises* are concerned with shifting the weight of the *torso* from *1st* to *5th*.

A strong sense of *centre* is required, aligned over the feet.

Falls, away from this carefully and strongly rooted position, take the *torso* to the side as above.

Fondus³⁹

Many versions of the principle behind these *exercises* may be given during the course of the fortnight, all with the *working* leg in *cou-de-pied*, and all making use of the sensation of *hanging* the *working* hip.

As the work of the back becomes more complex, concentration will be needed to locate *energy* in the body only where it is required as in *pli s* above.

Battements⁴⁰

These patterns all involve either *falls*, the use of a *deep fold* or the *working* leg in *cou-de-pied*.

Across (A)⁴¹

Building on the skills developed above, this combination uses:

- (1) *falls*;
- (2) *softness* in the use of the back (having remembered the sensation from earlier in the class) as it *rebounds* from *falling*, and becomes the *impetus* needed for the turn;
- (3) the *hanging* sensation in the hip socket of the *working leg* in *2nd position*; and
- (4) complex timing and *phrasing*.

Across (B)⁴²

Again using skills developed above, this combination concentrates on:

- (1) *falls*;
- (2) the *phrasing* of the back, co-ordinated with the legs in such a way that the torso leads the changes of weight; and
- (3) the *hanging* sensation in the hips with a variation of this *co-ordination* in the second section of the *combination*, when the *working leg* is *loosely stretched* during the final turn.

Big jump (A)⁴³

Borrowing ideas from the travelling *combinations* across the floor, this material uses *falls* that occur following landings from jumps and, for the second version, a *rebound* of the back, leading from the *curve* into the repeat of the *combination*.

Big jump (B)⁴⁴

This is a development of BJ (A), adding complex changes of direction, increasingly complex timing and the use of the *deep fold* on landing.

Big jump (C)⁴⁵

Here the *deep fold* of the *working leg*, in *attitude 2nd*, is followed by a *fall*.

Connections

In all examples previously cited, it is possible to make strong *connections* between related strands of material. These relationships depend not only on the fact that certain *co-ordinations* or patterns of movement may be repeated, but more significantly on the fact that they share the same physical sensations. This is something that the students must be encouraged to feel and experience for themselves, as recognition will not necessarily be an automatic response.

Combinations which share the same shapes as each other may not share the same *kinaesthetic focus*, while others that have different forms may be designed to explore the same physical sensation. It can only be when students are able to work deeply, on all levels, that they will progress beyond the readiness to make assumptions about the work which are based on superficial visual experiences of it, and arrive at the point where they are able to connect one deeply felt physical experience with another, understanding the movement's logic both intellectually and physically.

The advantage of working in this way is twofold. Firstly, as suggested earlier, rather than existing in isolation, physical ideas may be linked together in ways that are more profound, being rooted in the body as well as in the mind, than merely by superficial recognition of shapes. Knowledge of movement contexts in which such sensations are similarly experienced, as opposed to those in which they are actually the same, leads to the comprehension of concepts which enables the student to cross-reference in millions of ways.

In turn, the ability to cross-reference results in a capacity to work more deeply in the body, making the physical sensations increasingly real to the dancer and visible to the audience, as knowledge of one deeply understood sensation can be related to another which is connected to it - directly and at speed.

Secondly, making *connections* between related strands of material can help to build the students' confidence, and therefore their ability to extend their present store of knowledge. Claxton points out that the network of knowledge which is built up in this way can be developed through one of two methods:

either by adding on new pieces of information at its edges, like the spider enlarging its web, or by discovering more links between ideas already within it, like the spider filling in gaps to make its web stronger.⁴⁶

In terms of the dancers' development these two methods are themselves linked. The confidence that all students will build, in the strength of the web of knowledge that they spin, will contribute enormously to their ability to add to the 'edges', as they develop trust in the notion that the base on which they stand is bound to support them.⁴⁷

Observation and recording

As a further aid to identifying gaps in the students' knowledge (see Examples (A) and (C)), as well as in more general terms, observation and recording are vital parts of the teaching process. One of the benefits of careful recording has already been mentioned in relation to retaining longer-term intentions, while dealing day-to-day with more immediate problems that arise and need to be solved. But there are many other reasons why it is important to keep records, and we may learn from the wider teaching profession in this respect. Logically, the manner in which we choose to record our observations relates directly to our individual movement material, as well as to our chosen teaching strategies. The following suggestions serve as examples.

Most colleges of higher education, vocational dance schools and universities where dance is taught assess their students' development according to established and published criteria. Where this is the case it is useful to look back periodically on such agreed

criteria, and assess our teaching in relation to the skills which we expect the students to be achieving. We may use it as a check-list for:

- 1) the items which we believe have been covered by our work to date, with positive results;
- 2) the items which we have covered but which need further work; and
- 3) areas which we have not been concentrating on sufficiently regularly to enable the students to acquire the appropriate skills.

All this information may usefully be integrated into future plans. Added to this list could be thoughts relating to our personal check-list, concerning the students' real, as opposed to apparent, learning, and to those strategies that we develop individually, as a response to the challenge of helping the students to achieve such a level of real understanding.⁴⁸

It may then be useful to make specific notes as to each student's particular difficulties, together with points on which we have encouraged them to *focus*. These notes may serve many purposes. Firstly, by observing the students closely and regularly enough to record their progress (albeit in simple note form) we provide ourselves with a means of checking that we have in fact (and not only in our intentions) given time and thought to all of our students. Secondly, we may ensure that we have not allowed personal preferences or matters of taste in movement to obscure our greater responsibility to teach everyone in the class, dealing as fairly as we can with all the students' needs.

Thirdly, such notes may serve as a starting point for discussion with students, about their perceived progress. It may help them to understand that our intention is to involve them in the process of learning, as discussed in Chapter One, especially if they make contributions to such notes and are then encouraged to look back over them and make their own assessment of their progress in the light of points that were previously discussed. The goals or learning outcomes which have not been reached may be

discussed again and perhaps re-positioned; more appropriate strategies for attempting to deal with the problems may be introduced; and, as importantly, areas of real achievement which might otherwise have been obscured by the constant striving to achieve new goals, will be high-lighted. Reminders of problems that they encountered in the past, which seemed like insurmountable walls, may be freshly perceived as hurdles which have since been jumped, providing a focus for some genuine celebration which is all too infrequent during this complex and demanding process of training.⁴⁹

Finally, if cross-references between these notes and the detailed analyses of the *exercises* that we choreograph are made, then we have a way of describing the connection between the students' difficulties and our responses in terms of the structures through which we will help them to solve their problems. A description of an *exercise* merely as a record of its general shape may be of limited use, but with appended notes it could be of enormous value. Observations on the aspects which students found hard to grasp, the last minute variations which were made, in response to problems that arose during the class, or the discoveries that students made through the exercise which we had not anticipated, may serve as an aid to future planning, helping us to shape new combinations which are increasingly relevant to the people we teach.

Adapting the material for different body types

The following are given as examples of the situations in which adaptation of movement material commonly needs to be made if students are to work with a respect, understanding and responsibility for individual physical structure.⁵⁰

Differences other than those described, for example the relative length of the achilles tendons or the particular build of the knee joint, have a similarly important impact on the

ways in which students may interpret the given movement material in order to work efficiently and safely within it.

It is suggested that in the early stages of working with a new group of students, teachers should help individual students who have particular anatomical challenges on which to work, by giving them the feedback that will enable them to understand the relationship between their physical structure and the demands of the class work being explored. Following these tutorials, relatively quick reminders during the class usually serve well, as reminders that not all students are expected to be working in the same ways with the class material. Where this is not the case, more regular tutorials will be necessary in order to clarify this very important point.

1) The degree of 'turn-out' or rotation of the hip joints in the hip sockets

If students are encouraged to work in ways that are anatomically sound, then the degree of rotation which they have in the hip sockets will determine the direction of their leg gestures. The position described as *2nd* will not necessarily be directly to the side, but rather as far to the side as possible taking physical limitations into account. For students with very little rotation this might mean diagonally forwards and when this is the case every movement which is initiated by the gesture of the leg will automatically be altered in spatial terms. For example, a brush of the leg to *2nd* continuing to reach away from the torso until it pulls the weight into a *lunge 2nd* will result in the *lunge* facing forward (hip bones face forward) whilst the leg carrying the weight of the body is diagonally forward of the stretched leg. If the student were then to run or step in that direction, she or he would be travelling on the diagonal rather than to the side of the studio. This inevitably has important consequences for the ways in which material is planned in spatial terms as well as for the groupings of students who travel at the same time and need to be going the same way!⁵¹

When it is important for the students to move as a group in the same direction, they will need to make adjustments to their way of working - but these should still be in relation to their own physical needs. For example, students with very little hip rotation might decide to fall to the side in order to be in line with others. They could do so by shifting their body's weight through the pelvis, then moving the working leg backwards in space from where it had been during the reach, rather than by following the reach of the leg gesture. Importantly, the fall would have been initiated in a different area of the body, but they would have retained an important physical principle, landing safely with the *alignment* of their working leg carefully placed over the working foot.

Alternatively, in the knowledge that the next part of the combination involved running to the side of the space, they could decide to *swivel* on their *standing* legs in order to alter the direction they faced whilst keeping their *working legs in 2nd* (to the diagonal front). Immediately on landing from the *lunge* they would then be able to run as a group, facing the same way. In this case, the *placement* of their weight would have to be sufficiently far forward on their feet to make turning (or *swivelling*) at any stage in a movement combination a possibility. In the context of this work, that would never be a problem, as students are encouraged to keep their weight well forward on their feet when travelling, as a general rule; however it is recognised that, within the context of different movement material this might constitute a significant shift of emphasis.⁵²

2) The mobility of the spine

In order to encourage maximum mobility of the whole spine, the work of curves and arches of the back needs to be *focused* on the areas where it is most needed for each individual. For example, to ask a novice student to think of curving only the upper back in *reaches* is counter-productive if, as is usual, the middle-back is comparatively immobile. Such an instruction would lead to an increasingly open upper back, possibly *round shoulders* if taken to extreme and a *middle-back* that was increasingly board-like.

On the other hand, careful and specific work on the least flexible area should result, eventually, in the whole spine being mobile - once this is the case the student can use all areas of the back in an *articulate* way.⁵³

Similarly, when *arching* the back it is important to try to extend the range of the least mobile areas, rather than to hold them rigidly whilst the more flexible parts of the spine extend more and more. Commonly the neck is liable to drop backwards and the lower spine is allowed to *arch*, in lieu of extension through the middle and upper spine. It is only when the neck and lower back are supported well and concentration is given to the area between, that flexibility along the length of the back will develop.⁵⁴

3) The connection between the work of the spine and the legs, as defined by the flexibility of the lower back and the hips

As the primary *focus* of the work of the back is to lengthen and mobilise the spine, this must take precedence over placing it at a particular point in space, especially for those whose lack of mobility in the lower back and hips make it impossible to reach fully through the spine if it is placed on the horizontal. Students should be encouraged, therefore, to sense the stretch in the back rather than to work towards the shapes which they may recognise all around them in the more mobile bodies of their peers. Similarly, the specific intention of the set exercise must be kept in mind by those students who are very flexible in certain areas of the body, lest repeated concentration on any one area prevents the development of different skills.⁵⁵

When there is limited flexibility in *tilts* to the side, students may learn where their *2nd* is, taking the tilt directly to the side even though it may not extend very far, as well as learning how to extend this depth by leaning diagonally forward as the tilt deepens, giving appropriate support from the back and abdominal muscles. It is important if they are to understand the different uses to which the two can be put, that they explore both

such movement ideas in the preparatory work, rather than using only the former in the first part of the class and the latter when travelling. For example, if they need to touch the floor when tilting to the side, whether for a particular effect or in order to get their weight safely onto the hand prior to descending to the ground, students without extraordinary flexibility will have to lean forwards during the tilt. On the other hand, during a strenuous *adage* combination it may be more appropriate to use a smaller tilt which will enable the student to check that they have *lifted* the torso sufficiently and that the muscles on both sides of the back and waist are working to support that *lift*. For advanced students who have such support readily at their disposal, *tilts* in *adage* can also be deep, further challenging their strength and the appropriate *placement* of their weight.⁵⁶

4) The use of the arms

Appropriate use of the arms, relating to body type, can be divided into two categories:

(a) Use that relates to the torso and the structure of the shoulder joints, dictating the positions in which the arms may be *held*.

Just as the particular build of the pelvic region has an effect on the use of the lower back and the legs, the build of the upper spine and the positioning of the shoulder girdle effect the use of the arms.

Similarities between the terms *in 2nd*, relating to the arms and the legs may be assumed. Whereas a reach of one arm to the side of the studio would involve a simple extension from the usual position adopted for one student, another might have significantly to alter the position of their shoulder-blade in order to achieve the same result - or alternatively, involve a rotation of the upper spine.

Again, when the work is relatively simple this does not normally create a problem; however when the arms are *held on the back in 2nd position* and the back is then involved in complex manoeuvres, particular care needs to be taken in order to retain the sensations underpinning the material, rather than to look for the achievement of a particular aesthetic line or body shape.

NB: An image that is frequently useful, although it has no logical, anatomical basis, is that of lifting the arms, perhaps to *5th* or to high diagonal forward, as if extending the reach of the back, in order to encourage further *lift* through the torso.

(b) Use in terms of the pathways of arms which may be *changed for different purposes*, relating to individual needs.

Initially it is helpful if alterations in the use of the arms is teacher-directed to ensure that the students become aware of the range of possibilities and their potential outcomes. For example, when moving the arms from *2nd* to *1st* the most direct pathway will enable the student to concentrate on maintaining the length of their necks; bringing the arms through *5th* on the way to *1st* encourages a lifting of the shoulders.

During work which is not too complex, perhaps because it is stationary or because it does not involve many changes of the back, most students should be able to work with the pathways of the arms in whatever ways they are set. However, as the work becomes more complex, alterations in these pathways, for some students, might be important in order to ensure either that old habits of mis-use do not recur, or that unhelpful tension is not built up.⁵⁷

Once they have become aware of such potential pitfalls, students may be encouraged to make alterations in the use of their arms, depending upon their individual intentions, within a set combination. This will continue to be a positive strategy provided that they

do not unduly limit the range of possibilities that they set themselves and it will be for the teacher to check that this is not the case.⁵⁸

Introduction to the structure of the class and method of presentation

The structure of the classes described here has evolved over a period of twenty-two years and continues to be influenced by the perceived effectiveness, or otherwise, of combining and juxtaposing exercises as detailed in the teaching notes (Appendix B). Whilst the need to take account of the students' intellectual and emotional development, as well as their physical progress in relation to their different *body-types*, has influenced the methodology adopted, continual re-assessment of observations leading to new decisions as to the amount of repetition, variation or development of dance material employed, have all contributed to the structure as it is now defined.

Apart from the issues relating to the pace of the class previously discussed, there is also an important relationship between the class structure and the patterns of physical energy experienced by the students which can be utilised to positive effect.

The energy that the students bring to the class in terms of their willingness to participate fully in the work (usually, though not always, closely aligned to their general motivation) is seen here as separate from the physical energy which rises and falls according to levels of stamina, revealing itself in a *commitment to, and pleasure in, working deeply in the muscles and in using space.*⁵⁹

Awareness of such *energy waves* leads to the structuring of the class with different overall shapes in mind. To begin with something very energetic/aerobic is sometimes effective, even if students come to the class already warmed-up, as it encourages feelings of being fully physically awake right from the outset. On the other hand a slow beginning, which

might be chosen if students come directly from another class that has finished with energetic jumping combinations, provides a way of *focusing* very differently and therefore freshly on the body.

The build-up to a final climactic point, finishing with a vigorous jumping combination, is a commonly used form and it is tempting to continue this tradition, if for no other reason than that the degree of energy expenditure involved often helps students to finish the class "on a high" - feeling positive about themselves and their work.⁶⁰ However, when students are very tired, perhaps revealing their lack of energy in an inability to *focus* on the landings from jumps which are vital to achieve safely, it will be more appropriate to shape the class differently. Then a shorter time spent jumping, or perhaps the use of only a *skimming* combination, followed by a return to some stationary work which is concerned with *centering* will be more advantageous.

Sometimes a slow build to the final climactic point is appropriate, however this is generally less effective than a series of smaller waves which give crescendos of energy at different points in the class and thereby prevent students from forming the habit of only using their full energy when jumping. This structure also allows people who cannot jump, perhaps because they are dealing with injuries, the sensation of having used their full energy even if they cannot complete the class.

Many decisions of this kind can be made while teaching in spontaneous response to the students' energy levels on any particular occasion. Nevertheless, in the interest of appropriate, general planning strategies it is necessary to bring experience of such patterns of effective energy use (as they are most commonly exhibited) into the complex equation regarding the juxtaposition of different kinds of work, determining the internal class structure, for the maximum of positive learning outcomes.

A general structural outline, in physical terms only, which takes account of these energy waves, is given below.

The preparatory section, from the *opening* to the *pliés*, is primarily concerned with mobilising, lengthening and strengthening the back, whilst being concerned with *alignment* and the effective carriage of the weight of the body on the feet, in parallel, 1st and 2nd positions. During this process, different areas of the back are isolated and the concept of initiating movement in the different areas is introduced.

The legs and feet are actively used, although kept at low levels, and a strong sense of *connection* is sought between the use of the torso and that of the legs. The *focus* throughout is on achieving the relevant aims with a minimum of muscular *effort*. In particular, unhelpful tension in the lower back and in the hip sockets is released, aided by the carriage of the weight on two feet for the majority of the back exercises.

In order to prevent a build-up of tension, exercises predominantly for the back are alternated, from time to time, with those for the legs and feet. In this way, no single area of the body experiences over-tiredness, and the ability to connect the torso and the legs is encouraged.

By the time the *plié* exercises are completed (approximately thirty minutes into the class) the back will have been worked in every plane in space, possibly involving the use of the floor, through curves, tilts, arches and spirals and with a variety of movement qualities.

Most of the exercises in this section are stationary, although they involve changes of weight either from one leg to the other, or in terms of the proportion of weight carried by each leg, so that the legs are rarely still and passivity is never encouraged. At least one of the exercises will involve moving through space (very often one from the *long back* category) in order that the students' ability to carry the principles learned in the preparatory section into travelling combinations may be tested.

The plié exercise is a transitional one. Merce Cunningham calls it "the last of the back exercises" (a structure retained by Richard Alston) and in the sense that the back is carried into deep plié with the *focus* remaining on its length and *alignment*, rather than shifting the *focus* to the specific work of the legs, this structural aim is retained.

However, it is also the beginning of a new section of the class which works on the shift of weight into crossed positions of the legs and feet, without altering the sense of openness in the lower back and hips. This serves as a preparation for later work with the weight entirely on one leg. In this respect the work differs from that of Merce Cunningham, as the weight shift is actively sought, even exaggerated, in ways which are more closely aligned to the ballet technique than to much contemporary work.

The following section of the class (approximately twenty minutes) concentrates more specifically on the articulation of the legs and feet, extending their reach further into space and higher in relation to the students' bodies thereby developing increased strength. The legs are used with different qualities and degrees of *effort*, depending on the context.

The relationship of the weight of the body to the legs is clarified, in a variety of different movement contexts, and the work of the back is combined with that of the legs in increasingly complex ways. Importantly, this particular area of the work *focuses* on the necessary changes in the use of the back and pelvis when the legs are involved at heights of more than forty-five degrees, especially when the working leg is behind the torso. Generally the weight is carried in 5th position for the duration of this section.

For the next twenty to thirty minutes, the *focus* of the work is on travelling across the floor, using many of the skills developed during the first two sections of the class. The remainder of the time is spent on jumping, first preparing the feet and legs to ensure that they are fully warm, then progressing through a series of combinations which build the power and knowledge of *co-ordination* and *phrasing* which will result in jumping with

ease and landing with control. Here again, *connections* are sought between previous work, in particular that of the back, and the skill to lift into the air with support from a strong use of the torso.

The following, more detailed description of the order of work undertaken in the classes, is given as an explanation as to how the intention of each exercise, or part of the class, dictates its relationship to the whole. On some occasions, when work on a particular exercise or section of the class needs to be extended, some of these categories may be missed out, but this would be unusual. Further, certain limited variations in the structure may be made in order to follow different patterns of energy. Examples of this would be finishing with the *Big Jump*, rather than *returning to centre*, or spending relatively longer on the combinations across the floor and less time on jumping. However, the structure as defined below is proposed as the most effective one through which the aims of this work can be realised.

The title of each exercise is followed by a list of its aims, intentions and any further relevant comments as to its effectiveness. The shorthand employed is listed and explained in the Glossary, as are the exact meanings of all the dance-related terms used, especially where this vocabulary is derived from ballet terminology, yet does not share the same meaning, or where it is commonly used within the dance profession in various different and possibly confusing contexts.

An account of how this structure was translated into the exact combination of exercises that constituted a term's work for students in their third year of study is given, in note form, in Appendix B.

Opening⁶¹

Aims :

- 1) Relax the back muscles and lengthen the spine;
- 2) Find correct *placement* of weight on feet;
- 3) Find appropriate *alignment* of torso when vertical;
- 4) Discover appropriate energy to lengthen and open the joints as a preparation for the work which is to follow.

These combinations are always set at a slow tempo in order to ensure sufficient time to concentrate on the spine as the *focus* of attention and as the primary source of movement for the preparatory part of the class.

Reaches⁶²

Aims :

- 1) Reach for further length of the spine and work on specific, individual areas of stiffness;
- 2) Find an appropriate use of the muscles on both the back and front of legs to support the *placement* of the hips on *centre* as the back reaches away:

[NB: for most people this means concentration on the work at the back of legs, as these tend to be less strong];

- 3) Find a sense of *connection* between the lengthening lower back, the *placement* of the pelvis and the work on the backs of the thighs;
- 4) Continue to work on relaxing the ankles and feet while concentrating on correct *placement* of weight.

When the lower back is inflexible, it will be especially important to work on the relaxation of muscles in that region, during the demi-pliés, which will gradually allow the lower back to lengthen with *ease* and without the pelvis *tucking under*.

This work follows the *Opening* exercise in order that the release of tension in the body achieved at the start of the class can enable the reaches to extend further, not being restricted by an unnecessary shortening of the muscles.

Back Stretches⁶³

Aims :

- 1) Isolate different areas of the back and extend flexibility of the spine;
- 2) Release any unnecessary tension in the hips and lengthen the ham strings and achilles tendons;
- 3) Work on the 'lift' in the abdominal muscles which serves to support the back;
- 4) Increase awareness of the reach of the spine into different planes or areas of space (vertical, horizontal, diagonal, front etc) whilst clarifying the spine's changing relationship to the hips and legs.

The exercise represents a third stage in the process of opening and lengthening the back. There are increasing physical demands, during the three stages, in terms of being more specific as to the area of initiation of the movement, the changing *placement* of weight on the legs and feet, and of strength and stamina.

Whereas the first two exercises use only demi-pliés, the *Back stretches* deepen the work of the legs, which have become warm by this point, into deep pliés in 2nd position and to deep *lunges* in 4th.

This work will be developed in the *Deep Spirals*.

Feet⁶⁴

Aims:

- 1) Mobilise different areas of the feet, concentrating on this work with the back upright;

2) With increased awareness of the *placement* and the stretch of the spine, achieved during the first three exercises, concentrate further on the *connection* between torso and legs.

It is important for novice students at the beginning of their training, and for all students early on in the term, when stamina needs to be built up again after a holiday, that too many consecutive back exercises do not lead to over-tiredness in that area, often leading to the problem of working with an excess of tension. Working on the feet, and the *connection* between torso and legs in a simple way, at this point in the class serves to ensure that students do not over-work their backs.

Middle -back⁶⁵

Aims:

- 1) *Focus* on the initiation of movement from the middle of the spine and increase awareness of this area as an important source of strength and *focus*;
- 2) Discovery (in slow motion) of the reach which can extend the spine into an arch;
- 3) Careful attention on where the arch is initiated and how far it can be extended before correct *placement* is lost;
- 4) *Focus* on the necessary support for the neck and on its relationship to the spine.

(See Glossary: Arch.)

Very often the middle back is the least flexible area of the spine, therefore this is an important exercise, being concerned with increasing mobility and strength.

Wide, reaching circles of the whole back, taken carefully in slow motion while the mid-back is carefully placed and held will train the mid-back to take most of the strain that the lower back would otherwise feel when the upper body is widely used in extended positions.

This work will be developed, especially in terms of *dynamics* and speed, in the Upper Back exercises .

Brushes: weight centre⁶⁶

Aims:

- 1) As in Feet above, the use of the upright back gives an opportunity to *focus* clearly on the legs, developing concentration on the *connection* between the torso and the legs as they begin to reach out into space;
- 2) Understanding the use of the vertical reach of the back to counterbalance the reach of the legs and awareness of the use of this lift through the body which can prevent the weight from sinking into the hips, thereby enabling the legs to stretch fully;
- 3) Deep concentration during these simple patterns on how the weight is placed on the feet and the relaxation of tension in the ankles which needs to occur in order to allow shifts of weight to be made with *ease*;
- 4) Understanding of the necessity to make these shifts on the standing leg in response to the different directions of reach of the working leg.

Many students will suffer cramps under the feet and tension in calves or shins leading to severe problems later unless this concept of weight *placement* is understood. It is therefore important to allocate sufficient time to comprehend the significance of this work at the outset. When the back is used in full extension, together with reaches of the legs, such shifts of weight become vital. Therefore these exercises serve as a preparation for the development of these ideas in *Brushes + back*, and all subsequent combinations which rely on the use of the counterbalancing of the work of torso and legs.

These patterns all start from 1st position enabling the openness of the lower spine achieved at the beginning of class to be maintained whilst demands increase in terms of the work of the legs. A later challenge will be to maintain this *freedom* in the back when the legs are used in crossed positions (see *Pliés* and *Tendus*).

The exercises are performed in one of three ways in relation to the carriage of the arms:

- 1) With the arms *dropped* or *hanging*, in order to encourage concentration on the work of the back and legs.
- 2) With the arms held in one position throughout the exercise (normally 2nd or 3rd position), or lowering and lifting again to the set position, coinciding with changes of weight from one leg to another. Either method will encourage the use of the back muscles to support the arms and to work on their reach as an extension of the reach of the back, reflecting particularly the width of the upper back when the arms are held in 2nd position.

NB: If the arms are held in the same position for too long a time, there is a danger that a build-up of tension in the neck and shoulders will ensue.

- 3) With *port de bras* patterns, increasing in complexity, which will
 - a) prevent arms from getting too tense,
 - b) encourage mobility in the upper back, shoulders, elbows and wrists,
 - c) challenge habitual ways of co-ordinating arms and legs and thereby open up new possibilities for *co-ordination* and *phrasing*, introduced here in a relatively simple form. This work serves as a preparation for the development of *co-ordination* exercises in *Fondus* and encourages the ability to *focus* on the specific details of any movement *phrase*.

The exercise serves as a change of *focus*, physical and mental, from the strenuous work on the back which precedes and follows it.

Threes⁶⁷

Aims:

- 1) To explore the use of different areas of the back with maximum fluidity, encouraged by the setting of such structures in triple time;
- 2) To use a faster tempo and/or fluidity of movement in order to test whether:
 - a) Sound *placement* can be maintained whilst working at speed,
 - b) Appropriate use of energy can be maintained at speed - especially concentrating on a lack of tension in the ankles and feet - in order that maximum mobility can be harnessed,
 - c) Different areas of the spine can be used in *articulate*, eloquent ways when the *phrasing* changes. (Fluidity generally encourages the merging of one physical statement into another - when this is not appropriate, can it be avoided?)

Deep Spirals⁶⁸

Aims:

- 1) Extensive exploration of the reach of the back into space - directly forwards, backwards into hinges, forward and back diagonals, arches and deep spirals;
- 2) Discovery of how this work can be supported by the use of 'lift' through the torso and the work of the legs.

With the weight *centre* on two feet in *parallel* and the pelvis facing forward, these *exercises* continue the work of the *Back stretches*, developing the range of exploration of the reach of the back into space, and in terms of strength and stamina. The *alignment* of the thighs in *parallel* position, with the knees bending 'over the feet ' is crucial, as is the support for the back given by strong work on the *back of the thighs* and the abdominal muscles. *Focus* is also given to directing the weight in different ways, through the lower back, hips, legs and feet in order to *counterbalance* these deep reaches of the back and therefore to perform them with *appropriate energy*. Being set later in the class than the *Back stretches*, when the body is warmer, these *exercises* explore the use of *deep spirals*,

arches and *hinges* as well as reaches forward, directly to the front or on the diagonal. Development of strength in the abdominal and lower back regions to support this work is vital, therefore simple versions of these explorations are repeated many times before Merce Cunningham's 'Exercises on Six ', from which this work is derived, are attempted. (See Glossary: *Exercise on Six*)

Brushes + Back⁶⁹

Aims:

- 1) To concentrate further on the *connection* between torso and legs;
- 2) To develop the movement ideas of *Brushes weight centre*.

The weight remains *centred* in the sense that the exercises do not travel through space - but they are combined with the work of the back which has been explored in the previous back exercises.

There are increased demands in terms of *co-ordination* as well as in purely physical terms, leading to a thorough exploration of the different ways in which movement can be *phrased* in the body. (See Glossary: *Phrasing*.)

The back and legs are *phrased* together, in isolation and with different combinations of both of these. All the possibilities in terms of *musicality* which this implies and which will be necessary when travelling across the floor in longer combinations can therefore be tried out here in simple form while the weight remains in place.

Isolations⁷⁰

Aims:

- 1) As in *3s* above, the whole range of movement in back and arms can be explored with changes in *dynamics* and whilst trying to maintain clarity in terms of the origination of each movement;

2) The patterns become increasingly complex and can work up to fast speeds again testing *placement* which should be assured by this point.

These exercises develop concepts of *co-ordination* introduced in the previous exercise, working on different, more unusual kinds of *connections* and testing these out while maintaining basic principles of weight *placement*.

Upper Back⁷¹

Aims:

- 1) Developing the necessary strength in the lower back and abdominal muscles, and supporting work in the legs, to be able to initiate movement in the upper body which extends to its physical limits, away from the centre of gravity;
- 2) The back will extend away from *centre* as it did earlier in *Reaches* and will connect from one position to another as it did in the *mid-back* exercises but the *focus* will now be on maintaining such work at different tempi and with various uses of *phrasing*, all of which put to the test the *placement* both of torso and legs, and of weight on the feet.

This work extends into the shifting of weight as the limit of reach in the spine is felt and further stretch leads to pulling the weight off the feet. Weight shifts are initiated in different areas of the back (for example, using the mid-back to pull the weight backwards off the legs). Careful concentration allows for the differentiation between this and weight changes which occur because of reach in the legs.

Long Back⁷²

Aims:

- 1) To find the greatest possible length from tail bone to top of head and to experience the *softness* in the hip socket and ankles which allows for this deepest reach;
- 2) To try to replicate this *easy*, long stretch when standing (and to continue with it in the next exercises - pliés);

- 3) To feel the shift of weight which can come from this use of the back both on the feet when remaining in place AND through space when the back reaches to pull the weight off the legs;
- 4) In combination with deep *lunges*, to be aware of the long *connection* between head and heel (through the back and the length of the reaching leg). And again to try to replicate this when standing;
- 5) To feel the lengthened spine in different planes in space: horizontal, vertical, diagonal and to work with clarity in these different areas;
- 6) To find a way of working the arms as an extension of the back when reaching forward, without 'lifting' the shoulders and without undue tension in the upper body.

Pliés⁷³

Aims:

- 1) To complete the range of possibilities in terms of the carriage of the back by taking it, in its fully lengthened state, down into deep plié;
- 2) To maintain the work on the sense of *freedom* in the back as the legs move, for the first time, into crossed positions.

By the end of pliéés the back should have been worked in every plane in space, through all its possible positions, with a wide variety of dynamic demands and at a variety of speeds.

The *connection* between back and legs should have been deeply felt and, even if only in simple combinations, the back should have been co-ordinated with the legs and arms in a variety of ways.

Movement which is initiated by different areas of the back should have been understood and physically clarified.

Advanced students can think of this also as the beginning of a new section of the class as increasing demands are made in terms of *co-ordination* of back, legs and arms. The use of demi and deep pliés at the same time as the full range of movement in the spine makes these exercises some of the most demanding of the class.

The strengthening work in the legs, together with all the other developing skills, as listed above, serves as a good preparation for adage.

Tendus⁷⁴

Aims:

- 1) Starting from 5th position, to repeat all the challenges previously explored through the work of the legs, with the added demand of the crossed position;
- 2) To develop the use of the ham strings as the shift of weight is clarified;
- 3) To confirm the directions of travel implied by this change of *alignment* as being directly in front of, or behind, the spine.

Particular emphasis is placed on attaining these crossed positions, even if that prevents a full stretch of the working leg. The 5th position should eventually be comprehended as a strong, *centred* place from which the working leg can move out with *ease*, because of the secure *placement* of the weight of the body over the standing leg.

An extension of this idea is given in the use of the arms, held in 3rd position in order that the weight of both arms is also on the side of the standing leg. Further development of the same principle involves the use of the back in deep spirals towards the working side.

Because the understanding of weight *placement* is so crucial, many of the exercises work on the shift from 1st to 5th, making the necessary, albeit often minimal, changes increasingly conscious.

When the weight shifts from one foot to the other, this may be initiated either by the feet or by different areas of the back. Concurrently, the challenge of using varied methods of *phrasing*, and port de bras patterns, may be incorporated.

Ronds de jambe⁷⁵

Aims:

- 1) To increase the ability to use the maximum available rotation in the hip socket, through circular movements of the leg, whilst maintaining the reach through the working leg and keeping the torso's weight on the standing leg;
- 2) To concentrate on *phrasing* movement with the continuity that circles suggest (changes in tempi might be used during the circle, however there is never a stillness).

NB: Preparation for this will sometimes be given during the *tendus* when the action of opening the working leg to 2nd, then closing to 5th is done as a circular action.

As a first stage, exercises which concentrate on lengthening and *freeing* the hip socket are given. This use of the hip is then more likely to be sustained during the ronds. The working foot retains its contact with the floor for a considerable time before the same action can be effectively carried into the air.

The second stage will be to work the legs only just off the floor - to concentrate on the *placement* of the pelvis and lower spine. It is important that both sides of the back can maintain length, otherwise adding curves, spirals and arches can be dangerous as they will be executed with a twist in the lower spine.

The third and final stage involves the use of the legs extended to their full height. Maintaining the lift through both sides of the back is vital here, although it is recognised that this length will not be equal and the pelvis will no longer be able to retain its

previously square *placement*. However, advanced students will be strong enough to lift sufficiently between the vertebrae for this inevitable twist not to cause a problem.

Further development of the material involves the addition of separately choreographed work for the back. Frequently this work is also based on the notion of circularity. Eventually the two challenges of working the legs and the back in extended and continuously moving circles are put together. Final stages of the development of this concept involve the addition of circles in a variety of ways, leading to combinations which include turns and arcs running through space so that the whole body is felt to work in circles.

NB: When these patterns become very complex, the exercises should be preceded by brushes that are relatively simple, or followed by fondus that are not too taxing. It is always important not to make the material so complex that no energy is left for working with real concentration on the particularities of the challenges contained in each exercise - and for imbuing each exercise with individuality, as previously discussed.

Fondus⁷⁶

Aims:

- 1) To develop strength in the thighs by lowering the body's weight on one leg, thereby encouraging the supple strength needed when landing from jumps and to sustain the slow, strong movements of adage;
- 2) To *focus* on the way in which the weight must be carried on the feet when complicated changes of the back are involved, inevitably altering this weight *placement*, (NB: the patterns of the legs are deliberately simple in order that due concentration is given to this important issue);
- 3) To concentrate on the initiation of movement from different parts of the back, resulting in different changes of the legs - bending, stretching or reaching in different

directions. (NB: the legs work at an intentionally low level, so that appropriate energy may be given to this particular challenge);

- 4) To continue to work on the degree of tension in the hip sockets which builds the strength necessary for adage work and yet allows the body to lie down on, or towards, the thigh. (See Glossary: *Deep fold*.)

For students who have already grasped the concepts listed above, these exercises can also be executed with the legs reaching to their full height extension. In this case, they would take the place either of the Adage or the Développé combination so that a maximum of two, out of the possible three strenuous combinations would be explored in any one class.

Développés⁷⁷

Aims:

- 1) To work for full height extension and full stretch of the legs, with maximum strength in the hips and on the standing leg, providing support for this strenuous action;
- 2) To maintain the length of the working thigh (that is, with the knee still reaching away from the hip) as the leg passes through attitude positions;
- 3) To use the back to counterbalance such a full reach of the legs. The addition of this work for the back, in its many different directions of reach, is a development of the work begun during the first brushes of the class and extended during the *tendus*, *ronds* and *fondus* exercises. This is the final stage of preparation for the travelling work which will also involve deep use of the back and legs together, and for the jumps which carry the same concept into the air;
- 4) To concentrate on the carriage of the weight on the standing leg and the full changes of weight involved in falling *off-centre* into deep *lunge* positions - leading the fall with either the reach of legs or with the reach of the back (or both together). This work will be developed, especially in terms of dynamic range, in the following *Battements* exercises.

These exercises involve different *co-ordinations* of the back and legs in their most strenuous forms. They may not be any more complicated than the exercises which precede them, but they are nevertheless the most physically taxing, therefore the patterns of these combinations should not also be excessively demanding mentally. Furthermore, it is generally more advantageous if these combinations are simple in terms of changes of direction and *focus*. For periods of time it is useful to set the exercises facing different fronts so as not to become reliant on the use of the mirror and yet to be able to *focus* on the *placement* of the body in relation to the squareness of the walls of the studio. Direction changes within the combinations are not given until the following Adage section of the class.

Adage⁷⁸

Aims:

- 1) The principal aim is to combine all aspects of the work covered up to this point in the class and to do so with particular concentration on *musicality* and *phrasing*;
- 2) To retain the controlled, sustained quality which characterises Adage work whilst adding the further challenges of changes of direction and *focus* and travelling through space.

These are slow, sustained movement combinations which involve working with full height leg extensions, as in *développés*, and using the supple strength and elasticity developed during the *fondus* exercises, the full reach of the back that was explored during the preparatory section of the class and maximum physical strength.

Depending on the physical needs of the students, these combinations may be set at different points within the class structure, either:

- (a) Following the *Battements*, in order that the *Battements* can serve as a preparation for *Adage*, by loosening the hip joints and working the legs to full extension prior to using them with full strength, or

(b) Prior to the *Battements*, so that the use of a weighty swinging action in the legs can stretch and loosen the hip sockets fully following the strenuous *Adage* work which may have precipitated a build up of tension there.

Battements⁷⁹

Aims:

- 1) To extend the use of the brushing action of the foot against the floor, leading the working leg into full height reaches which will serve as a useful preparation for jumps;
- 2) To develop the strength implied by such an extended use of the legs, with the necessary strength on the supporting leg and in the back;
- 3) To develop the use of *falls* and the recovery of the weight to *centre* (vertical);
- 4) To *focus* on the different uses of rhythm in this context, leading to different qualities for the *battement* action - either one of attack, of reach, of a swinging action, or different combinations of these;
- 5) To use the swinging action of the working leg to loosen and stretch out the hips.
(See *Adage* above.)

Quick Flick⁸⁰

Aims:

- 1) To loosen any excess of tension built up in the body during the *Adage*.
(NB: when *Battements* are used prior to the *Adage* section, this exercise will be particularly useful);
- 2) To change the *focus* of work to movement which is swift and initiated predominantly in the feet;
- 3) To work for a sense of weight in the feet which will be used either in the movement material which travels across the floor or in the subsequent jumping combinations.

When the exercises involve fast changes of the direction of *focus* (without necessarily travelling) they also serve well as a preparation for fast changes of direction when travelling across the floor which are more readily achieved when the direction of *focus* is clear.

Across the floor⁸¹

Aims:

- 1) Through combinations which *focus* on moving across the space, to make use of *connections*, both physical and intellectual, with the previous work of the class, utilising a wide selection of the skills previously rehearsed;
- 2) To increase the physical demands by adding the dimension of travel in as expansive a manner as possible, and the intellectual demands by combining challenges in ways which have not been encountered until this point in the class.

At least two of the exercises previously encountered in the same class will be directly linked to the challenges of the travelling combinations so that the use of *connections* described above may be readily understood.

Complicated *co-ordinations* may be practised further, through repetitions of the same movement material the next day, through different combinations which contain the same physical challenges, or through variations of the original material which maintain the same *focus* but increase their demands in some way - for example, in terms of *phrasing*, stamina or physical complexity. Thus the same physical principles may be explored during the course of a whole week or might continue as a theme for an entire term with other subsidiary themes changing more frequently in order to retain the students' interest and maximum development.

Very complex or unusual *co-ordinations* may be re-introduced later in the class, for example as jumping sequences. In this way, those students who were not immediately

able to grasp the concept under scrutiny will have a further chance to comprehend it without having to repeat the same combination too many times. Meanwhile, those students who found it simple to grasp will have a chance to put their new knowledge to the test immediately, by applying it to the new situation. Did they, for example, understand the concept sufficiently to be able to use it whilst leaping into the air with the strength needed for a *Big Jump*, or whilst flitting across the floor with the speed required for some of the *Skimming* combinations?

Inevitably, students who take relatively longer to assimilate new information might still be trying to make sense of the new *co-ordinations* and therefore not be able to concentrate fully on getting into the air in such a situation. Therefore it might be appropriate to work on a simpler jumping combination in addition, so that the particular skills required for elevation are also rehearsed. It should not be assumed that those who are not able to come to terms with a particular challenge in one situation are necessarily the ones who will find it hard to apply to a different physical context. Very often it is the very fact of meeting the same problem within a different combination that helps the student to discover its logic, so that whilst one might grasp the concept and apply it to a travelling combination, another might be capable of using it in the air, especially if elevation is an aspect of class work in which they normally excel.

It is not important that all students should succeed in all aspects of all parts of the class. The lack of appropriate challenges that such a situation implies would not lead to their continuing development. As Merce Cunningham suggests, it is important that every day, in some respect, they should have the opportunity to go beyond what they believed to be possible:

in every class, [...] at some moment the student should touch the utmost limits of what he is capable then, and every day, he should achieve that and enlarge it.⁸²

One of the most challenging aspects of the technique class work is to bring the knowledge gained during the first part of the class to the travelling section. Students very often need help in making the *connections* between the skills they have learned early on and the ways in which such skills can be utilised when travelling. When these *connections* are not made, the first hour of class tends to be treated as a series of exercises and the last half hour as dancing or performing. In this way separations are continually being made between the logic of the preparation for moving through space, the technique required to perform the travelling combinations with eloquence and clarity, and the pleasure of moving which is very often only experienced in the latter part of the class. Conversely, when such *connections* are understood, the preparatory work, through its logic, ceases to seem dry and *unimaginative* and there is often an experience of genuine pleasure in the work which is so physically and mentally taxing.

Preparation for Jumps⁸³

Aims:

- 1) To ensure that the legs and feet are fully warm prior to jumping. Although they will inevitably have been in use during the combinations across the floor, the particular demands of jumping combinations necessitate careful and thorough preparation of the legs and feet. Furthermore, when the class size is large and students have to take it in turns to travel across the floor, some students may not have been working physically for some time when this point in the class is reached;
- 2) To prepare for the jumps in terms of the *dynamics* needed for small elevation by introducing that dynamic into these combinations;
- 3) To *focus* again on *placement* and *alignment* issues, to avoid injury when landing from jumps.

These exercises take various forms:

- (a) fast brushes and fast changes of weight which are initiated by pushing the feet strongly against the floor, or

(b) isolations of different parts of the feet, for example lifting the heel as far as possible away from the floor whilst the toes maintain contact, using just the toes to push against the floor, or stretching the whole foot immediately, using that action to push off the floor

(c) combinations of pliés and relevés, imitating the process of landing (plié) and jumping (relevé) whilst concentrating on *alignment* and the action of pushing down against the floor (prior to relevé) which will be the initiating force for small jumps.

Jumps: In Place⁸⁴

Aims:

- 1) To retain concentration on sound *placement* as the body goes into the air for the first time;
- 2) To strengthen the feet as a preparation for bigger jumps;
- 3) To build general physical strength and stamina.

These first jumps are small, do not travel and are combined in simple ways in order that appropriate attention can be given to *alignment*.

Small Jumps⁸⁵

Aims:

- 1) To combine small light jumps with turns or runs which travel through space although the jumps themselves will still be predominantly on the spot, or
- 2) To use the back in various ways (for example, lifting from a curve to *centre*) either to initiate a jump or to give the impetus needed to take a jump higher into the air, while retaining an *easy* use of the legs.

NB: Exercises which have this aim build on the work of the exercises in the *tendus* category in terms of the *co-ordination* of the back and the legs. They also make

reference to all previous exercises which were designed to encourage specific use of different areas of the back for different purposes.

Skimming⁸⁶

Aims:

- 1) To use all the skills discovered and rehearsed in the *Small Jump* combinations, with the added challenge of travelling as far as possible through space;
- 2) To work with increasing complexity in terms of *focus* and rhythm, as runs, fast changes of direction and turns are added;
- 3) To use the physical *effort* required in order to jump swiftly across the floor as an aerobic preparation for the final and most strenuous combinations. (See below.)

Big Jumps⁸⁷

Aims:

- 1) To work for maximum height of elevation;
- 2) To work on landing with control and appropriate attention to *alignment*;
- 3) To build power and stamina;
- 4) To bring all the skills developed during other jumping combinations together and to extend them through the added challenge of further height and distance of travel.

To jump slowly and with the height demanded in these combinations requires a very particular strength and takes years to achieve for many students - either because they do not have a sense of the requisite *co-ordination*, or because they lack the strength to carry such *co-ordination* high into the air.

Apart from building strength gradually, through smaller jumping combinations, *connections* can usefully be made with other areas of class work which serve to build the technique needed in this context:

- (a) the strength of the *Battement* action which will often initiate the lift into the air,
- (b) the lift in the body (an essential part of the majority of the class work) in combination with the push off the back foot (see especially *Brushes* and *Prep for Jumps*) which will help the *torso* to follow the initial thrust of the leg,
- (c) the timing of the *co-ordination* of the initial thrust and the response of the body to that action (see especially *Fondu* exercises which concentrate upon the *co-ordination* of back and legs in different ways),
- (d) the relationship of the weight of the body and the legs (a key concept in all the class work - see especially *Brushes + Back, Long Back, Tendus, Adage* and *Small Jumps*), understanding of which will lead to the projection of the weight of the body directly upwards, forwards or even backwards depending on where the weight is needed on landing from jumps.

Although it is sometimes appropriate to work with complex movement material at the end of class, all the elements of the *Big Jump* combinations can be practised within simple structures, encouraging the students to ensure that the most efficient use of energy and *alignment* is being employed, or simply as an exhilarating end to class which is not encumbered by unnecessary complexity.

Return to Centre⁸⁸

Aims:

- 1) To warm down slowly following the exertion of the big jumps;
- 2) To make use of the warmth of the body as an aid to the stretching which is incorporated into these exercises;

- 3) To *focus* on fundamental principles of *alignment*, recognising their place as key issues of the technical work, and therefore the value of using this exercise as the final statement of the class;
- 4) To return to *centre* :
 - a) through slow work which aids the use of the deep muscles of the body,
 - b) through the use of a shifting *centre* of gravity as the body works through different areas of space and onto the floor,
 - c) through *alignment*, returning to the vertical to finish,
 - d) through a return to *focusing* inward, on individual sensations, feelings and ideas - separate from the relationships explored whilst travelling with others through the space.

Notes and References

- ¹ Louis Arnaud Reid, *Ways of Understanding and Education* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1985), Foreword by Harold Osborne, p. x.
- ² Acocella, J., *Mark Morris* (NY: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1993), p. 251.
- ³ Acocella, J., *ibid*, p. 251.
- ⁴ For example, see Nicholas Dromgoole 'Grave of All My Hopes', *Sunday Telegraph*, 6 May 1990, Arts III, p. x.
- ⁵ Acocella, J., *ibid*, p. 257.
- ⁶ See Chapter Two.
- ⁷ See Chapter Three: Adapting the material for different body types.
- ⁸ See Chapter Three: Connections.
- ⁹ See 'Defending strategies' in Claxton, G., *Teaching To Learn: A Direction for Education* (London: Cassell Educational, 1990), p.129.
- ¹⁰ Claxton, G., *ibid.*, p.115. See also Video reference [3].
- ¹¹ See Chapter One: The 'Healthier Dancer', and Video reference [4].
- ¹² Acocella, J., (1993) *ibid.* pp. 79-80.
- ¹³ See Video reference [5].
- ¹⁴ See Video reference [6].
- ¹⁵ See Video reference [7].
- ¹⁶ For a detailed description and explanation of this structure, see Introduction to the structure of the class and method of presentation, at the end of this chapter.
- ¹⁷ See Video reference [8].
- ¹⁸ See Video reference [9].
- ¹⁹ See Video reference [10].
- ²⁰ See Video reference: [11].
- ²¹ See Video reference [12].
- ²² See Video reference [13].
- ²³ See Video reference [14].
- ²⁴ See Video reference [15].
- ²⁵ See Video reference [16].
- ²⁶ See Video reference [17].

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- 27 See Video reference [18].
- 28 See Video reference [19].
- 29 See Video reference [20].
- 30 See Video reference [21].
- 31 See Video reference [22].
- 32 See Video reference [23].
- 33 See Video reference [24].
- 34 See Video reference [25].
- 35 See Video reference [26].
- 36 See Video reference [27].
- 37 See Video reference [28].
- 38 See Video reference [29].
- 39 See video reference [30].
- 40 See Video reference [31].
- 41 See Video reference [32].
- 42 See Video reference [33].
- 43 See Video reference [34].
- 44 See Video reference [35].
- 45 See Video reference [36].
- 46 Claxton, G., *Teaching to Learn*, p. 53.
- 47 Examples of physical connections are given at Video reference [7].
- 48 See Chapter Two: Introduction.
- 49 Examples of such notes, made with a class of 2nd year students in 1996, are given in Appendix D.
- 50 See Appendix E: London Contemporary Dance School assessment sheet, category one.
- 51 See Video reference [37].
- 52 See Video reference [38].
- 53 If significant changes are to occur within the limited time span of a three year course of study, it is important to note that supporting physical work, undertaken outside class time, will be essential for most students.

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- 54 See Video reference [39].
- 55 See Video reference [40].
- 56 See Video reference [41].
- 57 See Video reference [42].
- 58 See Video reference [43].
- 59 See Appendix E: London Contemporary Dance School assessment sheet, category three.
- 60 This link between vigorous dancing and sensations of well-being and increased self-esteem has been noted by Morgan and Hanna. See Morgan, W.P., 'Affective Benificence of Vigorous Physical Activity', *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 17 no.1 (1985), pp. 94-100 and Hanna, J.L., *Dance and Stress: Resistance, Reduction and Euphoria* (NY: AMS Press,1988).
- 61 See Video reference [44].
- 62 See Video reference [45].
- 63 See Video reference [46].
- 64 See Video reference [47].
- 65 See Video reference [48].
- 66 See Video reference [49].
- 67 See Video reference [50].
- 68 See Video reference [51].
- 69 See Video reference [52].
- 70 See Video reference [53].
- 71 See Video reference [54].
- 72 See Video reference [55].
- 73 See Video reference [56].
- 74 See Video reference [57].
- 75 See Video reference [58].
- 76 See Video reference [59].
- 77 See Video reference [60].
- 78 See Video reference [61].
- 79 See Video reference [62].
- 80 See Video reference [63].

81 See Video reference [64].

82 Cunningham, M., *The Dancer and the Dance: Merce Cunningham in conversation with Jacqueline Lesschaeve*, (London: Marion Boyars, 1985), p. 74.

83 See Video reference [65].

84 See Video reference [66].

85 See Video reference [67].

86 See Video reference [68].

87 See Video reference [69].

88 See Video reference [70].

Chapter 4

Video Presentation

Introduction

The video examples of class work given here are an inter-related visual and sound presentation of significant features of the methodology described in chapters one to three. They do not represent a recipe for success in teaching dance, nor do they constitute a whole class; rather they serve as examples of the kind of physical results which may ensue when class work is planned according to the methodology proposed.

The students who worked on the video were all students at London Contemporary Dance School. They have been generous in agreeing to the use of sections of film which reveal the complexity of the work, rather than those which highlight their personal strengths as dancers. The decision to use such material here, rather than to exhibit only those sections which manifest the dancers' skills to greatest effect, is made in order to emphasise the work being done rather than the result being achieved. In this respect, the intention of the video mirrors the intention of each class, being primarily concerned with process rather than with product.

All the dancers concerned have worked with the author for a significant period of time so that the essence of the physical material is well understood although the specific exercises shown here were not rehearsed prior to the filming process. In some instances, which are identified, the selected sections of film show a dancer repeating a movement combination several times in order to emphasise both the process of gradual clarification which occurs and the learning strategies which the student has chosen to employ in order to deal with the physical challenges encountered.

For the reader's ease of access to the filmed examples of work, the video presents these examples in numerical order with cross-references to the footnotes of the main text. Where appropriate, exact repetitions are given to ensure that the reader is not required to search through the film for sections of material under discussion. For this reason, the video is long and is best used in conjunction with the text when clarification of issues is required.

The following introductory paragraphs form an integral part of the video presentation, giving additional information on the visual material which is not to be found in the text of the previous chapters. This text forms the script for the voice-over. Readers who wish to concentrate on the visual material without the interruption of sound may prefer to read each section prior to viewing the corresponding sections of film.

The decision not to use music for this presentation has been made in order that the *dynamics* of the movement material are emphasised. It is believed that music would detract from the clarity of the dancers' contributions, encouraging the viewer to *perceive* the filmed work as a performance rather than as part of a working process. Furthermore, musical accompaniment may encourage the viewer to concentrate on one particular aspect of the material (for example, the softness of the limbs, if the music were lyrical), whereas without sound different qualities may come to the fore. When seen without music, the viewer may more readily empathise with the dancers, and the process in which they are involved is emphasised.

In situations where the time structures of the exercises are particularly relevant, these are given in the text together with metronome markings to enable the viewer to understand fully the relationship between the underlying rhythmic structure and the forms presented on screen. The shorthand 'M' (metronome) is used to indicate the tempo; each beat on the metronome, once it has been set at the speed suggested in the text, represents one crotchet.

Each paragraph introduces a film clip with the intention of aiding the viewer in pinpointing the details of the movement material which best illustrate the issues under discussion.

[1]

Chapter 2: footnote 87

Spatial awareness

Li-Li shows a combination travelling across the floor. Having learned the combination the dancers are asked to perform it in cannon, and to make contact with each other at designated points in the movement material. Jürg, Alison and Li-Li show their first attempt to meet this challenge. Note that Li-Li realises that she will not be able to reach Alison's arm at the key point and hops across the space in order to ensure that they do make contact. In doing so she reveals that she understands that this work on relationships in space takes priority over her individual performance of the set material.

Later the dancers are asked to circle each other as well as to make contact at the same moment as before. It is hard for them to do this while maintaining the rhythm of the combination, however they have repeated the material several times by now and manage to meet all these challenges.

[2]

Chapter 2: footnote 88

Travelling: a combination structured by changes of direction

The movement material here is simple. It is the changes of direction which provide additional interest and which will, once learned, give structure to the combination. The students have been encouraged to *focus* primarily on spatial concerns by clarifying the direction of travel first, then the rhythmic structure, and finally the development of the movement material.

You will see that however complex the material becomes, through the addition of multiple turns, the dancers continue to mark out the four corners of the space, and turn to face the corner from which they began before the slow rotation into the repeat.

[3]

Chapter 3: footnote 10

Transference of concepts

During this first take, notice that Jürg makes the weight shift from 1st position to 5th position visible. The variation which requires a change of feet, closing in 1st position each time, reveals that he can manage this because he has kept his weight in 1st; that is, with the weight of his torso falling between his two legs in order that no shift of weight is needed.

On the second take, notice that he places his weight in 5th position straight away, so that although he is closing his feet into 1st position, he is not putting weight on his working foot every time it meets the floor. This is not necessary for successful completion of the exercise, but it reminds him that he has a choice as to where he places his weight, even though the shape of the combination is set and the closing positions of his feet are prescribed. This time the variation shown requires a fast change of feet from 5th position. He transfers the concept applied to the previous exercise (at a slower tempo) and keeps his weight between his legs in 5th position in order to make the change of feet possible without a visible shift of weight. Notice that he is unable to maintain a stable pelvis while working his legs at this speed. However, when he is more confident of the pattern of the combination, he will be able to place his weight more securely and to use the brushing action of his working foot against the floor more effectively. [Then he will be able to eliminate these changes in his lower back.]

In the example of a combination built on brushes which extend into *lunge*s, Jürg discovers that he cannot transfer the concepts discovered at a slow tempo when he speeds up significantly. The reach of his back into a long curve, followed by its slow return to *centre* has to change *dynamics* in order to pick up sufficient speed. When we see him trying to meet the demands of the faster tempo, notice that he is not simply doing the

same thing more quickly, rather he is working with a different physical sensation - that of drop and rebound.

Similarly, there are details of *co-ordination* and *phrasing* which he finds very hard to apply to the new, faster tempo. When working slowly he is able to show the *co-ordination* and isolation of back and legs very clearly. Notice at the end of the movement combination that he brings his working leg to 5th position, in plié, before he completes the circling of his back into a *centred* curve. In the faster version, although he is battling to achieve the same *co-ordination*, his weight is fully on two feet only when his back is dropped forward. Working at speed is something that he finds difficult and his instinct is to return to more usual patterns of *co-ordination* in this situation, dropping the weight of his legs and his back at the same time. It is particularly hard for him to work against this instinct because he has discovered that in order to achieve the necessary speed in his back, the use of drop and rebound is crucial. However, he must now learn that the same rule cannot be applied to his legs if he is to maintain the required separation between the two. You will see that he does manage to maintain this separation on his final attempt at it.

[4]

Chapter 3: footnote 11

Individual Dynamics

Jürg and Li-Li show their first attempt at a travelling combination. Notice that they both work deeply with their backs, but with very different movement qualities. Jürg works with control, placing his back or reaching it carefully as he travels. Li-Li drops hers, or throws it forwards, working with much less tension. Often this approach throws her off-balance and she has to jump to regain control of her legs and keep to the rhythmic structure.

Because their approaches are so different, they will need to concentrate on different aspects of the work in order to improve their performances. As they continue working on the combination, Jürg's task will be to build on what he has achieved so far, trying to loosen and deepen the work of his back, allowing his centre of gravity to drop closer to the floor. Li-Li's challenge will be to retain the *freedom* which she has, while clarifying the work of her legs.

For this second example, the dancers have been asked to learn the physical and rhythmic structure of the movement material as accurately as possible, but to make individual choices as to its dynamic shape. This is the first take and you will notice that there are occasional rhythmic inaccuracies, and some variations in the shapes of a few of the arm positions. However, the interesting variations in movement *dynamics* prove how very differently a group of students can approach the same work, giving it an individual stamp.

[5]

Chapter 3: note 13

Variation of intention: real and apparent effort

Li-Li and Jürg work together, in their own time, in order to clarify the difference between the *effort* which is actually used by the dancer and that which is made visible. Jürg begins by performing the same movement material twice, once on his own and once with Li-Li using her body weight against him, so that he has to push against her during the movement combination. The external shapes and visible *dynamics* remain the same in both instances. However, internally there is a very different degree of *effort* going on when he is required to work against resistance. This is exaggerated when Li-Li performs the exercise. Jürg pushes against her with a force which almost topples her over; however she has great core strength which enables her to maintain a sense of *ease* and softness in her limbs even when the internal work required is significantly increased

[6]

Chapter 3: note 14

Phrasing

The example shown here is of a demi-plié exercise designed to develop the awareness of different possibilities for *phrasing* within the body by involving *co-ordinations* of the legs, back and arms in different ways. The pattern of demi-pliés is deliberately simple in order that concentration can be given to the isolation or *co-ordination* of body parts and the relative timing of each.

As Jürg begins, he co-ordinates a simple port de bras with a demi-plié and stretch of the legs. The second plié is co-ordinated with a long curve and the stretch of the legs with the reach of his back to *centre* (vertical). As he stretches his legs following the third demi-plié, you will notice that his back is only half way along its pathway to vertical. This time he is moving his back more slowly in relation to his legs in order that it reaches vertical at the height of his rise to relevé. This requires more than a simple change of timing; in order to achieve that timing he must work with a different energy in the body. Subtle changes in weight *placement* will also be necessary to allow for the smooth lift through the back while also shifting forwards onto the front of the feet to complete the relevé.

As Jürg repeats the whole exercise in profile, the *co-ordination* of back and legs is clarified. Notice also how the *ease of alignment* he has achieved enables him to *focus* on the particular demands of this work on *phrasing*. That is, he is not distracted by balance problems which would have ensued had he not placed his weight so carefully over his feet. See also the vertical *alignment* of his pelvis, which remains constant. Even during the deep curve there is a sense of weight in the lower back and a *connection* between this sensation and the work of the legs which is one of the fundamental concepts underpinning this work.

On the repeat, Jürg works with a further variation, opening his arms from 1st to 2nd positions so that he has completed the stretch of his legs following the first demi-plié before his arms open. Again he has to concentrate on the relative timing of different body parts for this to become a possibility.

[7]

Chapter 3: note 15

Connections

Two examples of *connections* are given. In the first, you will see an adage combination, followed by similar concepts presented in a travelling jump. Jürg performs the adage, working for linear clarity as well as for a clear understanding of weight *placement* as he travels through the combination, rehearsing the moves that he will eventually make during the jumping material. The transitions will inevitably be different and some details are changed, but much of the internal muscular work will remain the same and can therefore be practised here, in slow motion, giving plenty of time for careful thought. For example, as he rehearses the position which will become his landing position, he can check that he has all the necessary muscular support and that his weight is placed carefully over his standing foot. If he finds that, for example, he is not engaging his *turn-out* sufficiently on his standing leg then he has time to do so before he moves on and before it becomes a major safety issue as it would be, following a turn in the air, in the jumping combination. The specific requirement to complete a slow turn in a passé position with a tilt of the back, even though this does not occur in the later jumps, develops the ability to sustain that position for a significant length of time without becoming locked into a static state. This is a pre-requisite for the skill which is actually demanded in the later combination.

[The specific skill which will be required later can be described as the ability to control the degree of *suspension* in the passé position before falling out of it in such a way that

the *suspension* is maximised and the fall carefully timed so that the runs leading into the repeat of the combination are rhythmically accurate.]

Li-Li performs the related jumping combination. Notice the turn in the air which was rehearsed on the ground, the landing position from the opening jump and the fall out of the *passé* position previously discussed.

In the second example Li-Li shows how the weight changes and the *co-ordination* of back and legs that she will need in an adage combination can be rehearsed much earlier in class with the legs on the ground. Again there are some variations between the first combination and the later one to which it is connected. However, as in the first example, it is similar enough for her to be able to work on the significant features of the combination before she has to deal with the added complication of full extension in the legs.

During the brushes combination, Li-Li concentrates on the relationship between the *placement* of her pelvis and that of her standing leg, while her back reaches away from that *centre* of weight. For the viewer it may seem as though these two exercises are vastly different, however for the dancer many of the internal sensations are the same. For example, notice the change in the lower back and pelvis when the working leg closes from *tendu* behind to first position. This is replicated in the adage combination when the working leg moves from *arabesque* to *passé* - the lower back lengthens and the pelvis returns to its vertical *alignment*. In the first example Li-Li places weight on her working foot as it closes into 1st position. In the later adage she also works with a sense of weight in her working hip as she changes her *alignment* in order to be able to counter-balance an extended reach of her back into a deep tilt. These internal weight shifts may not be visible, but it is important to recognise that for the dancer to make use of a preparatory exercise in this way it is the physical sensations which must be connected, rather than more easily recognisable peripheral or shape-oriented concerns.

As in the previous example of *connections*, the internal work can be rehearsed here in a less tiring context than would be possible if the adage combination itself were to be repeated many times. Because Li-Li has made the appropriate *connections* she can, during the adage, rely on knowledge gained earlier in class and *focus* on different concerns. One of these is clearly the extension of her legs to full height, another is the position of her standing foot which must be placed carefully in order to take her weight during these extensions.

Because of her build at the knee joint, notice that Li-Li has to work with significantly less rotation in her lower legs and ankles than in her hips. This means that every time she places her working foot to the floor she needs to check that it is not over *turned-out* in a way which will not support her well when she puts her full weight on it. Notice how she battles with this problem during the adage combination, how *turned-out* she is when her legs are in the air and how little rotation she can use effectively, relatively speaking, when they are on the ground.

When movement concepts are woven together in various ways during the class, as in these two examples of *connections*, important educational concepts are reinforced. Rather than expecting students to acquire skills only through the practice of material for which they are actually needed, the introduction of related material which will help them to develop those skills by degrees, and in a variety of contexts, gives due recognition to the fact that there is a developmental process involved in the acquisition of physical skills, just as in any other form of learning.

[8]

Chapter 3: note 17

Tendus

Here Li-Li works on simple shifts of weight and complete control of the *alignment* of her torso over her standing leg. Note that because the exercise is simple and slow she is

always able to judge the appropriate *placement* of her standing foot. The length of the exercise helps her to build stamina in terms of her concentration on her *alignment*. Note the *placement* of her pelvis which she manages to maintain when she reaches her back into curves, tilts and arches.

[This is one of very few exercises which have been recorded in their entirety. The aim is to give an accurate impression of the real time that such work takes in an actual class. This has particular relevance for an exercise which is designed to build stamina, both physical and mental.]

[9]

Chapter 3: note 18

Upper Back

In this exercise, Jürg works his back as deeply as possible while maintaining the image of reaching into space through his upper back, neck and head. At this slow tempo he is able to control each move and clarify every change of direction.

He works with as deep a plié as he can manage in order to provide himself with a stable weight base from which he can reach away with confidence and *ease*.

As he turns to the diagonal he is careful not to spiral so far that one side of his back is shortened. As he reaches to the diagonal in a long curve, notice that each side of his back is equally long. Similarly, arching to the diagonal is preceded by maximum lift in the torso and the degree of rotation is carefully judged in order that both sides of the back can remain equally lengthened.

Note that almost all the changes of weight which occur in this combination are led by the movement of the upper torso.

During the repeat, at a much faster tempo, notice that he is able to maintain control without diminishing the reach of his back into space. Factors which contribute to this ability are a secure weight base, the stable *alignment* of his pelvis, resilience in his legs as they shift in and out of pli  , supporting the movement of his back, and strength in the lower torso and abdominal muscles.

[10]

Chapter 3: note 19

Ronds de jambe

Li-Li shows an exercise which is built around the notion of circularity. This is seen in the action of her working leg, the turn, the curved pathway that she takes when she runs through space and, on the repeat, the circular action of her upper back during the turn.

This is the first take of the material which Li-Li had learned only moments before filming. It epitomises her most frequently employed learning strategy. Notice how *courageous* she is in her use of her upper torso, which actually throws her off balance. When she repeats this combination, rather than doing less with her back in an attempt to work with more control, watch how she brings the movement increasingly under control without diminishing the action of her back as it circles. To try for the particular dynamic qualities of the combination, with a generous use of space and physicality, and to refine the work of the legs and feet later on is not a common strategy, but it is typical of her approach.

When learning new material Li-Li never adjusts the combinations to make them more comfortable, or easier to achieve. Her greatest challenge is usually to control her weight through her legs, as is apparent here.

[11]

Chapter 3: note 20

Battements

Jürg works through a combination of *grand battements* and falls into *lunge* positions, returning to *centre* (vertical) with his working leg firstly on the ground, secondly just off the floor and finally in *passé*. In each case he is concentrating on his ability to rediscover how to align his weight over his standing leg when he moves from the fall back to a vertical position at speed.

[12]

Chapter 3: note 21

Quick Flick

Li-Li shows that it is necessary to place the weight of her torso securely on her standing leg in order to be able to use her working leg with the *freedom* which this exercise demands. Note that she keeps her weight well forward on her standing toes. This enables her to change her weight from one leg to the other at speed and also to *swivel* on her standing leg in order to complete the quarter turns. Throughout the combination she maintains control of her vertical torso without any unnecessary tension.

[13]

Chapter 3: note 22

Across (A)

Jürg shows the simplest version of this travelling combination, clarifying the direction changes from one corner of the space to the next.

These directions will be maintained as the material becomes increasingly complex and will serve as a formal structure on which the dancer can rely. It is important, therefore, that these directions are clear before the material is developed.

Li-Li repeats the combination adding a few turns and then again with turns throughout. Note that as the material increases in its physical demands, her ability to be clear about her *focus* in space enables her to define the starting point for each turn rather than merging one into another. The clarity of the starting positions also helps her to execute the turns well.

[14]

Chapter 3: note 23

Across (B)

Both Jürg and Li-Li attempt this travelling combination with great energy. They reveal a generous use of their upper backs and the *effort* required to travel as much as possible. The fact that they are required to move their backs almost continuously makes it more difficult to *focus* outwards when necessary and to clarify the direction changes by *focusing* with their eyes as well as by the *alignment* of their bodies. It is also hard, in conjunction with all these challenges, to have to stop suddenly in 4th position, on relevé, and their battle to meet that challenge is visible here.

[15]

Chapter 3: note 24

Skimming

Jürg shows a simple combination of jumps which skim the surface of the floor, concentrating on the maximum use of all available space. The requirement to reach the edges of the space means that he has to be acutely aware of his relationship to those edges

all the time, re-adjusting the size of his runs and jumps, as well as his exact direction of travel, as he progresses through the combination.

[16]

Chapter 3: footnote 25

Big Jump (A)

The first two of these jumping combinations show the development of material which will help the dancers to build the skills necessary for the final, third version. Note the *connection* between the direction changes shown here and those of the travelling combination at reference point [13].

[17]

Chapter 3: footnote 26

Big Jump (B)

This final combination, made with the challenge of directional changes in mind, shows the importance of clarity when changing direction in the air if landings are to be safe, and secure enough to be sustained at this slow tempo.

[18]

Chapter 3: footnote 27

Starting point: a jumping combination

Jürg and Li-Li take it in turns to perform the jumping *phrase* which has initiated a different method of planning the class material. This combination is structured on threes and twos and an important challenge for them is to be accurate with this rhythm while working on the more specifically physical aspects of the combination.

With the tempo set at M (one crochet) = 138 the dancers are counting as follows:

12123123

[19]

Chapter 3: footnote 28

Adage

During this adage combination, which has been discussed in the context of making *connections* between related strands of material, notice how Jürg tries to make a smooth transition between the slow turn in attitude, closing in 5th position in plié, and the circular reach of his back into the final arch. This circle of his back does not occur in the jumping combination, however in order to achieve the smoothness required here he must develop extraordinary control of his legs and of the *placement* of his weight, both of which will be vital to him when he lands from jumping.

The presentation of a somewhat easier, yet very similar task in the later jumps, compensates for the fact that the dancers have, by then, to cope with more complex demands of a different nature. The jumps are set at a faster tempo, there is a more complex rhythmic structure involved and concentration needs to be given to the particular challenges of jumping with strength and landing safely.

[20]

Chapter 3: footnote 29

Battements

The example shown here is the fourth version of the battement exercise which is developed throughout the week. Li-Li shows her ability to close each battement with her working foot carefully placed on the floor so that she can change feet very quickly when required to do so. Her final battement reveals the strength that she has developed in her

legs, enabling her to hold her working leg in the air at full height for quite some time before lowering it slowly to the floor.

[21]

Chapter 3: footnote 30

Small Jump [In Place]

With the tempo set at M (one crochet) = 168, Jürg is counting as follows:

12123123

[22]

Chapter 3: footnote 31

Combinations structured on twos and threes

The key feature of the following examples is their rhythmic structure. Metronome markings and counts are as follows:

Li-Li glissés M = 112 1212312123

Jürg and Li-Li travelling M = 116 1212123

Jürg and Li-Li travelling M = 126 12312312

Jürg and Alison jumping M = 152 1212312123

Jürg and Li-Li jumping M = 138 1212123

[23]

Chapter 3: note 32

Opening

In this first exercise of the class concentration is given to working the back deeply and with as little tension as possible. Jürg uses small demi-pliés in order to maximise the stretch of his lower back when he allows it to *hang* forward. As he returns to *centre*

(vertical) he tries to maintain that length and sense of *ease*. It is important to note that opening the class in this way does not constitute a warm-up: the structure of the class as presented here relies on the dancers having done another class prior to this one, or having warmed-up very thoroughly on their own.

The very slow tempo is set to give enough time for the physical sensations within the body to be deeply felt and registered.

[24]

Chapter 3: footnote 33

Feet

As he works to mobilise his feet and to carry his weight smoothly up and down, retaining the *placement* of his pelvis and torso, Jürg concentrates on deepening the folding action of his hips.

In parallel and 1st positions his short achilles tendons prevent him from working in a deep demi-plié. However in 2nd position, setting his feet wide apart, he can achieve a much deeper fold at the hip joint.

You will notice that as he lifts his working heel he places his pelvis lower than at the start of the exercise, emphasising the fact that he is working to maximise the mobility of the working hip at every available opportunity.

[25]

Chapter 3: footnote 34

Brushes

Here Jürg uses a deep fold of the hips in parallel plié as well as in 2nd position. He does this by taking the weight of his pelvis behind his heels and counter-balancing himself by reaching his upper back forwards over his toes.

In the variation, falling into a side *lunge*, he takes his working leg as far away from his standing leg as possible so that he can hinge his working hip deeply. The rebound of his back from the tilt - through *centre* to the other side - helps him to lift his weight smoothly off his working leg.

[26]

Chapter 3: footnote 35

Long Back (A)

During this back exercise involving changes of weight which are led predominantly by the movement of the back, Jürg uses deep *lunges* and works for control and resilience in his legs. Notice that he softens his upper back in these curves, allowing his head to drop forward and checking that he is not building tension in the back of his neck.

Similarly, he tries to work his ankle joints softly, placing his feet carefully to support his weight without undue tension.

[27]

Chapter 3: footnote 36

Long Back (B)

Jürg shows the articulation of different areas of his back. Having lengthened it fully with the opening parallel plié, he curves his middle spine and follows this with a drop of his upper back, softening into a deeper plié as the whole of his back curves over.

Rather than returning to *centre* he lifts to a diagonal line, falling forwards immediately off his feet. The second fall - backwards - leads him into his runs through space. He uses the energy of this fall to help him gather the momentum to cover ground.

[28]

Chapter 3: footnote 37

Pliés

Apart from working on the deep folding action of his hips, Jürg uses this combination of pliés to increase his awareness of the relationship between his back and his legs. Notice that he has his tail-bone down in the long curve prior to descent into deep plié; then the tail-bone is up in order to maximise the *hanging* sensation of his back. He works for a clear vertical *alignment* of his pelvis and lower back during the demi-plié with a high arch and lifts to *centre*, with his whole spine vertical, maintaining this relationship carefully for the final deep plié and rise.

[29]

Chapter 3: footnote 38

Tendus

Jürg uses the reach of his working leg to pull his weight *off-centre*. The fall to a side *lunge* with a deep tilt of the back has been used before in the preceding exercises. Now

he has to deal with the added challenge of returning to *centre* (vertical) with his working leg still off the floor.

You will see that he sometimes mis-judges the amount of energy that he needs, pushing off his working leg, to return to an upright position. Notice how he uses the reach of his back and the arm which is in 2nd position to help stabilise his weight on his standing leg. This is the first take of the exercise and it is noticeable that with each repeat Jürg makes improvements to his performance of the material.

[30]

Chapter 3: footnote 39

Fondus

By watching this fondu combination in profile we can see clearly how Jürg returns to the relationship between back and legs, folding deeply at the hips, on which he had worked in many of the previous exercises. The added demand here is to lift the working leg to a high attitude position while lifting the back smoothly from a long curve, or a deep tilt, to *centre* (vertical). This requires great control and strength on the standing leg as well as in the rest of the body.

When Jürg mis-judges the *placement* of his weight in the deep tilt, notice that he does not give in to the instinct to rescue himself by lowering his working leg. Rather, he maintains his position and makes adjustments to the muscular support in his torso and the exact *alignment* of his weight on his standing leg and foot. This determination to deal with each problem as it presents itself and not to give in when such challenges arise typifies the seriousness of Jürg's approach.

[31]

Chapter 3: footnote 40

Battements

Two examples of battement exercises are given here. In the first, Jürg and Li-Li use a *deep fold* of the working hip in their high attitude positions as well as for the battements with straight legs. As they bring their bent working legs to meet their standing legs in fondu, they try to create a sensation of space and *ease* in the socket of the working hip. This is maintained during the following battement.

Notice the sharp accent which they give to the glissé, as a preparation for using the same dynamic for the full-height battement.

As they come to the repeat of the exercise, you will see that they are also working on the concept of counter-balance, reaching their backs away from the direction of their working legs as they lower slowly and smoothly to the ground. The overall effect is one of great strength and control.

In contrast, the second example shows the use of *freedom* in the working leg. In order to achieve this, the standing leg and torso are controlled as much as in the previous exercise, but that control is less apparent here.

Notice how the dancers are unified by the *dynamics* of the movement and the accuracy of their timing. It is barely noticeable that their legs achieve different heights or that they have such different degrees of mobility at their disposal.

[32]

Chapter 3: footnote 41

Across (A)

This travelling combination will be shown by four very different dancers - Jürg, Lucy, Marcus and Li-Li. Notice the individual choices that they make in terms of *phrasing*. All of them keep to the rhythmic structure as it was set, the only variations being after the fall to the back, as different amounts of *suspension* result in alterations to the timing of the subsequent runs.

This is the first take of the material, filmed just after it had been learned. You will see that the least *secure* section, for most of them, is the return to *centre* (on one leg) following the fall into a *lunge* in 2nd position. The amount of energy that they give to their backs during this drop and rebound must be carefully balanced with the necessary control. It is clear that all the dancers find their own ways of coping with the physical consequences when these movements are slightly mis-judged; also that they all react by adapting the material, in subtle ways, if necessary, while keeping the rhythm of the combination intact. In this way (as in many others) they prepare themselves for performance from the minute that they begin to learn new material.

Li-Li was asked to choose between a fast and a slow tempo and elected to go straight for a swift version of the material. Again this is the first take.

On her second attempt she is more accurate rhythmically, but though she manages to keep up with the set pulse, there is little time for *suspension* and a real sense of falling.

The third take, at a much slower tempo, reveals the rhythmic clarity together with nuances of *phrasing* and *dynamics* which were lacking when the tempo was much faster.

Li-Li described one advantage of this approach saying that, by the third attempt, she felt as though she had masses of time to stretch through the body and to exaggerate the changing *dynamics* within the combination. However, it is important to recognise that for a different kind of dancer, setting off so quickly might have induced a sense of panic, and a tension which would have been counter-productive.

[33]

Chapter 3: footnote 42

Across (B)

Jürg, Li-Li and Lucy show this combination which is structured on 4 x 3's and a 4. With the metronome set at M (one crochet) = 152 it is counted like this:

1232233234231234

Again, the amount of control which the dancers have of the falls within the combination, determines the exact timing of the runs which follow. Otherwise they all keep to the rhythmic structure which has been set.

Notice that the final turn begins on *centre* (vertical) and falls forwards towards the end, giving impetus to the final runs. As she began to move across the floor, Lucy was asked to add a double turn at the end. She made a clear decision to complete a turn and a half vertical, and to begin to fall during the last half turn. Viewing this section in slow motion will clarify the knowledge that Lucy reveals, concerning the *placement* of her weight, which allows for this possibility.

[This is a clear example of a dance intelligence at work. Lucy draws upon all her previous knowledge and gives an immediate physical response to this challenge which is carefully judged, accurate in its *placement* and timing, and daring in its physicality. In

this situation, having no time for rehearsal at all, we can see that her intelligence feeds her *creative* physical responses directly.]

[34]

Chapter 3: footnote 43

Big Jump (A)

These jumping combinations share the use of kinetic energy. The landings are in off-balance positions, so that falling from these positions provides the energy for the subsequent runs.

Beginning with a structure of 3 x 3's, the dancers have time to explore the extent to which they can be off-balance, while retaining enough control of the landings to be physically safe.

The variation, on 2 x 3's requires them to trust in what they have discovered and to fall more quickly.

[35]

Chapter 3: footnote 44

Big Jump (B)

This is a development of the Jumps above [A], structured on 6 x 3's and incorporating more complex changes of direction.

Note that Jürg's short achilles tendons make it imperative that he softens and folds in his hip joint when landing from such a slow jump. This action works as a shock absorber, in the absence of resilience in his ankles.

[36]

Chapter 3: footnote 45

Big Jump (C)

This final jump, on 4 x 3's, exaggerates the folding action of the hips by incorporating a forward reach of the back on landing. There is also a fall following the reach of the working leg into a high attitude in 2nd.

[37]

Chapter 3: footnote 51

Adapting material for different body-types

Jürg and Li-Li demonstrate a combination which is led by the reach of the back. Their first performance of it shows the different directions which result when they fall into a side *lunge*, the angle of which is determined by their different degrees of *turn-out*. They are asked to finish the combination facing directly down-stage and achieve this by *swivelling* on their standing legs.

In the variation, they follow their *lunges* with runs and you will see that by keeping the directions which have been determined by their own bodies, they inevitably run in different directions, although they still finish in unison facing directly up or down-stage.

Their instructions for this second variation were to fall in directions set externally; that is, in relationship to the edges of the space. They can do this without a problem, by *swivelling* on their standing feet. It is important to recognise, however, that these two, equally valid versions not only have different spatial results but also feel very different for the dancers in terms of the way they relate the physical sensations of reach in the body to the energy required to travel. In the first version the energy of the reach provides the impetus for travelling. In the second, that impetus comes from a different physical source.

[It is possible for these dancers to choose between the two options presented here because they clearly have enough knowledge to make that choice. Novice dancers encountering the same material might over *turn out* the working leg, or reach too far around with the back, landing facing the correct direction but in ways that are anatomically unsound, twisting the joints of knee and ankle in an effort to arrive in the required place. Therefore to *swivel* - having first put the weight of the body forward on the feet - is a specific skill which should be taught carefully. Until they have the skills, the concept of working from internal sensations must be carried through to its logical conclusion and issues of direction in space be secondary.]

[38]

Chapter 3: footnote 52

Adapting material for different body-types: further examples

This is a section from Li-Li's stretching sequence in the final exercise of the class, *Return to Centre*. Note that the length of her achilles tendons and the mobility of her hip sockets enable her to squat on one leg with the other fully stretched against the floor. In this position she is also mobile enough in her lower back to reach well forward and lengthen her spine with *ease*. She allows her head to fall forwards and uses its weight to increase the stretch of her back.

Watching Jürg, we see that the build of his hips means that he must bring his stretched leg diagonally forward if he is to use his maximum rotation during the stretch. Note that he lifts his pelvis considerably as he brings his previously stretched leg into 1st position, in deep plié, because of the relative tightness of the joints in his ankles and feet. In order to get his weight securely onto his standing foot and allow his weight to drop into his hips, he has to shift quite a long way towards his stretched leg.

In this example, Jürg shows how the reach of his right leg can lead him into a *lunge*. He keeps his hips facing forwards and rotates his left leg as he brings it to meet the other in 1st position. By working like this he can use his maximum rotation in the hips and use the energy of the reach to change his weight.

It is possible for him to fall into a *lunge* directly to the side of the space, if required to do so. Notice, however, that he does this by initiating the fall from a shift in the pelvis rather than from the energy of his working leg. He exaggerates this pelvic movement in order to clarify the point being made here. Such initiation would normally be made in a much more subtle way and not be visible, but nevertheless would constitute a significant change of intention for the dancer who works with acute awareness of internal sensations.

As he repeats the exercise in profile, you will notice how much Jürg travels when he follows the reach of his working leg. Again, in the second version, he travels only from side to side when he initiates the fall from his pelvis.

In this adage, Jürg continues to work for maximum rotation without decreasing the length of his lower back. To do this he takes his working leg to the front diagonal rather than to the side of his body in the *développé*. In the effort to maintain length in his back, as he turns in attitude, he keeps his working leg low and his foot higher than his knee. Notice how he uses the reach of his torso and leading arm to help him project his weight forwards over his standing foot for the final balance.

As Li-Li performs the same adage, notice how the same work has different linear results, none of which have any bearing on the dancers' performance of the combination in terms of strength, control or appropriate movement quality.

[39]

Chapter 3: footnote 54

Adapting material: the mobility of the spine

Jürg begins by demonstrating an arch which is not well supported. He has allowed his neck to drop back and the weight of his whole back to sink towards the floor. As he returns to *centre* he uses his stomach muscles very strongly, proving that he has muscular control in that area that he was not utilising in the arch.

His first curve is of the upper back only. He then reaches from his tail-bone to his head in the longest curve he can manage, without altering the *placement* of his pelvis.

[Jürg is mobile in his middle-back but relatively tight in his upper spine. Therefore to encourage mobility in his upper back it is useful for him to concentrate on that area, checking that he does not automatically involve his middle and lower back every time he reaches into a curve.]

This second demonstration shows an arch led by the *hanging* of the head, with insufficient support along the whole length of the spine. Prior to his second attempt, notice how much Jürg lifts through his torso as a preparation for his reach into the arch. At the last minute he drops his neck and you will notice that he corrects this by reaching further with his head.

He demonstrates this important adjustment one more time.

[40]

Chapter 3: footnote 55

Adapting material: lower back and hip mobility

Here Lizzie shows back stretches in 2nd position as they would be performed by a dancer with limited mobility in the lower spine and hips. The important point here is that she is able to maintain the intention of the exercise regardless of how close to the ground she can project her spine. In fact the important issues of retaining the energy of the reach forwards, from tail-bone to head, well supported by the abdominal muscles, and of softening the joints of the legs although retaining the *turn-out*, while the back is carried down and up, are not altered by these linear concerns.

In this second version, Lizzie uses a deeper hinge in the hips and a deeper plié, while in all other respects the exercise remains the same.

Jürg shows a similar exercise in 4th position and also demonstrates two ways of working within it. In this first one he begins in a wide 4th position and does not change the position of his legs as he moves through the combination. Notice the deep hinge that he achieves as he reaches his back forwards with his weight on his bent front leg.

In the second version, Jürg reaches his back leg further away as he projects his weight forwards over his front leg. This enables him to stretch much more between his thighs and to lower his body closer to the ground. Lifting from this position will require greater strength in his legs than the previous version. However, the relationship between his back and his front leg remains unchanged and his lower spine is, if anything, less stretched than it was before.

It is clear, therefore, that there are some benefits connected with working more deeply if mobility in the lower back and hips makes this possible, but such mobility is by no means a pre-requisite for physical gain from these exercises. The internal work may be equally

deep in both examples. Further, it may be useful for students who are very mobile to impose restrictions on themselves from time to time, in order to encourage concentration on different aspects of the work.

[41]

Chapter 3: footnote 56

Adapting material: use of shallow and deep tilts in adage [Fondus]

In his first performance of this adage, Jürg uses shallow tilts and supports his back equally on both sides as he makes control his priority.

For the second version he deepens every reach of his back, shortening one side in relation to the other in his deep tilts. He forfeits some stability by doing this, but is able to extend far further into space and explore the outer edges of his physical range.

During her performance of this adage, Li-Li keeps the movement quality at the forefront of her mind. To ensure a slow descent to the floor, she uses a very shallow tilt, leaning well forward and making sure that her weight is fully on her front leg so that she can control her descent through the strength of her standing thigh.

In order to sustain the final reach, you will notice that she uses the opposition of her back and legs in a similar way to that explored in the earlier battements exercise.

[42]

Chapter 3: footnote 57

The use of the arms: variations in pathways (teacher-directed)

Jürg shows the first six bars from Merce Cunningham's Exercise on Six. [Second set.]

He will perform it with variations in the pathway of the arms, which are not part of

Cunningham's exercise. The first time he spirals to the right, and then to the left, his arms only change between 2nd and 1st positions, enabling him to concentrate on moving his back deeply and clearly. On the repeat, he takes his up-stage arm down and forwards into 1st position. This adaptation encourages his shoulders to stay relaxed and his neck to maintain its length. As he lifts through *centre* he also lifts his arms, using them to remind him to reach upwards in the torso. Because he has just given attention to the relaxed *placement* of his shoulders, he can think of retaining that sensation, taking care not to lift his shoulders as he lifts his arms.

On the third version, Jürg puts this *placement* of his shoulders to the test by reaching his up-stage arm through 5th position on the way to 1st, returning to the original version - opening simply from 1st to 2nd - to finish.

Adaptations such as these are useful in encouraging concentration on the carriage of the upper torso and neck.

The second take of this exercise, with Jürg seen in profile, serves to clarify further the different pathways of the arms. Notice that these changing patterns do not alter Jürg's ability to work clearly with his back. For less advanced students it might be more advantageous to work with one version only for quite some time before changing to a new pattern, to make sure that sufficient concentration is still given to the fundamental aspects of the work of the back.

As Jürg completes the combination, you will see that he brings his back too far forward, mis-judging the *placement* of his vertical *alignment* and over-using his back muscles. As he lowers his arms he relaxes these muscles and brings his torso vertical. Throughout the film Jürg struggles with his tendency to grip these muscles in his back. It is one of the individual challenges that he deals with constantly.

[43]

Chapter 3: footnote 58

The use of the arms: variations (student-directed)

In this section from an exercise to warm the legs prior to jumping, Li-Li chooses to work with her arms down while Jürg holds his in a position of his own choice. He also decides on the pathway that he will use to change from one side to the other. He adheres to this choice throughout, underlining the fact that the choice was conscious and that he is self-disciplined in seeing it through.

[44]

Chapter 3: footnote 61

Opening

This combination is set at a slow tempo in order to ensure sufficient time to concentrate on the torso as the focus of attention and primary source of movement for the preparatory part of the class.

The dancers work to mobilise their backs, concentrating on finding the appropriate muscular control to support a sense of *freedom* in the joints. As they move through the full range of movement in the back, they also give attention to the necessary shifts of weight through their legs and feet. Every time they return to a vertical *alignment*, they endeavour to memorise the physical sensations involved in being *centred* over their legs with a strong sense of *connection* through the torso

[45]

Chapter 3: footnote 62

Reaches

During these reaches of the back, away from *centre* and into the space, Jürg and Li-Li work on specific areas of stiffness in their backs. The demi-pliés are used to carry their fully-lengthened backs down and up with concentration on maintaining the vertical *alignment* of the pelvis and lower spine.

As they curve diagonally forwards, they try not to rotate their hips, but to keep them facing directly forwards and to lengthen each side of their backs equally, keeping their weight firmly on two feet.

Throughout, attention is given to the amount of muscular support required in the legs, concentrating especially on working the *turn-out* muscles deeply, and on activating the ham strings.

[46]

Chapter 3: footnote 63

Back Stretches

This is a section from a series of back stretches, structured on six bars. As the arms change (bars three and four) Li-Li and Jürg try to retain the forwards reach of their spines, supported by their abdominal muscles and the use of their *turn-out* and ham strings.

Notice how Li-Li opens her arms from 1st to an over-extended 2nd position, stretching the front of her chest but shortening the space between her shoulder blades and tightening her upper back.

It is often the case that dancers find it hard to rediscover an appropriate relationship between upper torso and arms, which allows for complete *freedom* in the upper back and neck, when the back is not vertical. During a slow exercise such as this, they have time to concentrate on these kinds of issues.

[47]

Chapter 3: footnote 64

Feet

Here Jürg and Li-Li work to mobilise their feet and to carry their torsos smoothly up and down by using the strength and resilience of their legs. The exercise involves the isolation and *co-ordination* of the different joints of their legs and feet, while their backs are held in vertical *alignment*. Particular attention is given to maintaining the lift through the torso, resisting the lowering of the weight of the body, as the heels reach for the floor following the rise.

This second, similar example shows Jürg using a different dynamic to push through his feet, gaining strength in the joints of his toes which will be especially useful for jumps. He also works on the simple transfer of weight from two feet to one and back again, still carrying his torso in its vertical *alignment*.

[48]

Chapter 3: footnote 65

Middle-back

Here we can see that Li-Li begins to curve in the middle of her back, lengthening that area of her spine before extending the reach through her upper back. Having *focused* on the middle-back as the source of movement she can concentrate on it as a still point from which the upper body reaches away, during the second half of the combination.

Note the vertical *alignment* of the pelvis throughout this combination. The dancers work hard to resist the tendency to *tuck-under* as they deepen the curves. It is vital to rehearse this physical concept in slow exercises, concentrating especially on turned out positions, as middle-back curves are used frequently in this work when travelling; *tucking-under* in these situations will often lead to reduced mobility in the hips and twisting of knee and ankle joints.

[49]

Chapter 3: footnote 66

Brushes: weight centre

This simple exercise, concentrating on the work of the legs and feet, is shown in three variations. In the first the dancers work with their arms down throughout and *focus* on their backs as they make simple shifts of weight.

On the repeat they hold their arms in a set position, changing them from side to side in the simplest possible way. [The pathways of the arms, as they change from side to side, have been chosen by the students and therefore provide another example of student-directed variation.]

For the third version, they work with a continuously moving port de bras, fighting against the instinct to *phrase* the actions of the arms to coincide with those of the legs. They try to clarify the shapes through which the arms move, without pausing in any of the set positions. A further important challenge is to make these arm movements without disturbing the *placement* of the back.

[50]

Chapter 3: footnote 67

Threes

Here Jürg and Li-Li work through the different areas of the back, as previously explored, but at a faster tempo and with changes in *dynamics*. The use of greater *freedom* in the upper body and faster shifts of weight necessitate deep concentration on retaining sound *alignment*.

[51]

Chapter 3: footnote 68

Deep Spirals

The dancers perform an extensive exploration of a broad range of movement possibilities involving the reach of their backs into the space. They use their hips as carefully placed *centres* of weight, providing stability for these extended reaches.

Each pattern is performed to the right side and repeated to the left. At the beginning of each section, note the use of demi-plié to encourage the lengthening of the lower spine, and the lift through the torso which supports the reach of the back. You will see the use of a deep arch, rather than a high arch involving only the upper back. Notice also the openness and lack of tension achieved in their upper backs and necks which is attainable because of the strength and sense of *connection* through the rest of their bodies.

[52]

Chapter 3: footnote 69

Brushes + back

Here the dancers work on the *connection* between torso and legs, again sensing the pelvis and lower back as points of stability, while both back and legs reach into the space.

For this exercise, the timing of the actions of the legs has been learned separately from that of the back. Then they have been put together, with clarity as to moments of isolation and *co-ordination*.

As they repeat the combination, the dancers *phrase* the movement differently so that although the timing of the legs is unchanged, their backs move more swiftly into the arch, or the curve, demanding an absolutely sure sense of weight *placement*, and the ability to isolate changes of movement *dynamics in designated areas of the body*.

In this second example, Jürg works on the *co-ordination* between his back and his legs that enables him to drop into a deep tilt with a plié in 2nd position - or a *lunge in 2nd* - and to rebound from the tilt taking his weight fully onto his standing leg, *freeing* his working hip. He times the action of his working leg exactly with that of his back, so that both arrive together in the plié with a *centred* curve. As he begins each new *phrase* of eight bars, he projects his weight onto one leg as his back lifts to vertical, again timing the work of the back to coincide with that of the legs, though this time that work is more internal and less visible.

[53]

Chapter 3: footnote 70

Isolations

Jürg and Li-Li work on isolating the movement of different body parts without disturbing their overall *alignment*.

The repeat of the exercise, in reverse, is taken more slowly to ensure sound *placement* for the less usual movements; for example, spiralling in an arch which is *off-centre*.

The dancers learned this combination immediately prior to filming it. Notice that Li-Li is not as well supported with her abdominal muscles as is usual for her. This may be because her attention is *focused* on the complexity of demands in this new material. If the combination were given in class, it would be important to repeat the material, providing another opportunity for her to rediscover a sound *alignment* of her torso.

[54]

Chapter 3: footnote 71

Upper Back

During this combination, led by the movement of the upper back, the dancers work to define the areas of the body where *effort* must be maintained and areas where muscle tension must be dropped as much as possible. They work hard with their abdominal and *turn-out* muscles, aware of the support of the ham strings, and they concentrate on their *alignment*. It is important - as well as *focusing* on the *placement* of the pelvis, knees and feet - that they keep their weight *centred* on two legs (both thighs working equally). The arms, back and neck work *alternately* with a *minimum of tension*, or with none at all (as when the back is dropped into curves or tilts).

For the repeat in each position of the feet, they add demi-pliés with the drop of the back, further testing their ability to stay *centred* on two legs when the *dynamic* of the movement would tend to pull their weight onto one side.

Notice that Li-Li's hips do move *off-centre* as she drops into the tilt. Careful *focusing* on the relationship between the work of her torso and legs should enable her to adjust this weight *placement*.

[55]

Chapter 3: footnote 72

Long Back

Three examples of Long Back exercises are shown here. In the first, Jürg demonstrates his ability to *articulate* different areas of his back independently of each other and with different qualities of movement. He initiates his falls, forward and to the back, by leaning his whole body *off-centre* in the direction of travel.

In this second example, Li-Li shows how the reach of the spine can be used to initiate changes of weight. She reaches forwards until she falls onto her hands; her middle back curve pulls her weight towards her back foot in the deep *lunge*. Again she reaches through her whole spine and travels her weight forwards, this time onto her front leg. Her middle back initiates a controlled curve which in turn helps her to control the very slow lowering of her working leg into parallel *plié*.

For the final example, Li-Li concentrates on a soft use of all her joints, and on the different degrees of *effort* required to lengthen her back in different planes; vertical, horizontal and against the floor when lying down.

Following her first reach of the spine you will notice that it is a lengthening of the lower spine that initiates its drop towards the floor in a deep crouch. It is significant that the exploration of the use of length with softness is made while moving through space. Clearly the knowledge assimilated through such exercises will be the most readily transferable to the later part of the class which is concerned predominantly with travelling.

[56]

Chapter 3: footnote 73

Pliés

Jürg works through a series of pliés which involve the carriage of the back on *centre* (vertical), in a high arch and in a long curve. Following the strenuous work involved in the opening part of the combination, he changes the *alignment* of his pelvis and allows his back to fall forwards, eliminating any tension that might have built up there before beginning again.

Here Jürg and Li-Li show a similar combination, this time carrying their backs into deep plié with deep tilts.

[57]

Chapter 3: footnote 74

Tendus

The work following the pliés concentrates on crossing the legs into 5th position, with the shift of weight which this implies. Several examples of exercises in this category are given.

Here Jürg uses his legs, alternating with his back, to initiate changes of weight during a sequence which travels forwards and back. He uses crossed 5th and 4th positions to ensure that the direction of travel is clearly directly to the front, back, or upwards (as in the rise in 4th), and that he can make these transitions smoothly.

The second example shows Li-Li and Jürg working on the crossing of their working legs into 5th position, with their weight securely on their standing legs which will enable them to eliminate any unnecessary tension in their working legs and hips.

Here the dancers show three stages in the development of an exercise for the *placement* of weight on the standing leg. As they move quickly into fondu it is crucial that their weight is fully on one leg, therefore they work with this in mind from the outset, crossing their working feet completely every time they come into 5th position. In later variations, with changing arm and back positions, this *placement* of weight is put to the test. You will see that both dancers are very *secure* in this respect and can therefore work deeply in their backs. This would not be possible if they were still battling with balance issues. At the last moment Li-Li does fall backwards and reveals that it will be necessary for her to project her weight slightly more forwards, over her standing leg, if she is to counter-balance the arch of her back effectively.

In this final example Jürg shows a simple exercise concerned with clarifying the small but important weight shift which occurs when he moves from 1st position, with his weight between his feet, to 5th position, fully crossed. On the repeat he changes feet through 1st, demonstrating that his weight is falling directly between his legs. The shift into 5th position remains the same.

[58]

Chapter 3: footnote 75

Ronds de jambe

This first example of a rond de jambe exercise shows the dancers working on loosening their hip joints as they make quarter or half circles with their working legs in attitude. They use the *placement* of weight - fully on their standing legs - that they explored in the previous exercises, to enable them to work with a minimum of tension in their working hips. A strong lift through the torso is an equally vital pre-requisite for this *freedom*.

Here concentration is on the smoothness of the action of the legs and back as both work in circular pathways. A clear sense of the use of opposing lines of energy supports them

in this difficult work. You will see that they repeat the combination in reverse, and then again with their working legs off the floor. The physical challenge of such sustained use of *turn-out*, together with a constant reach of the torso, provides an excellent preparation for adage work which assumes a similar level of stamina and builds upon it with full-height leg extensions.

This adage combination involves the use of full-height extensions. Note the use of a middle-back curve when the working leg is at full height, *turned-out* and reaching to the front. The *placement* of the pelvis is crucial here. Remembering the earlier work of the middle-back exercises, Li-Li tries to find a relationship between her back and her legs which allows for a deep curve of the back without *tucking-under*, and therefore maximum mobility in the working hip for *ease* in the action of the *rond de jambe*.

In the final example, Li-Li demonstrates the concept of circularity explored through the use of a circular action in her legs, her back, during turns, and in the shape of the pathway which she makes, running through space.

[59]

Chapter 3: footnote 76

Fondus

In the first of these fondu exercises, Li-Li works on isolating the actions of her back from those of her legs. The fall, to the back, is led by extending the reach of her arching back.

Watching the same thing in profile we can see clearly how she curves prior to her descent into *plié*, and reaches her spine upwards, or into a tilt, before stretching her legs. Again, notice that she is working with a vertical *placement* of her pelvis during the middle-back curves, so that the *alignment* does not need to change when she tilts or returns to *centre* (vertical). When her working leg reaches to the back, there is an inevitable arch in her

lower spine. She extends this arch into her upper back before falling into a *lunge*, using the reach of her upper torso to initiate the shift of weight.

Jürg and Li-Li show a combination of *fondus* which involve a *deep folding* action in the hips. The first time, they keep their backs *centred* over their standing legs as they work to bring their working thighs as close to their torsos as possible, without distorting the *alignment* of their lower backs.

On the repeat, you will see that they add further work for their backs. The length in their lower backs is retained as they arch their upper backs with the attitude front.

[60]

Chapter 3: footnote 77

Développés

Li-Li shows a simple *développé* exercise which incorporates equivalently deep work for the back and the legs. Through the use of deep *fondus*, *développés* and back reaches, she is building the necessary strength for extended adage combinations, which will be more complex in terms of changes of direction and *dynamics*.

Notice the constant muscular activity in her standing foot as she works to accommodate weight changes without disturbing the resilient, smooth quality that she has attained.

[61]

Chapter 3: footnote 78

Adage

Here Li-Li performs an extended adage combination which incorporates many features of the preceding work. There are dynamic changes within it, many changes of direction

and of *focus*, the use of extension through the whole body and of different spatial planes including the floor. The principal physical challenge is to retain control and a sense of elasticity throughout. Judgment as to the appropriate use of *effort* for each moment, and in each area of the body, is crucial for the attainment of this degree of softness while working through a combination which requires such strength and stamina.

This somewhat simpler example shows Li-Li concentrating principally on the *placement* of her weight on her standing leg. This is put to the test in static positions and in the slow promenade turn. The requirement to rise on the standing foot as the working leg lowers slowly to 5th position, on relevé, develops great strength and control in that foot which will be useful in many other contexts.

[62]

Chapter 3: footnote 79

Battements

Four examples of battements exercises are given. In the first, Jürg and Li-Li show their careful work on the *placement* of their weight on their standing legs. For the final repeat they explore the use of opposition which relies on secure weight *placement* underpinning the three-way reach of torso and legs.

Here Jürg uses the energy of his battement to pull his weight off his standing leg, falling to the side and reaching with his back to help him to transfer his weight smoothly, through a deep *lunge*, onto the other foot.

A similar task is demonstrated here; the falls are to the front and to the back as well as to the side. Following the fall, Jürg pushes himself back to a central, vertical *alignment*, developing strength in the working leg and increasing his awareness of exactly how that

sense of *centre* can be achieved at speed. This will be particularly useful to him when he travels.

In the final example, Jürg and Li-Li show the use of different levels of energy in different areas of the body, clearly rooting themselves on strong standing legs - which move in and out of fondu with resilience - while dropping and throwing their working legs with a sense of *freedom*.

[63]

Chapter 3: footnote 80

Quick Flick

Through this exercise for the legs, Li-Li demonstrates the swiftness that she has attained in her lower legs and feet and her ability to change her weight from foot to foot at speed. She places her weight on her feet in such a way that she can *swivel*, changing direction quickly, while retaining the vertical *alignment* of her torso, undisturbed by the action of her legs. Note that she *focuses* outwards, emphasising the fact that her neck is always an integral part of this *alignment*.

[64]

Chapter 3: footnote 81

Across the floor

Five dancers are shown working on this travelling combination. They have been asked to retain the shape and rhythm of the movement material, but to *phrase* it as they like. This work, previously discussed in the context of individual *dynamics*, reveals how differently students may approach the same physical challenges.

[65]

Chapter 3: footnote 82

Preparation for Jumps

Here Li-Li performs a combination of various different actions for the feet which will help her to mobilise and fully warm them prior to jumping. The pliés and rises help her to concentrate on the careful *alignment* that she will need when initiating and landing from jumps.

In this sequence, fast brushes are used to ensure the warmth of the thighs as well as of the feet. The dancers work on using their full rotation with each action of the leg. As they reach into and push back from *lunge*s, replicating the use of the working thigh in many types of jump, they check that they also engage the use of their ham strings.

[66]

Chapter 3: footnote 83

Jumps in Place

In this first example, Jürg uses the plié and rise to remind him of the pathway that he will take when he jumps in place. He carries his back carefully, rehearsing the support that he will provide in his torso as he goes into the air, and as he lands.

Here simple shifts of weight are added and, for the repeat, curves and tilts which lift to *centre* (vertical) giving added impetus to the jump. The timing of the rebound of the back is very important. If it is too late then that action will hinder rather than help the lift off the floor. Jürg initiates the lift of his back fractionally before the strong push through his legs, so that his spine is vertical by the time the thrust through his legs and feet is complete.

[This is an action which is impossible to replicate exactly in other situations; the particular *dynamics* of a jump cannot be rehearsed without going into the air. However, many of the preceding exercises have encouraged acute awareness of subtle changes in *phrasing* and *co-ordination* between the back and the legs and all of this work serves as useful preparation.]

For this third example, Jürg tries to achieve the full height of his first jump while his back is still tilting to the side. He has to work against the physical habit of being *centred* in the air. You will notice that this rather alien sensation makes him smile as he enjoys the challenge of an unusual *co-ordination*.

Jürg and Li-Li show a combination which combines the use of the back - sometimes carefully placed, sometimes with the dynamic of a drop and rebound - with changes of direction. This serves as a good example of the kind of exercise which might usefully introduce directional change in the air, as it is sufficiently simple for the landings to be made clearly and with appropriate control.

[67]

Chapter 3: footnote 84

Small Jumps

In this first example of a jumping combination which travels through space, you will notice that the dancers use the runs to shift their weight while the jumps themselves move minimally. (The *sisonne* travels forwards; the *assemblé* and *changements* are in place.)

Here they work with a similar task but complete the combination with a travelling *jeté*, controlling the landing but allowing the kinetic energy of the torso to continue, falling forwards into the repeat.

Li-Li shows a variation with beats. She lands with her middle-back curved, then deepens the curve and uses the reach of her back to initiate the change of weight which leads into the runs.

[68]

Chapter 3: footnote 85

Skimming

Here Li-Li works on jetés which travel through space. She has to deal with changes of direction and a whole turn in the air while keeping the quality of lightness as she skims the surface of the floor.

Jürg's example is also concerned with travelling as much as possible, rather than with height.

In the final example, Jürg combines simple travelling jetés with reaches of his back which pull his weight through the space.

[69]

Chapter 3: footnote 86

Big Jumps

The examples of big jumps shown here are categorised as such either because they are concerned with height (rather than distance of travel along the floor, as in the previous category) or because they are set at a slow tempo which demands great strength and control. In various ways, they involve the use of the torso, as well as the legs, in full extension.

[70]

Chapter 3: footnote 87

Return to Centre

Li-Li shows the concluding section of the class, working through a series of stretches while she is still very warm from jumping, and taking time to explore deeply felt sensations as she tests the limits of her physical range.

It is especially important, following such intensive work with her back, that she does take the time both to stretch out and to relax her back muscles.

She works in her own time, reiterating the importance of her individual response to the work.

Credits

With thanks to London Contemporary Dance School for the generous financial support which made this film possible.

Special thanks to the dancers for giving their time, and for their willingness to put their work on record.

Dancers:

LiLi Cheng

Jürg Koch

Lucy Burnheim

Deborah Ford

Alison George

Marcus Green

Elizabeth Swinford

On-line Editor: Sue Giovanni

Camera Operator: Jane Hodge

Off-line Editor: Rosalind Hewitt

Producer/Director: Mary Evelyn

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Conclusion

Since the early years of this century and the beginnings of Modern Dance in America, the need to re-evaluate and challenge former ideas and assumptions about dance has always been recognised as an essential pre-requisite for the development of contemporary dance as an art form. However changes of various kinds are now occurring at such a rate that it is incumbent upon dance teachers to ensure that students learn, as a primary skill, the capacity to cope with change itself.

Aspects of the working environment, which have remained unchallenged until very recently, are now under scrutiny as advances in technology and the advent of choreographic work conceived and performed in cyber-space force us even to question the role of dancers as real people. Similarly, a re-evaluation of the necessity for dancers' participation in the choreographic process has been initiated by computer programmes such as Life Forms¹, which have enabled choreographers to experiment with computer-generated images of people in the initial stages of making work. There is now involvement in the profession from an increasingly broad cross-section of the population. No longer restricted to young professionally trained dancers, professional performers now include those with physical disabilities, mature dancers who might once have been considered past retirement age, as well as those who have received no formal dance training. Therefore, although it was never possible to predict future trends in choreography, so that the exact requirements in terms of training for the profession have always been hard to define in detail, we must now question the role of the dancer in every possible respect.

The need for dancers capable of extraordinary adaptability has been widely recognised and discussed in recent years, but the methods by which teachers could set about nurturing such dancers have not yet been addressed. As suggested in the introduction to this thesis, questions concerning the balance between education and training have been

debated for far longer, but inconclusively. The question of planning a training curriculum to take account of such needs remains open. However there is now an increasingly widespread acknowledgement of the necessity for the training process to be educationally informed. Many factors point to this conclusion.

The number of dancers in the independent sector who work in many different fields during their professional lives is rising. As well as continuing their artistic development and maintaining their fitness levels in classes and workshops, auditioning regularly for work and being involved in performance projects, such dancers may be working as teachers or choreographers, acquiring valuable experience in dance administration, or following independent courses of academic study. There is a developing awareness of the value of broadening the scope of their knowledge base, and of using other life experiences to complement their dance training, as well as a necessity for them to supplement their income from strictly performance related work.

With increasing numbers of students entering degree programmes in dance it is realistic to assume that not all students who complete a dance training will go on to work in the profession as performers. The future of all those who choose to branch out into other spheres is bound to be determined in part by the educational content of the training they receive.

In recognition of the fact that professional dancers normally perform for a relatively small proportion of their careers, it is important to assess the extent to which the training they receive provides them with the resources to approach the rest of their professional lives in creative ways. There have been important initiatives on the part of several artistic directors, to facilitate the continuing involvement in the profession of mature dancers - notably from Jiri Kylian (Nederlands Dans Theater 3), Fearghus Early (Green Candle) and Ian Spink (Second Stride). Nevertheless, it has been noted by centres for the transition of dancers in Canada, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA that there is a trend

towards increasingly early retirement from the profession. They suggest that the average retirement age for professional dancers has declined dramatically since the 1970s. It is vital that young people retiring from the profession in their twenties or early thirties are supported in their transition to second careers, but it is also important to consider ways in which their initial dance training can serve them well throughout their lives.

The view taken here is that the methodology which has been advocated in this thesis will provide people with the relevant resources to continue to study long after they complete such a training programme. Through a training method which is based on the assumption that students learn in different ways, necessitating flexible teaching strategies which enable all students to gain access to the material, students will become increasingly aware and in control of their learning strategies, as defined by their changing physical, emotional and intellectual needs. Thereby, they will be able to build their self-esteem as they develop learning skills which are transferable to other fields. Further, they will become increasingly self-reliant, able to make autonomous decisions, and to trust in their ability to contribute to society in many different ways.

In the interests of all those who *do* work as professional contemporary dancers, it is vital to recognise that few dancers work with one choreographer, or within one style, for the duration of their professional lives. In order to be adaptable while retaining personal integrity, to cope with change of many kinds and yet to maintain a personal artistic vision, such dancers need to be confident individuals who have learned how to learn. Dancers who are self-aware and able to make autonomous decisions, and who have trained with an understanding of their own bodies in relation to the technique studied, are able to bring individual qualities to their dancing which will continue to be valued.

Choreographers continue to seek out dancers who are prepared to involve themselves creatively in the working process. It has been argued here that such creative involvement depends to a large extent on the self-confidence of individuals who feel that they have

been appropriately prepared for such demands. Therefore it has been important, in the context of this investigation, to analyse the nature of the demands, how dancers can best be prepared to meet them, and what effect such analysis will have on teaching methodology.

Dance teaching methods have changed considerably over the last forty years. Changes have taken account of altered perceptions of the demands of the profession, and knowledge from the areas of bio-mechanics, sports science and psychology. Very little has been written, however, on the subject of a dance teaching methodology that would reflect the aim of educating the intellect and the emotions as well as the body within an interdependent framework. It is time that teachers took on this responsibility. As Peter Brinson rightly suggests in his keynote address, given to the conference 'Training Tomorrow's Dancers' (Dance UK, September 1993), it is up to us, as teachers, to show the way forward for dance teaching:

There can be only one way, towards quality - but a different, broader understanding of quality - not just the physical excellence we know we need for technique but a matching excellence of mind and emotional culture. [...] The key to all this lies with teachers. [...] Teachers need encouragement to be more flexible and willing to risk departure from methods in which *they* were trained and to which they cling.²

This study has proposed a framework for contemporary dance teaching which balances both what Brinson calls the 'culture of mind and emotions in relation to the body ' and the needs of students - physical, emotional and intellectual - in relation to the requirements of the profession. Rather than assuming that this balance calls for concerns of education and those of training to be met in different ways and at different times during the training programme, perpetuating a mind-body split, it has been argued here that the two sets of needs do not conflict. It has been suggested that there are, in fact, many shared concerns which can appropriately be met within each area of the course work, including dance technique classes. A coherent approach to the work has been advocated, encouraging the involvement of mind and body at all times, even when the focus of the work is predominantly physical.

The methodology proposed is based on four pedagogical principles. These principles have guided the specific work described in this thesis for many years; however it has been argued that they are relevant beyond the particular requirements of any one technique and could be applied to all vocational dance teaching.

They are: to stimulate the development of individual physical, emotional and intellectual relationships with the class material, thereby encouraging individual creative responses to the work; to support the students in bringing these relationships to consciousness in order that they may more readily be developed; to encourage increasingly in-depth study, through clarification of the intrinsic logic of the material, so that the students develop the ability to investigate all physical work with appropriate rigour, and; to ensure that the teacher's attitudes to the students, as expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways, are consistent with the values inherent in the strategies above, thereby helping the students to build their self-esteem.

The methodology advocated has been developed as a response to the necessity of matching long-term aims and objectives with the most appropriate pedagogy for this art form. The characteristics of the contemporary dance artist most likely to be able to contribute positively to the profession must logically form the basis of these objectives, yet such characteristics have not, to date, been defined in detail.

Given that the parameters of the art form are constantly changing and ideas concerning the dancer's desirable qualities and range of skills are always in flux, to arrive at satisfactory definitions of these characteristics is a highly complex task. Yet it is imperative that some unifying concepts are sought if training methods are to develop effectively and continue to meet the changing demands of the profession. Further, if these methods are to endure, and be transferable to differing vocational institutions, it is important that such concepts are based on fundamental principles which apply to dancers

working in any genre, cutting across issues of race, class or gender and going beyond superficial notions as to what is currently fashionable in dance.

Although this thesis has argued throughout in favour of a holistic view of students, in the interest of taking the discussion beyond generalities it has been necessary to divide the discussion of contemporary dancers' characteristics into separate, albeit overlapping categories. The terms 'intelligent', 'neutral' and 'healthy', which are commonly used amongst the dance teaching profession, have served to give structure to the complex debate concerning the degree to which such qualities can be taught and their relationship to the dancers' ability to access their creativity.

In the context of this thesis, these terms have been used in very specific ways, carrying with them high expectations of what the contemporary dance student should achieve. Dancers who are described as 'intelligent' have a profound knowledge of their own bodies, their personal learning strategies and their emotional needs and drives which enables them to be adaptable across a range of dance styles and ultimately, following retirement from the profession, to other disciplines. Rather than developing a superficial understanding of many dance styles, it has been argued that students will gain most from learning to deal in-depth with selected techniques which they study for a substantial period of time. This inculcation of a deep familiarity with and sensitivity to the specifics and subtleties of each style also engenders respect for the underlying logic of each technique and encourages students to search for a deep-rooted understanding of any work with which they are subsequently engaged. The method leads to adaptability across a range of styles because the knowledge gained is not material or content-specific and is therefore more readily transferable.

The 'neutral body', rather than denoting passivity, describes the pre-requisite state for adaptability which will eventually enable dancers to work within a range of dance genres, should they so wish, and to reveal their individuality through their dancing. Importantly

it has been argued that such 'neutrality' is also a pre-requisite for a deep understanding of the intrinsic logic of any dance genre.

The term 'healthy' has been used in this context to describe the dancer's emotional health. When teachers show respect for the individual responses of their students, recognising the impact that different personalities, personal histories, learning strategies and levels of motivation have on the learning process, they support the students' developing self-esteem. Thereby they also support their ability to enter and explore unfamiliar territory during the learning process.

Rather than suppressing their emotional lives, it has been suggested that students should be encouraged to become increasingly aware and in control of their responses to the learning situation, developing their ability to make autonomous decisions and building self-confidence. The personal view advanced in this thesis is that such self-awareness will enable them to approach the professional world with realistic expectations as to their potential involvement with it and the confidence to shape the dance world of the future. The ability to cope with the inevitable stresses relating to performance as well as those connected with periods of unemployment, and to make the transition at retirement with minimal stress must also be related to the dancers' emotional 'health'.

If dancers are to be responsible for their physical and mental well-being, it is essential that they are encouraged to understand and take on this responsibility during their training. Provided that students are given regular and specific feedback, it is appropriate to expect them to take charge of their own learning: on leaving the training institution, they will ideally have developed to a point of independent maturity enabling them to take care of themselves as they continue to develop during their professional lives. During training, the individual relationships which students develop with the class material, as it relates to their own bodies, and with their intellectual needs and emotional drives, are ones that they may rely upon long after they are students and no longer have regular feedback from

teachers. To encourage the development of such relationships is to lead students towards real independence and autonomy, and to the realisation of their full potential and artistic maturity.

An in-depth analysis of teaching and learning strategies has addressed the ways in which knowledge gained from other disciplines might usefully inform the dance teacher's choice of methodology. In terms of effective teaching it is imperative that all facets of an individual's functioning should be taken into account in the effort to understand the very different routes by which students reach an understanding of the movement material. When individuals within each class are treated as such, teachers can match their teaching strategies to the students' needs with greater sensitivity; thereby a greater proportion of students gain access to the class material in ways that have personal relevance and are constructive for their continuing development. With this aim in mind, means by which teachers may come to understand their students' learning strategies have been described and discussed.

In discussing the issue of detailed planning, in Chapter Three, I have tried to demonstrate how the fundamental principles proposed in the previous chapters can result in effective practice. For many dance teachers the challenge is not simply to assent to such principles, but to use them as the foundation for shifts in methodology. It is vital that such shifts are, at the very least, considered. If teachers aim to help students to build extraordinary levels of self-motivation and discipline, as well as physical expertise, then they must also be willing to immerse themselves in the process of re-evaluation, analysis and debate concerning teaching strategies. When teachers, rather than repeating known structures of inherited exercises, commit themselves to a creative involvement with the material that they teach, presenting nothing that is arbitrary or in any way careless, students may be encouraged to understand the specific intention of every element of the material that they are given and thereby become intellectually as well as physically engaged with it. Further, they may perform the material with the deep physical

understanding which enables them to infuse the movement with creativity, using it as a vehicle through which to reveal their individuality.

It is only when we are creatively engaged in this way, exploring the process of teaching through the physical work as well as through analysis and debate, that we can be certain of doing everything in our power to help all students realise their full potential. In this way the training will enable students to become not simply eloquent performers of the physical material that they encounter but many-faceted and inspiring artists, ready to take responsibility for new developments in contemporary dance that we can neither imagine nor foresee.

¹ Produced by Simon Fraser University, Canada and owned by Credo Interactive.

² Peter Brinson, 'Which Way Dance Teaching? An Overview', *Tomorrow's Dancers*, The Papers of the 1993 Conference, 'Training Tomorrow's Professional Dancers', organised by Dance UK, London (London: Laban Centre for Movement and Dance, 1994), pp. 2-7.

Appendix A

Glossary of technical terms and key to the shorthand used in the teaching notes

The following explanations of terms used in the text and in the teaching notes constitute an important part of this study. They include words which are particular to the movement material discussed in the teaching notes, and those in common usage within the dance profession. As the latter carry different meanings according to their context or the specific dance experience of the user, they have the potential to be misinterpreted.

Whereas ballet vocabulary has already been well documented,¹ the only work to date on the vocabulary used by those involved in the contemporary dance world is Dance Words.² The extraordinary range of words listed there, together with the lack of uniformity of meanings attributed to them, indicates the need for a dictionary of common usage.

Effective collaboration during the teaching and learning process, between teachers as well as between teachers and students, will continue to be problematic until such time as a widely understood dance vocabulary has been assembled. This Glossary is presented not as a definitive text in itself but rather as a first stage in the process of discussion which will be necessary if a common understanding of these terms is to be reached.

Where the terms are specific to the author's own class work, the exercises to which they refer are explained in greater detail, enabling them to be understood in relation to the broader context of the work under discussion. The shorthand for these terms, as used in the teaching notes, is given in brackets.

Other terms relate closely to ballet terminology. In these cases the differences between the meanings of the terms in the context of a ballet class and the meanings newly

attributed to them in the context of the author's work are made clear. Understanding of the meanings of these terms does not rely on previous knowledge of the ballet technique, nor on the vocabulary which describes it, however for those who do have such prior knowledge it is doubly important to stress that the differences in meaning are significant.

The use of borrowed vocabulary is recognised to be unsatisfactory: the fact that aspects of the physical work described are similar may be all the more confusing when frequently these borrowed terms are used to describe intentions which are substantially different. If this situation is to be avoided, a new and more appropriate vocabulary is vital; meanwhile, in the interests of communication, teachers have a responsibility to clarify the meanings attributed to all the terms that they use.

Notes and References

¹Sources for this Glossary are:

Gail Grant, *Technical Manual and Dictionary of Classical Ballet*, 2nd rev. edn (NY: Dover Publications, 1967)

Hoerst Koegler, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977)

The Royal Academy of Dancing, *The Foundations of Classical Ballet Technique* (London: Royal Academy of Dancing, 1997)

Rhonda Ryman, *Dictionary of Classical Ballet Terminology* (London: Royal Academy of Dancing, 1995)

² Valerie Preston-Dunlop, *Dance Words* (Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995)

Across [A]:

A sequence of movement which travels across the floor. This follows the *preparatory* part of the *class* and precedes the jumps.

Adage:

A French word meaning 'at ease' or 'leisure'. Sequences of slow movements which are performed with *fluidity* and *apparent ease*. These *exercises* develop stamina, power and *balance*.

Alignment:

The positioning of and relationship between body parts that allow for movements to be made with a minimum of *effort* and without undue strain on any one area of the body. A posture which is adopted for anatomical reasons rather than for aesthetic ones. It is not used to describe the relationship of the body to the stage space, nor the relationship of one dancer to others in the space (see *Directions*).

Appropriate:

Exercises which are suitable for a particular person or situation. When the term is applied to levels of *energy* or *tension* the implication is that those levels are suitably related to the performance of the movement in question: that is, they are aligned to the notion of working with the degree of *effort/tension* actually required to make the movement.

Arc:

A curved floor pattern or pathway through space. The term refers to the whole body in motion rather than to the pathway of an isolated body part. (See *Circle*.)

Arch:

The backwards reach of the spine in a supported *curve*. The depth of the *arch* is determined by how far it can be *extended* before *sound placement* is lost. Until the back, neck and abdominal muscles are very strong, the *middle-back* is *held* and the *arch* begins just below the shoulder blades [*High arch*]. Later it may be *extended* like a fully-formed bow from the lower back to the top of the head, however this requires very strong and stretched abdominal muscles, an absolutely sure sense of *appropriate* alterations to the weight *placement* on the feet, a very strong lower back and sufficiently strong reach between all the vertebrae so that no one small area of the spine need take undue strain. [*Full arch*]

Articulate:

The dancers' ability to express themselves verbally or with physical clarity. Physical clarity is achieved when the dancer is able to reveal the precise details of a movement - its design, rhythm, *phrasing*, source of *initiation* and intention.

Artistic:

Relating to the art form in question, involving the *imaginative* world of the artist in *personal/original* ways.

Assemblé:

From the French, meaning assembled or joined together. Used, as in ballet, to describe jumps which take off from one foot and land on two. The feet meet together in the air and the landing is in 5th position, unless otherwise stated.

Attitude [Att]:

Derived from ballet terminology; a position of the body inspired by Giovanni da Bologna's statue of Mercury. The weight of the body is supported on one leg with the other lifted, the *working* knee bent, *turned out* and with the knee higher than the foot. The ballet term dictates the position of the arms, legs and the *torso*, however in this context the term refers only to the position of the legs.

Back:

The word is used to describe the spine and/or the muscles surrounding it. To avoid confusion, particularly in the teaching notes, the word *behind [beh]* is always used to denote the direction of travel or relationship of one body part to another. For example, *Back returns centre, R to coup beh* suggests that while the spine returns to its vertical position, the right foot is brought into contact with the *standing* leg, behind the left ankle.

Back of the legs/thighs:

This expression is used to describe the ham string muscles. (Biceps, semitendinosus and semimembranosus.)

Back Stretches [B.Str]:

These *exercises* concentrate on the lengthening of the spine in different planes and with different relationships to the pelvis and the legs. Each area of the spine is *isolated* as it *initiates* or *extends* the movement. Flexibility is increased as the spine works through curved and fully lengthened positions.

Importantly, the abdominal muscles are always used strongly to support the action of the back. Awareness of the relationship between the carriage of the back as it reaches into different areas of space (vertical, horizontal, diagonal etc.) and the necessary support through the muscles on two sides of the waist, enabling the back muscles not to be over-used, is crucial.

Balance:

The term describes the body when it is in a state of *equilibrium*. This state is achieved through the use of *opposition* and/or the *alignment* of different regions of the body in order that their relative weights should literally balance each other. As the body moves, the dancer must be active in rediscovering the state of *equilibrium*. With each small change in the body forces of support need to be altered in terms of muscular *effort*, and/or differently *aligned*.

Beating:

Derived from ballet terminology, the word is used in a broader range of circumstances than would be the case in a ballet *class*. It describes the action of the *working* leg when it makes small changes in its relationship to the *standing* leg. Normally the position of the thigh is retained while the lower leg moves away from and towards the *standing* leg. The *working* foot is stretched unless otherwise stated and may *beat* against the *supporting* leg at the ankle, calf, or at the knee. The *working* leg may be *turned-out* or *parallel*. As in ballet, it may also describe the crossing of the legs in the air, in the context of *small*, *skimming* or *big jumps*.

Big Jumps [B.J]:

Jumps which require extreme *effort* and which travel a long way through space, either in height or in length, between take-off and landing.

Body-type:

The individual's anatomical and physiological make-up, including flexibility, strength and muscle-tone.

Breathing:

The term is used to describe the normal, instinctive action. It does not refer to particular *exercises* (as in Graham's work) nor to the use of breath as an *expressive* tool.

Brushes [B]:

Exercises which concentrate on the use of a brushing action of the foot against the floor, *initiating* the reach of the *working* leg away from the *standing* leg and mobilising different areas of the foot as the heel lifts away from the ground first, followed by the ball of the foot and finally the toes. This action of the leg is complete when the toes are fully stretched, *maintaining* contact with the floor (*tendu*) or reaching just off the floor (*glissé*).

Brushes + Back [B + back]:

The use of the leg as above in combination with the work of the back. That is, the *torso* has specific, choreographed movement material and is active at the same time as the legs.

Centre:

The term is commonly used to describe the abdominal region and the work of the abdominal muscles. Whilst the work of these muscles is recognised to be enormously important, the meaning of the word *centre* as used in this text needs to be explained differently.

The term is used in one of four contexts, the unifying concept being one of *connection* :

1) To describe the *alignment* of the body when it is strongly supported in its upright position, giving an impression of power through a sense of *connection* of all the body parts.

2) To describe the weight of the body in relation to gravity. The *centre of gravity*, or *centre of weight* has no fixed location in the body but rather depends upon individual, physical structure (length and weight of *torso* and limbs and the ways in which the joints are positioned). As the body moves, so the position of the *centre of gravity* or *weight* changes. Knowledge of the *placement* of *centre* in this sense of the word is crucial to an ability to return to the upright, *connected* position described above and in order to retain a strong sense of *connection* through the body when moving, leading to the ability to control the movement as required. Awareness of the *centre of weight* also enables the dancer to use *counterbalance* to maximum effect. Therefore a sense of *centre* is used in order that a state of *equilibrium* can be achieved when stationary, when moving, and when using opposing forces.

3) To describe the psychological state of preparedness for the action which is to take place, the work which is to be done in *class* or the performance which is about to be given.

4) To describe the sense of unity experienced by the dancer who has *connected* all aspects of their physical and intellectual work together with their emotional life, giving an impression of stability and strength.

The dancer who retains and is able to demonstrate through performance a clear sense of the term in at least the first three contexts may be described as *centred*.

Changing [Ch]:

From the ballet term, *changements*.

1) In the context of *small jumps Chx3* would denote three changes, that is jumping in 5th position, each time changing feet in the air so that a different foot will be in front every time the body lands.

2) The word is also used in relation to the *placement* of weight. *Ch.wgt* might denote a shift of weight in the *torso*, or from one foot to another.

Chassé:

From the French, meaning 'hunted', the word describes the action of replacing one foot with another, as if the first were being chased out of its former position.

Circle [circ]:

The word is used to describe

1) the pathway of the whole body through space (see also *Arc*) or

2) the pathway of an isolated body part.

For example *Back circ from curve-tilt-arch* would describe the back's movement through these positions, connecting them by travelling in a curved pathway. Likewise *Brushes circ.* would imply the use of a circular action of the hip, akin to a mini *rond de jambe*, rather than an action of the leg which opens and closes in straight lines.

Unless otherwise stated, a circular action of any part of the body is executed with maximum reach away from the *centre of weight*, describing as large a circle as is physically possible.

Combination [Comb]:

A section of movement material made by combining several movement ideas.

Commitment:

The word is used to describe the level of *concentration* which is characterised by a sense of being bound to follow through enquiries that have been initiated in the *class*, together with a sense of personal responsibility for the outcome of these lines of inquiry. Levels of *commitment* and those of *motivation* may be related but are not necessarily equal. Students may, for example, show consistent *commitment* to the *class* work, perhaps through a sense of obedience to the instructions given, even though their personal *motivation* and inclination to act with initiative is relatively slight. Conversely, students may be highly *motivated* personally, with a genuine interest in the work but without the *commitment* which might enable them to sustain or take responsibility for their own continuing development in the context of a *class*.

Connection:

1) Physical *connection* (see *co-ordination* and *centre*).

2) Intellectual *connection* between the challenges of one physical demand and another. Development of the ability to make *connections* of this kind results in greater eloquence of performance as the similarities or differences between movements are revealed with

increasing clarity. Such ability also aids the training process as the logic of the *technique* studied is inherent in the *connections* made between the different physical challenges encountered in the *class*.

Contemporary dance:

Dance which exists, or is made at the present time.

Concentration:

The word is applied in accordance with its usual definition, to describe the process of giving intense attention to the particular work being undertaken.

In this context such attention is both mental and physical. The dancer may have stamina in terms of intellectual *concentration* on the physical tasks set, yet not the physical stamina, or clarity, to make this visible. Alternatively there may be physical *concentration*, revealed through an eloquent performance of the movement material in all its subtleties, although the mental *concentration* on the set tasks is lacking. During the training process it is generally beneficial to encourage students to develop physical and mental *concentration* together, and by means of the same tasks. However it is recognised that an important part of the training process is to develop from this stage to the point at which physical *concentration* is retained while other forces are allowed to come into play, leading to performances of the movement material which are informed by and revealing of *artistic* intentions. In such a way the dancer makes *creative* and personal contributions to the performance of the material. (See also *Imagination* .)

Co-ordination:

Either the way in which the parts of the body work together as a whole or, the act of arranging each part of the movement material (in terms of muscular *effort* or timing) in order that these parts, whether in isolation or together, should work efficiently to reveal the intention of the *combination* . The exact *co-ordination* of each move within the dance *phrase*, made visible, contributes to this clarity of intention.

Correct:

Appropriate for the task in question.

Corrections:

Commonly used to suggest the extent to which the student, aspiring to perfection in the performance of set *exercises*, is judged by the teacher to have succeeded or failed in this endeavour. When aspects of the work are judged to have fallen below the required standard, the teacher gives *corrections* which will help the student to understand the ways in which their performance might be improved.

It is assumed here that there are no absolute standards to which all students aspire, except those of matching intention to action, the understanding of the movement material in relation to individual physical structure, and in terms of levels of *commitment*. Furthermore that the atmosphere of the *class* is encouraging rather than critical. Therefore the use of the term *corrections* carries an importantly different meaning. That is, the sharing between student and teacher of information and thoughts as to the performance of a particular *exercise*, the effectiveness of it in relation to the student's *body-type* and individual aims, and its intention.

Cou-de-Pied [Coup]:

A French term meaning the 'neck' of the foot, this word was adopted into ballet terminology and is used to describe the position of the

working foot when it is *laterally* rotated at the ankle joint, fully stretched and held either in front of or behind the *supporting* ankle. In the context of this work the *working* foot is stretched but not rotated. It may be held at the front, at the side or behind the *supporting* ankle.

Counterbalance:

The use of opposing forces of *energy*. The state of *equilibrium* described as *balance* may be achieved by using two forces which work against each other. For example, an *arch* may be deepened when the *working* leg reaches forward, whether on or off the ground, as the reach of the leg *counterbalances* the reach of the spine. Physical *effort* in both directions need not be exactly matched for the state of *equilibrium* to be achieved, rather the differing degrees of *effort* necessary to achieve *counterbalance* depend upon individual physical structure, the relative length and weight of the limbs etc.

Coupé:

From the French, meaning cut or cutting, this is a small intermediary step which serves as a preparation for the movement which is to follow. The *working* foot 'cuts' underneath the foot of the *standing* leg, replacing it in the same space. The expression *catch step* is commonly used with an equivalent meaning.

Courageous:

The dancer who is *courageous* is willing to take physical risks in order to explore the outer limits of physical possibility. These risks are limited to those which will not cause injury. For example, *suspension* before a *fall* may be stretched to the point at which the dancer does occasionally actually fall to the floor, before the physical limit of such a movement is understood and the *appropriate* degree of control is subsequently used. Dancing in this way may also be described as 'on the edge.'

Creative:

The term is used to describe dance-related activities which are characterised by personal, *original*, intellectual or *artistic* endeavour.

Crossed:

The word is used in two contexts:

1) Taken from the ballet term *croisé*, the word describes the position of the body and legs in relation to the audience, or front of the space. The hips face the front diagonal and the downstage leg is in front of the upstage leg. Unlike in ballet, the positions of the back and arms are not assumed, rather they are always described independently.

2) The legs and feet are described as *crossed* when *4th* or *5th positions* are used and the heel of one foot is placed directly forward of the toes of the other. Unlike in ballet the feet are never placed on parallel lines in these positions. Although the feet may be *crossed*, the angle at which they are placed depends on individual degrees of *rotation* at the hip. Additional *lateral rotation* at the knee or at the ankle is never encouraged.

Curve:

The reach of the spine when it *extends* forwards in space, creating a curved shape on both the back and front surfaces of the body. The *curve* may extend from the lower back to the head [*Deep curve*], involve predominantly the middle of the spine [*Mid curve*] or emphasise the upper spine [*Upper back curve*]. In all cases the pelvis acts as the still point away from which the spine reaches. The work of the abdominal muscles is crucial, providing a stabilising force and,

together with *energy* in the legs, the necessary *counterbalance* of weight.

Dance:

The following two definitions sum up the meaning of the word as it is used in this thesis.

...culturally patterned sequences of non-verbal body movements that are purposeful, intentionally rhythmic, and have aesthetic value in the eyes of those for whom the dancer is performing.

Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind* (1993 p. 223).

It is one among many symbolic modes of communication by which everyone may formulate and express their understanding of the world, their way of life and each other. Being non-verbal and symbolic it is a language of symbols and shapes expressed through movement for which bodies are the instrument. The symbols derive from many dance 'languages' evolved historically ... or ...self-created the way young people devise their own movements in discos and dancehalls.

Peter Brinson, *Dance as Education* (1991 p. 115).

Dangerous:

The term describes work which involves excessive risk-taking, likely to lead to injury. The balance between risk-taking which is exciting but ultimately controllable (see *Courageous*) and that which is *dangerous* is a vital one for the dance student to learn. Similarly, the differentiation between muscular *effort* which may be described as 'hard work' and the excessive *effort* that leads to muscle injury must be understood.

Deep fold:

Concentration is on the action of the hip socket as it works in the deepest possible hinge position with the thigh bone towards the chest, either *parallel* or *turned-out*. These *exercises* are in three categories:

1) at the beginning of *class*, within *Opening combinations*, where the weight is on two legs and the *torso* is *dropped* forward with the head *hanging* towards the floor;

2) at the end of the *preparatory* section of the *class*, within *Long Back combinations*, where the *deep hinge* action of the hip is used together with the lengthening of the spine forward in space. Generally the weight is on two legs;

3) within *Fondu* or *Développé exercises*, where the *working* leg is in *attitude* (front or side) rather than full extension and the aim of the *exercise* is to work for the height of the knee in relation to the hip socket, or where the *torso* is *folded* against the *standing* leg (in *fondu*) as in *Long Back combinations*. Here the weight is carried on one leg, either *parallel* or *turned-out*.

Deep Spirals:

The work of the spine when it turns on its own axis, using the pelvis as the still, stable point away from which it can reach. The back is always lengthened as a *preparation* for this *rotation*, and the reach is maintained throughout the *spiral* action in order that potential damage to the vertebrae is minimised.

Développés [Dev]:

Derived from ballet terminology, the word describes the unfolding of the *working* leg into an *extended* position in the air, that is, the

working leg bends as it lifts and stretches as it extends to the required height.

The pelvis may be kept level and 'square' to the direction in which the dancer is facing, as in ballet, or it may alter its position in relation to the *standing* leg and/or to the direction faced, as the significantly different work of the back in this context dictates.

Dev/Adage:

Sequences of sustained, slow movement material using the *développé* action of the *working* leg as their basis. These sequences may also include other types of movement material.

Directions:

1) Of the dancer in relation to the stage space. Traditional stage directions are used and the dancer's relationship to these is described. The front of the pelvis, just below the waist, being most commonly the site of the *centre of weight*, is used as the dancer's focal point. For example, *Facing DSR* would describe the dancer whose hips were facing the downstage-right corner of the stage/studio space, whilst *Twds SR* would describe the dancer who was travelling in the direction of (towards) the centre of the right-hand edge of the space.

2) Of the actions of the body in relation to the dancer's own *centre*. The direction of the hips/pelvis is taken as a starting point, to which the movement of any other part of the body relates. For example, *Facing fr, brush R leg beh* suggests that the dancer's hips are facing directly forwards whilst the action of the leg is to *brush* directly behind the hips.

Double work:

Any sequence of movements which involves one dancer being partnered or supported by another.

Dropped:

1) In relation to physical *effort*. For example, muscular *tension* is *dropped* when it is no longer used.

2) In relation to a body part. For example, an arm which was raised is *dropped* when it is allowed to fall without any resistance.

3) In relation to a body part in combination with the degree of physical *effort* used. For example, when the *working* leg is held in a bent position with the *working* foot at the ankle of the *standing* leg there may be muscular *tension* used to maintain its position and as a preparation for the action which is about to take place - perhaps a high *développé*. On the other hand, this *tension* may be *dropped* if it is not required, allowing gravity to alter the position of the leg although it has not fallen from a height and some resistance may still be used, preventing the leg from *hanging* limply or without a defined shape.

Such a *release* of *tension* in a very specific area - in this case the hip socket - allows the limb to *hang* while retaining sufficient muscular action to define its shape, therefore using a combination of gravitational pull and *release* of *tension*.

Duple-time:

see *Time signatures*.

Dynamics:

The term is used in various and frequently overlapping contexts:

1) To describe the shaping of movement both in terms of *movement quality* and the degrees of *effort* required to attain such *quality* (smooth, *fluid*, accented, percussive, sharp, aggressive, weighty, gentle, forceful etc.).

2) To describe the relationship of the movement to rhythm and/or musical phrasing.

When movement is performed without reference to music its shape can be described in terms of the rhythm created by the use of accents within the movement. Thus *Impulsive* movements have their accent as the *impetus* for the movement, *Impactive* movements are characterised by having their accents as the final statement, and *Swings* have their accents in the middle of the movement, giving weight to the pendulum-like action which is used.

When movement is performed in relationship to music, the musical phrasing, *quality*, texture or timbre, rhythm, overall structure and *tempo* may all influence the *dynamics* of the dancer who responds to it. The category headed *Musicality* from the list of assessment categories for technical work at London Contemporary Dance School reads:

Having an accurate rhythmic understanding together with a sense of phrasing; that is, the ability to use music to shape the dynamic of movement.

3) In relation to an individual's *personality* and their ability to contribute *creatively* to the performance of the movement material through a willingness to involve themselves with that material emotionally, as well as physically and intellectually. The individual's propensity to move within a limited range of movement qualities is dictated by their emotional and intellectual response to the movement experience as well as by formative life-experiences. The student who has developed a wide *dynamic range* will have the ability to move with the qualities that do not feel natural to them, as well as with those which seem to *express* their personalities most eloquently.

4) More generally, the term is used to describe other forces which affect the teaching and learning environment. For example, the relationships between the students in the *class*, between the students and the teacher and the apparent *motivation* of all concerned are referred to as contributory factors in the development the *dynamics* of the group or *class*.

Ease:

Movement which is characterised by a minimum of physical *effort*. This *ease* may be real or apparent/revealed. (See *Energy*.)

Easy:

The term is used to describe movements or *exercises* that are performed with *ease*, not those which are simple to execute.

Education:

The word is used in a broader sense than simply 'the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life' (Oxford English Dictionary, 1971). *Education* in this context also refers to the development of *artistic* sensibilities.

Effort:

The term describes the action of muscles with differing degrees of *tension*. *Effort* and *energy* are interchangeable words in this context.

The dancer's *energy/effort* can be divided into two categories:

1) *Real energy/effort*, the actual physical *effort* used to perform the movement.

2) *Apparent* or *revealed energy/effort*, the degree of *effort* which the dancer chooses to make visible. Given that there is a finite amount of *energy* actually required to make a movement (see *Appropriate tension*) when more or less *energy* than this is revealed, an aesthetic or dramatic statement is necessarily being made. *Apparent effort* may, for example, be slight when the movement *quality* achieved is *easy* or *seemingly effortless*, although the actual exertion involved in order to achieve such a *quality* may be great.

The use of *resistance* and of *opposition*, in combination with the degree of *energy/effort* in any muscle group/s, combine with *phrasing* and timing to achieve the desired *movement quality*. For example, although it takes a specific amount of *effort* to lift a leg into the air, the dancer might choose to use *resistance* in order to make the movement seem more powerful, weighty or suggestive of *effort*, or *opposition* to make it relatively *soft*, light or *effortless*.

The understanding of the concepts *real* or *apparent effort/energy* is crucial to the students' ability to work with a deep understanding of the movement material. In the simplest of terms the way a movement looks is not necessarily how it feels; therefore while students are encouraged to develop keen observational skills, they also need clear guidance as to how to achieve the *apparent* degree of *effort/energy*. It is of paramount importance that teachers give sufficient information about where the *real effort* is located in the body, encouraging the understanding of deeply felt sensations rather than the outward appearance of the movement material.

En Croix:

Derived from ballet terminology, the expression describes work for the legs which is executed 'in the shape of a cross'. That is, the leg gestures are directed to the front, the side, behind the body and to the side again. Commonly the pattern is repeated by the other leg, before being reversed.

Energy:

See *Effort* above.

The term is also used in relation to general levels of health and fitness. Dancers may be described as *energetic* when their bodies are in a state of preparedness for action, fully awake and alert and with the necessary strength and stamina to complete the physical material with *appropriate energy*. In this context the words *energy* and *physicality* are interchangeable.

En face:

Taken from ballet terminology, the expression describes the dancer who is directly facing the audience, or front of the space.

Exercise:

A sequence of movements set with a particular intention in terms of the physical challenges that it poses and the learning potential inherent within it. The *class* is made up of many such structures, some of which *focus* primarily on physical/anatomical concerns, while others are demanding in terms of *dynamics*, *musicality*, the use of space, relationships between dancers etc.

The word is commonly used with derogatory connotations, implying that there is no 'performance' or 'dance' *quality* in such a structure. In the context of this thesis it is assumed that within every *exercise* there

exist possibilities for exploration and *expression* of individual *creativity*.

Exercise on Six [Ex on 6]:

The *exercise* takes its name from Merce Cunningham's *Exercise on Six*, which has its roots in similar explorations of the same name in Martha Graham's work. 'On 6' refers to the way in which the *exercise* is structured musically. It is recognised that in order to develop *appropriate* strength in the abdominal and lower back muscles and to develop a sense of *centre* in the pelvis while the spine reaches through a wide range of movement possibilities, simple versions taking more time for each shift of weight are a useful preparation. Therefore within the context of this work the *exercises* are set on 8 or 12 counts, reducing eventually to a 6 bar musical phrase when the students are able to perform them with the *concentration* and strength which will support their backs sufficiently.

Expertise:

The quality of performance attained when the dancer has achieved a level of skill in the execution of the physical demands of a *technique* which engenders complete confidence in the ability to perform with both accuracy and eloquence, transcending the physical when appropriate whilst being able to retain physical clarity.

Expressive/expression:

The terms are used to describe the dancers' ability to imbue movement with feelings and emotions, transcending the purely physical by transforming physical actions into symbolic manifestations of commonly understood experiences.

The dancer deals with several overlapping emotional worlds at one and the same time. Recognition of these is crucial to the ability to move from the stage of *self-expression* to that of performing movement *expressively*, whether the emotional content of the movement is to be personal, suggested by the choreographer, or inherent in dramatic or narrative work:

1. Feelings in relation to the physical self, in the studio at one particular time, are related to an awareness of how it feels, given by physical sensations, and by how it looks to the student when mirrors are used;
2. The immediate emotional response, that is, what the student is actually feeling at any particular time relates to the physical experience described above as well as to external influences, for example the *group dynamic* or the attitude of the teacher;
3. Looking back, consciously or unconsciously involves making *connections* with an extensive collection of previous experiences and feelings that the student may or may not have come to terms with. This emotional/historical layer includes recent experiences as well as those in the distant past;
4. Different forms of emotional reality are explored as students make *imaginative* transformations of their immediate emotional responses. In some cases this may involve *trying out* different emotional states and in this respect the student may go through processes similar to those of the child during its stages of symbolic play, exploring emotions and often finding parts of an emotional life that were previously denied, hidden or trapped. In this way, students may increase their ability to draw on a range of emotions which, rather than being false, represent new possibilities discovered through exploration in previously unknown territory.

The distinctions between the various forms of *expression* are important. Within the context of a *technique class* teachers may affirm the value of individuality by encouraging students to be increasingly aware of their immediate feelings, and in the belief that dance can have a therapeutic effect, being an important outlet for those feelings. It is proposed that to be in touch with their emotional lives in this way is necessary as a first stage in the transformation process which will eventually involve using such feelings as a resource, enabling real life experiences to feed the students' *dynamic* or *expressive* range.

The increasing awareness of emotional states that develops in this context is very different from 'self-expression of the undisciplined, outpouring kind,' (Redfern, B. 1982 p.11) as the movement material is pre-set, giving a structure which naturally limits the range that may be explored at any one time.

The use of a broad range of *dynamics* within every *class* is vital to the process of transforming the expression of feelings from the *symptomatic* to the *symbolic*, allowing many different personalities the opportunity to express their real feelings through movement, to increase the range of possibilities for *expression* of this kind, and eventually to use the knowledge gained in this way to inform their use of dance as a symbolic language.

This symbolic language is *expressive* though the emotional reality with which it deals is at least one stage removed from the immediate feelings of the dancer involved. Students who have been encouraged to develop their awareness of the emotional worlds described may draw on that experience, using it in the collaborative process of making new work and relating it to the choreographer's intention in order that the movement material eventually used in performance is *expressive* of the choreographer's *artistic standpoint* and/or specific dramatic intentions.

Teaching which encourages *focus* on these issues must be carefully balanced with the necessity to work on specific physical challenges and to deal with the immediate in terms of relationships with others in the studio and with the physical material, lest students become increasingly introspective and unable to alter their learning strategies when appropriate. However, the often-heard appeal to students to *leave their problems outside* is not a useful request if the aim is to encourage them to be aware of their real feelings. The ability to put the details of a problem to one side, without negating the way they feel as they come into *class*, rather than being asked to put on an act of vacant cheerfulness, is a useful learning tool. It mirrors the transformation that they will make every time real feelings are abstracted and used as a substructure or source material for *expressive* dancing. Furthermore, it may increase feelings of self-esteem as students become increasingly aware and in control of their emotional lives.

Extend [Ext]:

The word is used to describe movement which is increased or goes beyond that which is usual. It may refer to body parts, for example in the context of *high leg extensions* or in the case of *Ext. back circ.*, to describe a circular action of the back in as broad/large a manner as is feasible. Equally it may refer to the use of space, dynamic range etc.

Fall:

The relinquishing of control over an action, although the moments immediately before and after the *fall* may be carefully structured

and/or performed with control. This may refer to the action of a single part of the body, for example an arm which is allowed to *drop* or *fall* down, or it may refer to the whole body *falling* through space whether directly down to the floor or whilst travelling from a higher to a lower position.

Feet:

These *exercises* are *initiated* by the action of the feet. Such *exercises* are used both at the beginning of the *class* and prior to the *jumps* and are designed to mobilise and/or strengthen them.

Fluid:

The *quality* of movement which is characterised by an apparent seamlessness. The transitions between movements are made without visible accents so that one movement literally flows into the next.

Focus:

The word is used in four contexts:

- 1) In relation to the dancer's *concentration* and ability to reveal the specific nature of the movement material and its intention, (see also *commitment* and *internalisation*);
- 2) to describe the use of the eyes/gaze to delineate the space or comment dramatically on it through variations in the intensity or distance of that gaze;
- 3) to denote the means by which a dancer projects the movement through space by means of differing movement qualities and/or clarification of its direction of travel;
- 4) to describe the direction that the work of the *class* is taking, defining a particular area of study.

Fondus [Fon]:

Derived from the ballet term *battement fondu*. As in the context of a ballet *class*, the *exercises* in this category build strength in the legs and particularly encourage the supple strength needed when landing from jumps or in order to sustain the slow, strong movements of *Adage combinations*. In the context of this work the material is relatively simple in terms of the patterns of movement in the legs, but deals with the added complication of changes in the *torso* which inevitably alter the way in which the weight must be carried on the feet. In these respects the material differs enormously from the ballet *exercise* to which it refers.

The *exercises* challenge preconceptions of *co-ordination* by *isolating* or *co-ordinating* the work of the *torso* and the legs in various different ways. Similarly different areas of the back *initiate* movement, resulting in different changes of weight on the feet in each of the *combinations*. The actions of the *working* leg are kept deliberately low in order that *concentration* may be given to the particular challenges posed. With advanced students it is possible to be specific in terms of unusual *co-ordinations* and methods of *phrasing* and to work very deeply in the legs at the same time, both in terms of the depth of the *fondu* and the height of the *working* leg. When these *exercises* are performed in this way they will be particularly *strenuous* and may substitute for an *Adage combination*.

In the teaching notes, the shorthand [*Fon*] is used to describe the *working* leg when it is bent. For example, *Fon R, L coup fr* suggests that the right leg is bent and carries the weight of the body, whilst the

left leg, also bent, is positioned with the left foot at the front of the right ankle.

Free:

The word is used to denote a lack of *tension* and is therefore, in some contexts, synonymous with *release*. The action of *freeing the hip*, for example, would involve *releasing* any unnecessary *tension*, thereby preparing for the movement which was about to occur.

Fresh:

Freshness may be real or illusory. There is real *freshness* in the learning situation each time the student discovers something new and personally relevant, whether this is connected with the performance of new movement material or with repetitions of *exercises* previously performed. An illusion of *freshness* or spontaneity is created when the student is able to give an improvised quality to their performance, apparently discovering new things as they move, even though, in reality, these movements may have been meticulously *rehearsed*.

Glissé [Gliss]:

Derived from the ballet term *battement glissé*, the word describes a *brush* which completes its outward action with the toes of the *working* foot just off the floor.

Grand Battements [Batt]:

Derived from ballet terminology describing an *exercise* in which the *working* leg is raised from the hip into the air and brought down again, both knees straight. The aim is to work for mobility in the hips and general strength, as the action of the *working* leg does not disturb the *alignment* of the *torso* or the *standing* leg. This *exercise* also serves as a valuable preparation for *big jumps* which are *initiated* by a *battement* action, leading the weight of the body into the air. When combined with choreographed movements of the *torso* further strength and stamina can be built as the dancer continues to work for *apparent ease* of movement, whilst *co-ordinating* very *strenuous* actions of the whole body.

Gripping:

The term describes the contraction of a muscle to the extent that there is no possibility of further movement. Such use of the muscles is never advocated.

Half-point:

The term describes the position of the foot when the heel is lifted as far off the floor as possible, leaving the ball of the foot and all the toes in contact with the ground. In the teaching notes, describing work for the feet, *half-point* is interchangeable with *arch*.

Hanging:

See *Dropped* (category 3) above.

Holding:

Maintaining the chosen position with the degree of *effort/energy* actually required to do so.

Imagination:

Referring to the inventive, *creative* faculties, the term is used to describe the use of thought processes brought to a situation in such a way that it may be significantly changed. Redfern (1973 pp. 6-20) lists

five forms of *imagination*; of these Imaging, Empathising, and Using "creative imagination" are significant in this context:

Imaging/Using "creative imagination."

Redfern suggests that visual or aural images may be remembered or conjured up, in either case such images are 'non-real' and may be undirected, as in day-dreaming, or directed to some extent. With reference to these concepts, the term *imagination* is used here to describe the ability to conjure and then direct images. The dancer who 'knows' the movement material through which they work in *class*, or performance, well enough to be able to 'suspend purely conscious control and to allow unconscious processes to take over' (Redfern, Ibid p.7) may be said to bring their *imagination* to their work, transcending the physical and speaking through it rather than simply making a physical statement. Whether in *class* or in performance, this ability leads to the projection of something quite different from who or where they are; the studio or stage space is transformed for the viewer and a sense of the extraordinary is created. To dance *expressively* in this way involves the use of what Redfern calls the creative imagination. As she points out, such an ability does not depend upon dancers' having made the movements themselves. Logically therefore, it is within the realm of the *technique class* to encourage such a use of the *imagination*.

Empathising.

The ability to *imagine* oneself in another person's position is an important part of the training process, most importantly for the sake of relationships between students and teachers, and between peers, which are built on sensitivity to each other's situation. However there are very practical considerations as well. The ability to work well as a group, travelling through space, whether in unison or using individual movement *combinations* which might weave in and out of each other, depends to a large extent on the ability to *imagine* where other dancers are about to travel and to respond sensitively to their use of the space. Dancers need to ensure that others literally have room to move, as well as being concerned with individual space requirements. They must be aware of one another's timing, especially if they are working in unison, so that they are ready to move on together, as well as concentrating on their own physical challenges. Where *double-work* is concerned this empathy, or use of the *imagination* is vital if dancers are to respond to shifts of weight and changing degrees of tension between the two bodies involved.

Further, significant changes may be made to the performance of movement material without reference to images other than deeply felt physical sensations and associated thought processes with which the student deals. The use of the *imagination* in this context is concerned with making *connections* between the physical and the intellectual and is explored throughout the text. See *Connections*.

Impetus:

The term describes the driving force used to *initiate* movement. Such a force may come from any one area of the body, or from a combination of *initiating* actions. The *impetus* for a movement may come from an *internal* source and not be visible, therefore students need verbal information as well as physical demonstrations of the *combination*, if they are to understand how to direct movement from a variety of sources.

In 2nd/2nd position/To the side:

The use of the ballet term *second position*, of the feet, is used here with some important differences in meaning. The feet are placed apart,

separated by the distance of one foot, with the legs *turned-out*, as they would be in ballet. However when students have limited *rotation* in the hips it is assumed that they will work with the maximum *rotation* available, rather than with the feet directed towards the side of the studio. In extreme cases the feet may face diagonally forwards, barely altered from a *parallel* position, but would nevertheless be described as being *in 2nd*.

The difference between working *in 2nd*, and working to the side of the studio is fundamental to the concepts discussed in this thesis, as the first suggests a relationship with the dancer's own body while the second dictates the relationship that the body has to the studio space. Within ballet terminology, no such distinction is made as the assumption is that dancers have the degree of *turn-out* necessary to direct their movements sideways, both in relation to their own bodies and to the space.

The concept of *2nd position* being individually defined is carried through from the position of the feet to all subsequent work and results in the need to adapt the movement material, considerably in some instances, for different *body-types*.

There is a resultant need to clarify the difference between movements which are involved with the notion of being *in 2nd* and those which are directed to the side of the studio. In the teaching notes, directions in space are given before the action is described e.g. *side lunge* denotes a *lunge* which is defined by having the *working/bent* leg directly sideways from the hips, towards the side of the studio. The position in relation to the dancer's body follows the action in question e.g. *lunge 2nd* describes a *lunge* which is characterised by having the *working/bent* leg *turned out* and as far to the side as is possible, taking into account individual degrees of *rotation* in the hip sockets.

The position *wide 2nd* is used when a very stable weight base is required for particular *concentration* on the work of the back. This position has the further advantage of encouraging stretch through the *back of the thighs*, for example in *deep pliés wide 2nd*. Further, for some *body-types* a deeper *hinge* of the hip can be attained in this position.

Initiate:

The action of creating the force necessary to begin a movement (see *Impetus*).

Internal:

The word is used in the following contexts, described in the Oxford English Dictionary:

Anatomical. Situated away from the surface of the body...
 ...pertaining to the inner nature or relations as distinguished from its relations to things external to itself...
 ...belonging to the thing or subject in itself; intrinsic...
 Of or belonging to the inner nature or life of man; pertaining to the mind or soul; mental or spiritual; inward; subjective.

See *Internalisation* .

Internalisation:

When students *internalise* the work which they are given to explore in a *technique class*, they are involved in the process of making that class work *internal* in many different senses of that word. Very often the process involves the use of power/strength or sources of *energy* as

initiating forces emanating from the *centre* of the body rather than from the periphery. Use of the deep muscles, rather than the superficial ones, is therefore an important part of *internalisation*. Equally importantly the process involves making *connections* between the *exercises* given (which may be described as external) and other relationships previously comprehended and *internalised* and/or the mental, spiritual or emotional in ways which result in such *exercises* becoming personally relevant. (See *Imagination*.)

When a student is unable to *internalise* dance material in both senses described above, their dancing may be described as superficial. In such cases there would be an awareness both that the student was not able to engage the deep muscles of the body when appropriate and that the knowledge acquired in *class* had not been absorbed in ways which would make it personally relevant and therefore readily transferable to new situations. (See Chapter Two: Teaching and Learning Strategies.)

Isolations [Isoll]:

Within this category of *exercises*, the whole range of movement possibilities in the *torso* and arms is explored in terms of the clarity with which each section of the *exercise* is *initiated* and its separate identity. The movement patterns become increasingly complex and can work up to fast *tempi*, testing the *sound placement* which should be assured by this point in the *class*. Following on directly from *exercises* which are concerned with the *connection* between *torso* and legs, these *exercises* provide a contrast as they explore the extent to which that work can be *isolated*. Less usual *connections* than the ones previously given in the *class* are made and these are explored while *maintaining* the same basic principles of weight *placement*.

Jeté:

From the French meaning 'thrown', the word describes a jump which is *initiated* by a brushing action of the *working* leg being 'thrown' into the air. A *jeté* always takes off from one leg and lands on the other.

Jumps:

These are categorised according to the *effort* required to achieve them and the use of space that characterises them. See *Big Jumps*, *Jumps in Place*, *Small Jumps* and *Skimming*.

Jumps in Place:

Jumps that do not travel through space, or *combinations* of such jumps which are predominantly in place. They may be large or small, depending on the *tempo*.

Kinaesthesia:

The sensation of muscular *effort*.

Kinetic energy:

The energy derived from motion, rather than from muscular activity.

Lateral:

Towards the side. That is, the outside of the body. Hence *lateral rotation*, for example, describes *rotation* towards the outside of the body.

Lift:

1) In the context of *double work* the term is used literally.

2) The muscular support which gives the impression of *lifting* the body's weight away from the floor.

Long Back:

These *exercises focus* on finding the greatest possible length from the base of the spine to the top of the head and the *softness* in the muscles which allows such a connection between the joints of the spine to be achieved with *ease*. The *exercises* also involve a *softness* in the use of the hip sockets and ankle joints as the back *folds* forwards towards the thighs. (See *Deep fold*) When combined with *deep lunges*, an awareness of the *connection* between the head and the heel of the *working* leg, through the length of the spine and the *working* leg, is also built up. The aim is twofold:

1) to be able to sense this lengthened spine in different planes in space, including the vertical, therefore eventually to work with clarity in all these areas;

2) to sense and to be able to use the shift of weight *initiated* by such a use of the back, both on the feet when remaining in place and through space when the back reaches far enough to pull the weight off the legs.

Loose:

The term is commonly used to describe the dancer whose joints and tendons are mobile, enabling them to achieve a broad range of physical possibilities in terms of body shape. It is also used here to describe movements that are not made with full *energy*. For example, a *loosely stretched* leg would be lengthened and straight, but not taut.

When used as a verb, the term refers to relative amounts of *energy*. For example, the direction to *loosen the hip* would indicate that less *energy* should be used than was previously the case. (See *Free*.)

Lunge:

The term describes the position of the legs when both feet are on the floor, the legs *turned-out* (unless otherwise stated) with one bent and the other stretched.

The depth of the *lunge* is determined by the distance between the feet and the mobility in the hip sockets which allows for the pelvis to be lowered towards the floor. A *deep lunge* is one in which the hips are held low to the ground with the feet wide apart, while a *small lunge* is relatively higher off the ground, with the feet closer together.

The direction of the *lunge* is described by the position of the bent/*working* leg, which will normally carry most of the weight. For example *Lunge R diag frwd* denotes a position in which the right leg is bent, *turned-out*, carrying the weight and diagonally forward of the left leg which is stretched.

Maintaining [Maint]:

The term is used to denote the intention of continuing one area of work whilst other aspects are changed. For example, *Maint curve, dev R beh* suggests that whilst the *curve* of the back is held, the right leg makes a *développé* action to the back.

Marking:

The rehearsal of movement *combinations* without full physical *energy*. *Concentration* is given to other aspects of the work, perhaps the *phrasing* or the *co-ordination* which will be an important part of the material when it is performed with full *energy (full-out)*. Frequently the *marking* process takes place at a very different tempo from that used in performance; therefore teachers must give clear guidance to

students, and musicians, concerning any variations in timing intentions.

Middle Back [Mid-Back] or Middle Curve [Mid-Curve]:

Used in the beginning section of the *class*, the *exercises* in this category have a dual purpose.

1) This is very often the least flexible area of the spine, therefore *exercises* which *focus* on increasing mobility are particularly important. To this end, movement is *initiated* from the middle of the spine, that is from the area which does not involve the shoulders and upper back, nor the pelvis and lower back.

2) In order that strength can be built up in the *middle back*, wide reaching circles of the whole back, made carefully in slow motion, while the *mid-back* is carefully placed and held, will train this area to take much of the strain that would otherwise be placed on the lower spine when the upper body is used in *extended* positions.

Movement qualities:

see *Dynamics*.

Musicality:

The dancers' awareness of their relationship with the music, enabling them to dance with or in counterpoint to it. The ability to *phrase* movement in response to musical phrases or to dance without reference to them, not being influenced by musical *tempi* or the atmosphere created, are both skills which the dancer needs, together with an understanding of metre and rhythm.

See *Dynamics, Phrasing* and Chapter Two: 'Musical intelligence'.

Opening:

This term has a double meaning. It is both the opening *exercise* of the *class* and aimed specifically at *freeing*, or *opening*, the joints of the back and legs with as little *tension* as possible.

Allowing the back to *fall* forwards in space, supported by bent or stretched legs and frequently also using the hands on the floor for additional support, the spine can be lengthened through the use of gravity while the muscles are *relaxed*.

Concentration is given to finding an individually *sound placement* of weight on the feet and to using the minimum of *tension* in the back when it assumes its vertical position.

The work in the legs is similarly *soft* that is, used with a minimum of *tension* in order to discover the length that can be achieved with *ease*. They will not necessarily be fully stretched as the students' bodies will not be warm at this early stage in the *class*.

Opposition:

Used in its literal sense to describe physical actions that are pitted against each other. The use of opposing forces in the body enables dancers to *extend* their movements by *counterbalancing* one force with another; further, understanding of this principle enables the weight to be securely held without the use of unnecessary *tension*. It is a key concept throughout the technical work described here.

Original:

An individual contribution to the working or performing process, involving the student in movements, thoughts, sensations or the *connections* between these which have not been explored before.

Original work describes the purposeful journey away from the known into new realms of thought, *imagination* or physical sensation.

Parallel [Paral]:

The positioning of the feet and legs so that the feet are parallel to each other with both knees facing forward. Actions of the legs when working *in parallel*, create parallel lines in space or maintain their *focus* toward the same direction.

Passé:

Taken from the French, 'passed', the term is used as in ballet, to denote the action of the *working* leg when it passes the other, whether in the air (for example in *Big Jump combinations*) or during *exercises* which involve moving the *working* leg from one position to another via a route which involves the *working* foot passing the *standing* leg, either at the knee or at the ankle. Unlike in ballet, it is not used when one foot moves forwards or behind the other to a new position on the ground.

Penché:

As in ballet, the word describes a change of the body's relationship to the *standing* leg when it leans forward. The position of the body is maintained, while the relationship of the pelvis and the *standing* hip is altered.

Personality:

As Reid (1986) suggests, personality is developed from a complex mix of emotion, feeling, self-reflections, judgments and relationships with others. Heredity and the environment are important conditioning influences, however personality develops from these, through individual routes which are also effected by many other factors.

Personality directly affects the students' motivation and methods of learning as well as their ability to use their *imagination*s and capacities to think, question and judge. It is vital therefore, that personality is taken into account in any discussion of learning processes.

Phrase:

Commonly used to describe a sequence of movements and thus interchangeable with *combination*. In the context of this paper the term *combination*, or *movement material* is always used in order to avoid confusion with *phrasing* in terms of the relationship of the movement to time structures and *dynamics*. (See *Phrasing*.)

Phrasing:

Movement material may be divided into separate *phrases* by the use of pauses or differentiated by changing *movement qualities* or *dynamics*. The clarification of dance *phrasing* is closely related to *co-ordination* in two respects:

1) *Co-ordination* in terms of the relationship between the movement material and the music.

As in music, the shape of the *phrase* may be defined by the pauses, stillnesses or *breath* which serve to separate one *phrase* from the next. Alternatively, the use of different *movement qualities*, or a range of *dynamics*, enables the dancer to make this separation without a visible pause or a break in terms of rhythmic structure. In this sense the use of *movement dynamics* is akin to the use of musical dynamics (volume) which can also be altered without changes to the time structure.

In either case the dancer may *phrase* the movement material to coincide with the musical phrasing or alongside it, as if in

counterpoint. In this latter case the overall time structure would be shared although internal *phrasing* structures would be different. Choices as to the relationship of the dance *phrase* to the musical phrase are significant in that they highlight differences or similarities between the two and thus may be used for particular effects.

2) Different methods of *co-ordination* of the actions of different body parts enable the dancer to work with the body as a unified whole, making a single statement in terms of *phrasing*, or to isolate one area of the body from another thereby choosing, for example, to define the *phrasing* of the back separately from that of the legs.

To use different methods of *phrasing* within a single movement *combination* gives the movement material added depth or texture. The body is seen then not as a single unit, but as a multi-faceted organism, capable of great subtlety.

Rather than electing to dance with a single *movement quality* there is the possibility of working with different *qualities* in different areas of the body, so that the *dynamic* range explored may be increased. For example, the arms might move with *fluidity* while the feet marked out the rhythmic structure in a percussive manner and the back worked with *softness* but had *phrases* that were punctuated by moments of stillness not shared by the actions of the arms. Thus three *phrases* would be revealed, all or none of which might have a clear relationship with the musical phrasing.

The ability to work in this way clearly depends upon the ability to *isolate* movements as well as to *co-ordinate* them. The concept of phrasing, as understood in musical terms, also needs to be grasped together with the notion of variations in *dynamics*. When the demands of the movement material and its *phrasing* become as complex as this, the dancers' intellectual involvement will inevitably be crucial.

Pick up:

The expression refers to the dancers' ability to learn the overall shape or pattern of a *combination*. When the important features of the material are grasped quickly and dancers are immediately able to work deeply within it, they are said to be able to *pick up* at speed.

Piqué:

Borrowed from the ballet term (French school), the word is only used to denote *piqué a terre*. The *working* foot is fully stretched and the toes are made to touch the ground, bouncing lightly off again to a low position in the air. The sensation sought is one of attack against the floor while the *working* leg achieves its *rebound* with *ease*.

Pirouette:

As in ballet, the word describes a complete turn on one foot. The force which *initiates* the turn comes from the arms and the legs, usually rising from *plié* to *relevé*.

Pirouettes are rarely used in the context of this work, the force for turning coming more often from the back, or being *initiated* by a different use of the legs than would be the norm in a ballet *class*.

Placement:

See *Alignment*.

Pliés/Demi-pliés [Demi]:

Derived from ballet terminology, meaning the bending of the knee or knees. It is always used here to denote that the weight is on two legs, whilst *fondue* describes the carriage of the body on one bent leg. As in ballet, the exercises aim to develop pliability in the joints and muscles and flexibility in the tendons.

Within the *class* structure discussed here, *pliés* are given with a different emphasis from that of the ballet *class*. (See Chapter three: Introduction to the structure of the class.)

Port de bras:

Literally, 'carriage of the arms'. Unlike in ballet, where the method of moving the arms from one position to another is set and the *quality* of movement employed is assumed, in this context the term is used to describe choreographed movement for the arms of any kind. The joints of the elbows and wrists may be used as well as movements which are isolated in the shoulders.

Positions:

The positions of the legs and feet are taken from the ballet tradition. However, significant differences of emphasis necessitate further explanation.

In all the positions of the feet (except *parallel*) it is assumed that dancers will work to use their maximum available *turn-out* from the hip. The knees and feet take their *alignment* from the degree of *rotation* of the thigh so that, when the weight is lowered into *plié*, the knees and ankles are working without any twisting action that might damage the joints.

In *first position* the heels are together; in *second* they are separated by approximately the length of one foot, unless a *wide second* is used (see *in 2nd*.) *Third position* is never used in the context of this work. *Fourth position* is one in which the legs are placed one in front of the other, separated by the length of a foot, unless *wide fourth* is used. In either case the feet may be opposite *first [open 4th]*, with the heel of the front foot directly forwards of the heel of the other, or opposite *fifth [crossed 4th]*, with the heel of the front foot opposite the toes of the other. *Fifth position* is one in which the heel of the front foot is touching the toes of the back foot, with the legs fully *crossed*, as in the Russian and French ballet schools. Unlike in ballet, the feet are not assumed to be parallel to each other. Working with individual degrees of *rotation* in the hip may dictate variations in the angle between the toes of the front foot and the heel of the other, from nought to as much as ninety degrees.

Positions of the arms are also derived from ballet *technique*. *First position* describes the arms when they are lifted with the palms of the hands facing and opposite the chest. The elbows are lifted so that a circle is formed by the *torso* and the two arms, the fingers almost touching. (See Russian and French ballet schools: *first position* and Cecchetti method: *fifth position en avant*.)

Second position is made by opening the arms to the side, very slightly lower than the shoulders, lifting the elbows so that single lines from the shoulders to the hands are created. The palms may face upwards, forwards or down. (As in the French and Russian schools and the Cecchetti method.)

The arms are *in 3rd* when one remains to the side (as *in 2nd*) whilst the other reaches forwards (as *in 1st*), or above the head (as *in 5th*). (See Cecchetti method: *fourth position en avant* or *en haut*, and French school: *third position*.)

Fourth position describes the opening of one arm to *2nd*, whilst the other reaches forwards of the shoulder in a straight line to the front, at shoulder height. *High fourth* differs from this in that the front arm lifts to a diagonal line, reaching away from the shoulder towards the forward, upper corner of the space.

The arms are *in 5th* when both are above the head, palms facing downwards, creating a circle by opening the elbows to the side. (See

Cecchetti method: *fifth position en haut*, French school: *fifth position*, and Russian school: *third position* of the arms.)

Preparatory [Prep]:

The word is used in its literal sense to denote those *exercises* or parts of the *class* which serve as a *preparation* for subsequent work. Such *preparation* might be physical, intellectual, emotional, or a combination of these.

In relation to the work described in the teaching notes, the *preparatory* part of the *class* is contained within the first thirty minutes, from the *Opening exercises* up to the *Long Back exercises*. Further *preparatory exercises* are designed specifically to prepare for the demands of the *exercises* which immediately follow them and are identified as such, for example *Prep for Jumps*.

Quality:

see *Dynamics*.

Quick Flick [QF]:

An *exercise* which has an air of frivolity, the QF is built of swift *piqués*, *beats* and changes of the *working* leg from *parallel* to *turned-out* positions, whilst the *standing* leg is either *held* or performs a series of changes in and out of its stretched position. The weight of the *working* leg as it turns 'in and out' is *dropped*, that is, there is a sense of increased weight at the ankle, length but little *tension* in the hip socket and as little *tension* as possible in the thigh muscles. Its purpose is three-fold:

- 1) to rid the legs of any unhelpful *tension* which may have been built up during *strenuous Fondu, Développé* or *Adage combinations* ;
- 2) to develop swiftness in the actions of the *working* leg, *initiated* predominantly in the feet;
- 3) to encourage the ability to learn fast movement *combinations* quickly.

Quick Flick + Back [QF + Back]:

As above, with the added challenge of changes in the *torso*. These will normally be swift also, but can be varied in *tempo* for advanced students who will be able to work at speed with different, or variable, *tempi* in the legs and in the back.

Reaches [R]:

Exercises concerned with the reach of the spine into long *curves* forward, to the front diagonal and into deep *tilts* to the side. Students are encouraged to work on specific, individual areas of stiffness and to find an *appropriate* use of *energy* in the legs to support the *placement* of the pelvis as *centre*, as the back reaches away from this still point.

[NB: For most students this requires particular *concentration* on the work at the *back of the legs*, while trying not to overwork the quadriceps muscles.]

Focus is given to *relaxing* the muscles around the ankles and feet, concentrating on an individually *sound placement* of weight and to the *connection* between the lengthening of the lower back and the *placement* of the pelvis, legs and feet.

In the context of this *exercise*, *demi-pliés* are used as a means of allowing further length in the lower back to be achieved with *ease*. Because the *exercise* is always set at a slow *tempo*, students whose lower backs are relatively inflexible have time to concentrate on the *relaxation* of the muscles in the lower spine which will allow it to

lengthen without disrupting the *placement* of the pelvis during the *demi-pliés*.

Rebound:

The natural reaction of the body to *bounce* away from a low point in space when the weight of the body, or part of the body is *dropped*. *Rebound* may be used as an *initiating* factor in the movement away from this low point, although further *effort/energy* in the body will be necessary to continue the momentum started in this way.

Further, the use of natural momentum from a *rebound* may enable the dancer to use less *effort/energy* for certain actions than would otherwise be the case, contributing to the aim of working with a minimum of *energy*.

Recapitulation [Recap]:

The term is used according to its literary definition of summarising, or rapidly repeating the main points of something which has already been experienced. In the context of the teaching notes it is used to describe the repetition of the main concepts dealt with in a certain area of physical work, therefore functioning as a revision process.

Rehearse:

Referring to the repeated practice of physical work, the term is also used to imply that the process of working itself should be actively analysed and repeated in order that the intellectual questioning and ability to *focus* on specific sensations is developed alongside physical skills.

Through rehearsal, therefore, the dancer not only practises what to do, but how to continue to explore within the set movement structures.

Relax:

Used in the same way as *release*, to describe the letting go of *tension* or the relative amount of *effort/energy* used for a particular action. There are degrees of *relaxation* just as there are degrees of *effort*. Full *relaxation* of a muscle involves no activity at all: the muscle is at rest. This is rarely the case when dancing, however, as even in *stillness* there is activity required to maintain a motionless stance. In the context of the teaching notes, the direction to *relax* generally indicates a complete letting go, for example when the back is allowed to hang forwards in *Opening exercises*. The direction *release* is generally used to indicate that there should be less *tension* than was previously the case.

Release:

The term is used to describe the *letting go* of *tension*, rather than the specific use of the reach of the spine so described by Martha Graham.

Relevé [Rel]:

From the French, meaning 'lifted', the term describes the rising of the body towards *half-point*. That is, so that the weight of the body is supported on the ball of the foot, evenly spread from the big to the little toes. Unlike in ballet, the term never implies the use of *full-point*, but may describe the action of lifting towards *half-point* without necessarily arriving there.

Retiré [Ret]:

Taken from the ballet term describing the position of the *working* leg when the thigh is in *2nd position* and the toes of the *working* foot touch the knee of the *standing* leg, either at the front or the back. Unlike in ballet, the toes of the *working* foot may touch the *standing* knee at the side.

Rond de jambe [Ronds]:

Derived from Ballet terminology. As in a ballet *class*, the aim is to use circular movements of the *working* leg (clockwise and anticlockwise) to increase the ability to use maximum *rotation* of the thigh in the hip socket, while *maintaining* maximum reach through the *working* leg, whether it is fully stretched or carried in *attitude* and keeping the weight of the *torso* securely on the *standing* leg.

In the context of this work they can be performed with the toes of the *working* foot on the ground (but carrying no weight) or with the toes just off the floor for increased strength. Because the aim will be to maintain the length of the spine as it works concurrently through its own patterns of movement, it is necessary to keep the *working* leg relatively low, except in the case of significantly more advanced students who are able to maintain length in the *torso* even when the *working* leg is high. Where this is not the case, the addition of *curves*, *spirals* or *arches* of the back may be *dangerous* as they will be executed with a twist in the lower spine which is not sufficiently supported.

The *exercises* in the category *Ronds*, take this same idea of reaching away from a still point and apply it to the work of the back. The pelvis serves as the stable point from which the back can reach, in as wide a circular action as possible.

Rotation:

Used to describe the *rotation* of the limb in a ball and socket joint, the term is not used when referring to other joints, or to the whole body revolving in space. In these circumstances the words *turn* (of the whole body or of one part, e.g. turn the head), or *spiral* (of the back) are used.

Round shoulders:

The expression describes the position of the shoulders when the head of the humerus is attached to the scapula in such a way that the arm appears to be rotated inwards. Often, though not necessarily, this is associated with a shortening and tightening of the chest and/or stiffness in the neck.

Secure:

The term is used to denote knowledge which has been gained in such a way that the student can rely upon it in a range of circumstances and situations. Thus their work may be described as *secure* when there is a strong sense that they comprehend what it is that they are doing both physically and mentally. This relies upon a personal involvement with the movement material.

There can be a sense of security which is not based on *sound* principles.

Sensation:

The feelings derived through the sense organs, in this context most often the bodily sensations felt through the muscles.

Skimming [Skim]:

Jumps which appear to 'skim' the surface of the floor. They travel, but are light on the thigh muscles as they do not lift high into the air. Because the emphasis is on travelling they are frequently given in combination with runs but the movement material may also include fast changes of direction, turns and other skills discovered in the *Small Jump combinations*, with the added challenge of travelling longer distances.

Small Jumps [Sm. J]:

Jumps which are small, light and predominantly on the spot. They are combined with turns or runs which travel through space so that the movement material covers ground while the landings of the jumps themselves are easy to control.

The *focus* of these *exercises* is to allow different parts of the body to lead changes of direction through space, during jumping *combinations*. It is crucial therefore that the weight of the *torso* is carefully controlled on landing in order that changes of direction do not put *dangerous* strain on the hips, knees or ankles.

Soft:

The word describes the work of the muscles and joints when they are used with pliability, resilience and *appropriate tension*. It does not imply a lack of strength, nor necessarily movement which is light. The landings from strong, *Big Jumps* may be *soft*, equally the use of the hips in a very slow *adage combination*, or the arms when they are carried with an awareness of the possibility of motion in all their joints. The opposite of this *quality* is the brittleness that comes from a locking of the joints and too much *tension*, which prevents pliability and resilience.

Sound:

The word is used to describe physical work which is based on logical, justifiable, anatomically safe and therefore reliable principles.

Spiral:

The action of turning the spine, using the pelvis as a still point from which the back can *rotate*. It is important to maintain the reach through the spine as it turns, in order to minimise strain on the vertebrae. Within the context of this work the *spiral* action always includes the neck and head, as an extension of the spine, unless otherwise stated.

Standing:

The leg or side of the body which supports the weight of the body. (See *supporting*.)

Still:

The term is used in its normal sense however, it is important to note that to maintain *stillness* in the body demands *internal* activity, unless the body is also completely *relaxed* (lying down). Therefore although *stillness* is perceived as inaction, it is felt by the dancer as physical action.

(See also *effort/energy* - real and apparent.)

Streaming/Setting:

The grouping of students in relation to their perceived ability or current level of achievement.

In the context of *technical* work it is important that students are streamed according to their intellectual and emotional development as well as to their present physical abilities. Levels of *commitment*, *motivation* and *concentration* are also vital factors in the grouping of students who will subsequently work together for a long time. The sharing of aims and objectives, together with an approximately equal level of physical achievement will lead to a group atmosphere and dynamic which has the greatest potential to be productive.

It is assumed here that measurable ability in terms of *technical*, physical achievement (or indeed of any other terms) does not relate to

judgmental attitudes regarding the students' worth or value. Furthermore these levels of achievement are not assumed to be fixed or limited in any way, so that the students' perceived ability at the time of allocation to different streams is not related to their ultimate potential.

Strenuous:

Actions that are physically demanding. That is, requiring a great deal of *effort/energy*, whether or not that *energy* is revealed.

Stretching:

Stretching is divided into two categories, passive and active.

Passive *stretching*, with the aim of *loosening* the joints by elongating the surrounding tendons and muscles, is encouraged when the body is fully warm. Students may stretch in this way after *class*, or between the sections of *class* when appropriate, however the expectation is that they will do so individually, so that it is not built into the *class* structure.

Active *stretching*, which builds strength as the muscles are working as they stretch, is a key concept here; the majority of the *class exercises* have the extension of the body in this way as one of their primary aims.

Style:

The particularities of a *technique* that characterise its uniqueness. It implies a clear logic and sense that every aspect leads towards the same goals or physical conclusions. Common usage of the word, describing physical mannerisms or the superficial, shape-oriented aspects of technical work is not adopted.

Supporting/standing:

Interchangeable terms which describe either the leg which carries the majority, if not all of the weight of the body or the side of the body which is used as the main source of stability while other areas of the body are relatively more active. The work which is involved on the *supporting* leg or side is frequently as important as that carried out elsewhere; therefore the term is never to be confused with passivity, nor does it necessarily imply *stillness*. (See *Working*.)

Suspension:

The stretching out of a moment in a dance *combination* so that it lasts for longer than might be expected, or might have been considered possible. The word is most commonly used in relation to jumps - *suspension* in the air describing the apparent still moment before descent - and to the moment before a *fall*, when the weight seems to *hang* in its *off-balance* position for longer than would be expected. The *quality* revealed through these moments is usually one of *ease*, however the ability to *suspend* movement depends on strength and an understanding of *counterbalance*. *Suspension* creates dramatic tension for the viewer, as the inevitability of what is to follow (the *fall* or the landing from a jump) increases in relation to the length of time spent in expectation of its physical conclusion.

Swivel:

Turns of less than forty-five degrees. The weight of the body will normally be towards the toes with the heel off the floor, but the same term may occasionally be used when the foot is on *half-point* or when the weight is on the heel.

Tail-bone:

The term describes the lower end of the spine and coccyx. As much of this work relies upon stability in the pelvic region, away from which

the back or legs may reach, the *placement* of the pelvis and lower spine is of paramount importance. This *placement* encompasses the two-fold aim of working for maximum mobility whilst stability is ensured. A sensation of weight in the pelvis is helpful with this in mind, together with the image of keeping the *tail-bone down*; that is, reaching towards the floor.

Technique:

A method of organising dance material in order that particular physical results may be achieved. Every *technique* relates logically therefore to the dance genre in question and to the *artistic* and intellectual concerns of the *technique* teacher.

Technique class [Class]:

Structured work, normally of ninety minutes duration, set by the teacher and explored by the students, leading to the increased intellectual and physical understanding of the dance genre in question and eventually to *expertise* in the execution of all aspects of the work that are specific to the *technique* studied.

Tempo:

Taken from musical terminology, this is the speed of the beats, or counts, which form the basis of the musical structure used for each *exercise*. A musician/accompanist might develop rhythmic complexities of many kinds, but it is most importantly the underlying *tempo* which the dancer must learn to hear and respond to. When there is a deep sense of the pulse of the music, variations in *tempi* may be followed with sensitivity. *Exercises* that are set without music, or without audible structure in the music played, still rely on a sense of the *tempo* of the movement *combination*, if dancers are to maintain specific relationships with each other. Movement which in this sense *has its own rhythm* still has an underlying *tempo*.

Temps lié:

Derived from the ballet term, this *exercise* concentrates on the *softness* of the *demi-plié* and control and *balance* during changes of weight from one position to another. In the context of this work the *exercises* increase in complexity as deep changes of the back are incorporated, sometimes *initiating* the changes of weight which result in transference of weight through the legs. As in ballet, a smooth *quality* is used and, for more advanced students, the *working* leg is raised as the weight of the body is transferred onto the *standing* leg.

Tendu [T]:

Derived from the ballet term Battement tendu, the word describes a brush (see *Brushes* above) which completes its outward action with the toes of the *working* foot *maintaining* contact with the floor.

Exercises in this category rely on the skills built up during the *preparatory* section of the *class* and are given, therefore, after the *Pliés*. The principal difference between these *tendus* and the *brushes* which are given earlier in the *class* is that these involve working in fully *crossed* positions of the feet while still *maintaining* the length of the spine and the *openness* of the lower back. Therefore the ballet term is used, indicating that the physical concerns explored in these *exercises* are closely linked to those of a ballet *class*.

There is additional *focus* on the use of the *back of the legs*, given by working in the *crossed* position and this is given greater importance than the ability to stretch the legs fully as they reach to *tendu* or *glissé*. On the other hand, the return to a *crossed* 5th position is crucial and the main aim of these *exercises* is to comprehend 5th as a strong,

centred position which can be made without distorting the work of the back as built up through the preceding part of the *class*, provided that there is sufficient *lift* through the *torso* and stretch through the legs. The direction of travel when led by the legs working in this way is directly forward or backward, in front of or behind the spine, rather than forwards or behind the shoulder of the *working* side. Understanding of the difference between *1st position* and *5th position* in terms of *weight placement* is a further, important, part of these *exercises*. Many of them are built, therefore, around the notion of shifting the weight from *1st* to *5th* which should be conscious, even if minimal, if it is to serve as a useful preparation for the changes of weight which need to occur when the *working* leg *extends* higher into the air in subsequent *exercises*. In many examples of *exercises* in this category, the arms reach towards the *standing* leg and/or the back *spirals* in that direction, further emphasising the transfer of weight.

Tension:

The degree of *effort* in the muscles. Given that muscles which are in use, that is contracting or *releasing* that contraction, are always involved with *tension*, it is the degree of *effort* used which is crucial. The word is commonly used to describe work which is *inappropriately* over-energetic. In the teaching notes, as in the text, the degree of *tension* is always described in an attempt to clarify the point that *tension* is necessary, although the use of a minimum of *effort* for any action is advocated.

Threes [3's]:

Set as part of the *preparatory* section of the *class*, the aim of these *exercises* is to explore the use of different areas of the back with maximum *fluidity*, encouraged by the setting of such structures in *triple time*. Working with a faster *tempo* and/or this *movement quality*, the work of the previous section of the *class* can be put to various tests:

- 1) whether *sound placement* can be maintained whilst working at speed;
- 2) whether *appropriate* use of *energy* (i.e. *soft* ankles and feet/upper body) be maintained at speed;
- 3) whether different areas of the spine be used in *articulate*, eloquent ways when the *phrasing* changes. (*Fluidity* generally encourages the merging of one physical statement into another - when this is not appropriate, can it be avoided?)

Tilt:

The back is described as *tilted* when it bends to the side in a supported *curve*. The muscles on both sides of the *torso* are used strongly. When this support is not given, the back is described as *dropped* to the side.

Tilts may be shallow, the reach of the spine being predominantly upwards, in which case the curves on each side of the *torso* are approximately the same length. *Deep tilts*, whilst *maintaining* muscular support, involve a much shorter curve on the side to which the back is reaching.

Time signatures:

The traditional musical terminology for the organisation of beats within each bar are used. Thus, for example, *duple time* indicates that there are two beats in each bar, whilst *triple time* indicates that there are three.

Tombé:

From the French, meaning falling down, the term is used whenever the weight *falls* onto the *working* leg in *fendu*.

Torso:

This is the word used to describe the body from neck to pelvis, not including the arms.

To the side:

For the distinction between *to the side* and *in 2nd*, see *In 2nd*.

Triple time:

See *time signatures*.

Tucking-under:

This is an expression commonly used to denote the *mis-placement* of the pelvis when the lower spine reaches down *and forwards*, often to the point of building *inappropriate tension* in the back and the legs and blocking potential movement in the hip sockets. It is frequently associated with a drawing in of the waist, rather than a deep use of the abdominal muscles, thereby creating further physical problems.

Turn-out:

The term applies to the *rotation* of the hips in the hip sockets. The feet turn with the legs so that, when standing, the toes point forwards when the legs are *parallel* and towards the side of the studio if each leg *turns out* as far as ninety degrees. The concept of *turn-out*, developed to enable the dancer to move with greater *ease*, is undermined if the legs are forced beyond a position in which they can work with *freedom*. Therefore, rather than using force, building *tension* and thereby restricting the range of movement available, dancers are encouraged to work with the degree of *rotation* that they have. *Concentration* is *focused* on *releasing tension* which might prevent full use of all available *rotation* and building the strength which will enable them to sustain this relationship of legs and hip sockets. Similarly, in order to maintain *sound placement* of the ankles and feet, turning the feet or lower legs separately from the hips is never advocated.

See *Positions*.

Upper Back [UB]:

The term describes work which is *initiated* in the upper *torso*, *extending* to its physical limits away from the *centre* of gravity in the lower spine/pelvis. When students have sufficient strength in the lower back and abdominal muscles and an understanding of the role of supporting work in the legs, this work can be used as a development from the *Reaches* and the *Middle Back exercises*. Here the back will reach into space as in *Reaches* and it will connect from one position to another as it did, in slow motion, in *Mid-curve* (i.e. carrying the back from *curve* through *tilt* side to *arch* etc.) but it will attempt to perform all of these movements at speed and with varied methods of *phrasing*, further testing the *placement* of *torso*, legs and feet.

This work extends into the shifting of weight through space as the limit of reach in the spine is achieved and further stretch leads to pulling the weight off the feet.

Careful *concentration* allows for the differentiation to be clarified between this and weight changes which occur because of *extending* the reach in the legs, or in different areas of the back. (For example, *extending* the reach of the *middle back* which pulls the weight backwards.)

Vocational:

Training which prepares the student for a particular occupation or profession, in this case the dance profession, as a dancer, choreographer or teacher.

Warming-up:

The process of working the body until it is deeply, rather than superficially, warm. It is vital that students understand the difference between feeling warm, perhaps because they have layers of clothes on or have recently had a hot drink, and *warming-up* which involves the deep muscles and the cardio-vascular system and prepares the body well for working deeply and safely.

Geeves (1990) points out that the positive effects of *warm-up* are numerous. An increase of heart activity and blood circulation brings more oxygen to the muscles, improving their performance ability. The warmth in the muscles encourages nerve impulses to travel more quickly making contraction easier and more efficient. Movement in the joints increases the volume of fluid and the thickness of the cartilage, improving the joints' shock absorbing capacity. Further, the increased flow of blood in the joint encourages elasticity in the joint's supporting tissues.

Working:

In direct contrast to *supporting* or *standing* the term describes the leg or the side of the body which is relatively more active and which carries proportionally less of the body's weight. It is an illogical term, given that the actions of this leg/side do not necessarily demand greater physical *effort* or work, nevertheless it remains a convenient shorthand as its meaning is so widely agreed upon and understood.

Appendix B

Teaching Notes

The following notes are given as an example of the detailed planning of class material. This contemporary technique course was devised for a group of third year students who worked together on a daily basis for ten weeks in the autumn of 1995. Their responses to the course are given in Appendix C.

The overall structure of the class remains the same in each of the fifty classes described; an explanation of this structure will be found in Chapter Three. Explanations of the shorthand used will be found in Appendix A. Numbers given to individual exercises (for example, UB 3, A 37) refer to a card index system detailing exact physical structures, timing and phrasing. This specific information is not replicated here as it would not be relevant to anyone but the author.

F Group September - December 1995 Week 1

Thought for the week:

WORKING WITH SIMPLICITY: CALM: REDISCOVER DEEP MUSCLES

Opening Tension and release in spine: simple patterns as for E group especially following holiday break: chance to work simply again and re-define areas of work/tension and letting go. Will only keep this in class for a few weeks ... then students will be expected to prepare for class in a similar way on their own.

Reaches 16 counts - lift on 4: 1 slow demi FIND length of lower spine and work at back of thighs. Retain length in lower back as legs stretch. Demi again to lengthen in hips with *no descent*.

B Str On 5 - recap 2nd and diagonals - 2 plain 2 diagonals: repeat (arms 2nd & 5th)

Use of back of thighs

Connect tail bone and neck

Width of upper back through arms especially on release.

Feet 7 Recap loose joints of hip/knee/ankle made possible by lifting up front of body as support for the torso's weight.

Dropping of weight of the leg easily through centre.

Mid-back 7 Weight into floor - mobilise as low down in the back as possible without tucking-under. Having sensed the openness of the middle spine try to keep it long and reaching in side bends and centred curves.

Pliés - straight serve to re-iterate the weight through legs into the floor. Plié and tilt: knees over feet.

I Parallel only

II Add 2nd

III Parallel , then choose between 1st & 2nd

Side tilt - curve using mid back CONNECT with A17 and BJF1

Brushes Simple patterns for 1st 2 weeks - correct placement for maximum turn out and easy articulation of hip joint. Sense of working the whole leg from hip to toes in one stream of energy - iron out any distortions at ankle.

I just legs

II add arms

Wed, Thurs, Fri new pattern: see B + back 26

3's Not in week I

Ex on 6 Recap from last term
 No 1 on 8 (Mon, Tues)
 No 2 on 8 (Wed, Thurs) - combine on Friday

Brushes + Back Simple patterns - requiring placement over feet to be 'accurate' so that there is no unnecessary tension in the upper back - no 'holding' that prevents easy movement in simple patterns, co-ordinated with the legs

Combs with the back, but weight staying on centre

Mon. Tu. Wed: no. 26

Thurs: learn no 27

Fri: reach more back in opposition to legs

Isolations Not in week I

Upper Back Looking for strength in centre and placement of weight that allows upper back to be thrown: simple patterns for week I.

See card UB1

Long Back 1 prep (recap) (and for new people to learn)

Day I 1st phrase of 1prep

Day II both phrases

Pliés **Day I:** Demi only

Day II & III: add 1 x full in 1st and 2nd

Day IV: 1 plain deep in all positions

Day V: 2 x full 1st and 2nd

Tendus From 5th NB Several in this group are unable to work in 5th - they need to begin from 1st and work on degrees of weight shift to get securely onto standing leg first.

1st - 5th 2 Recap of final work in E group for those who were there - slowly as intro for new people. Prep. version all week

CONNECT: A17 shift of rond leg - prior to turning on it: big jump
F1 same thing.

Ronds/Tendus As above, deal with problem of changing weight: shifting of body & weight into 5th to get onto standing leg.

Use of back of thighs in reach to 4th & 2nd positions which is then retained in ronds.

Sense of 'where the 1 is' musically and to give weight to the movement to emphasise this.

Fondu Not too heavy for week 1 - 2 (1) (small lift)

Beg Day II From croisé so as not to 'freeze' to mirror

Arms to 5th with low lift of leg.

4 days the same - work on reaching the thigh before lifting it and maintaining length of lower back/arms in 5th without shoulders lifting. Weight easily centred down standing leg.

Développés 1 CONT (5)

Day I 1st 2 x 8's only

Work to own body's turn out as in tendus therefore take attitude to DSL as you turn leg into attitude 2nd. Leave toe in place as you turn away from it ... will arrive facing different directions. Close to own front foot. Swivel to face US to begin left side facing the back.

Battements 1 CONT (E)

CONNECT: tendu and ronds 13 , finding back of thighs in reach.

1 for loose hips

1 CONT: loose hips + reach

Monday: Fwrds x 4 beh x 4

Tuesday: Fwrds x 4 beh x 4

Wednesday: En croix (same back always)

Thursday: 1 CONT (3)

Friday: 1 CONT (3)

No adage week I

- Across Recap covering ground
 Combinations that are not too taxing technically
Day I A 19 fig 8 runs
Day II 19 whole combination 5 x 3's + 6 x 3's
 Use of weight in the back - softness - flows of energy
Day III Recap 19 whole combination to clarify, for phrasing and to get moving through space
Day IV A17 on 5 x 3's
 Connect changing from mid-back from tilt to curve in preparation for weight centred over fondu leg for turn with deep changes in back, as in mid-back ex. at start of class.
 Retain sense of ease and breath worked for earlier in the week.
Day V Add passé to close 5th fr to DSL and mini - rond to initiate turn - 8 x 3's Clarify phrasing then much faster trying to make a continuously moving squiggle through space (went very well !).
- Prep **Day I** 1
Day II 2 (too complex for them - therefore decided on something simpler)
- Sm Jumps **Mon. Tu. Wed :** 1st x 8 2nd x 8 1st to 2nd x 2 Fin in plié and slow controlled stretch to centre.
Thurs. Fri : repeat slower
- Skim **I** 8 prep for big jump 8
II F1 (1)
III F1 (2)
IV F1 (3)

V BJ only

Big Jump **Friday** : Plain jetés down diagonal on 3 changing feet each time.

Back centre then arch, centre .. arch .. (to encourage them not to look down)

F Group Week 2

Thought for the week:

Getting into 5th - placement of weight 1st to 5th. Sequences that require you to be crossed in order to work well (across the floor). A15 for control A 65 exaggerated crossing: safe enough to throw the weight of the back and still be on the legs.

Opening (6) Tight upper back curve 1.. roll down to hang 2.. demi-plié 3.. uncurl and straighten legs 4.. arch 5.. deeper arch 6.. and continue through side to long curve 7.. (no tension in chest) plié and soften over 8.. lift to centre on straight, arms 2nd.

Parallel: 1st: 2nd:

Work on tension and release

Phrase I fin on 4 - then cont in one phrase to 8

Reaches As week I: work on lengthening 2 sides of waist

Back Str

I	as week I
II	4th position opposite 1st (x4). Finish in 1st: arms 5th
III	4th position opposite 1st (x4). Finish in 1st: arms 5th
IV	& V 2 centre: 2 diagonals: 2 in 4th

Feet (5) Concentration of maintaining 'upright' placement of hips especially with tendu behind. See plan of 5 days work on card.

Middle Back (8) Find length in arch that was missing week I. Also sense of *ease* in upper back to allow it to be mobile. Therefore kept same very simple combination for whole week to give time for them to find useful placement.

Brushes 3 [A] I (6) en croix
 II repeat
 III filed under 'W' see notes on card. Rhythmically tricky and they made an excellent job of it.

Ex on 6 I as Friday (1 & 2) 8 x 2's (x4)
 II as above on 6 counts : pli  + spiral tog.
 Different phrasing to finish
 III repeat
 IV lift of back at fin of all sets pulls weight up onto relev 
 V repeat

Upper Back I 1 (5)
 II see card for details of 4 days (UB F'95)

Long Back I 1 [B] (1) + (2) Find softness in arch as in mid back ex.
 II repeat
 III 1 [B] (1) + (4) parallel
 IV as Wednesday, to turned out lunge - shift of weight coming more visibly from reach of back. CONNECT adage 21
 V repeat

Pliés 4

I 8 + 4 relevé on centre then lower. In 1st, 2nd, 5th & 5th.

Followed by deep pliés in 1st x 2 in 2nd x 2

II Work on phrasing, how to show, within same combination, the difference between 8 + 12 and 12 + 8. Demis as above - deep in all positions.

III Work on phrasing as above. Deep curve with all deep pliés: necessitates keeping tail bone down

IV & V Front of 4 card: opening phrase of 8 (no arch)

Tendus

1st - 5th 2

[A] (1) to front: repeat to 5th behind

(2) See back of card for day by day changes. Excellent exercise!

And very well executed.

Ronds

13 cont

Monday: add arms AND combine reach away from passé leg: fast

lift to centre: plunge into fondu FOR CENTERING AND

COURAGE!!

NB 13 = Simple version, retains problems from 13 cont

Tuesday: missed it out

Wednesday: repeat and sort out placement problems

Thursday: add curve and centre on 5... 6...same back when legs reverse

Friday: repeat and deepen. Courage to drop head over, ready for Across combination

Fondu**Monday:** 2 (2)**Tuesday:** 2 (3) pull into retiré and back towards where working leg began (very heavy but they were strong enough)**Weds & Thurs:** drop in favour of time on adage**Friday:** repeat as Tues & Wed (working through the thoughts of the whole of the week)Développé

1 Cont (5) (began last Friday with 1st 2 phrases only)

Monday: 4 x 8's**Tuesday:** repeat**Wed. Thurs. Fri** see card for details: Adage 21Battements

1 cont [D] 'easy' hips

Same all week

Looking for their own 2nd position

Across**Monday:** 15 requires crossing worked for week I. Work as adage finding correct position in feet to support the back as it reaches.**Tuesday:** Continue to explore and speed up a bit.**Wednesday:** Add turns and work at speed. Find a way of allowing the movement to 'pass through the body' - not the body 'doing' the movement. Improvement in 20 mins of continual crossings at speed was remarkable but it took a lot of trust as well as time, as at first they all looked as though they were chasing something unattainable. An injured member of the class who was watching found the transformation amazing.

Thursday: 65 on 4 x 3's

To learn and then try to be courageous with it immediately - easier today because of what they were aware of having achieved yesterday.

Friday: deepen lunge fall across... (lean forward)... curve in turn ... use of thigh pulling to 2nd as break for the turn and to direct the body en face into runs ... falling backwards through space on 4 23. Also with double turns from everyone, therefore no faster than Thursday, but larger and more energy. All did doubles. Amazing.

Small Jumps In place: New set F1

Monday: (1)

Tuesday: repeat

Wednesday: (2)

Thursday: repeat

Friday: comb - 3 x 8's

Big Jumps **Monday:** recap Friday Jetés + back (looking up).
Whole combination as Thursday + arch at fin F1

Tues - Fri : see card F '95 Week II

F Group Week 3

Thought for the week:

To continue with crossing; finding length in both the curves and the arches (almost universally achieved by this group in slow work - now to use in fast combinations) Looseness' in reaching positions. Change of dynamics and ability to use these to be developed - put to the test in fast foot exercises and changing qualities of sequences, across the floor in particular, but whole of the rest of the class as well.

Opening (8) Discover the 'stretched hang'. Allow more time than usual to let the lower back hang out and to concentrate deeply on motivation for each move, as a preparation for using this kind of concentration throughout the class.

Monday: parallel x 2nd

Tuesday: parallel x 2nd

Wed. Thurs. Fri: Add 1st and take it a bit faster

Reaches Placement of back of neck in relation to tail bone especially in tilts - 2 sides of waist long & 2 sides of neck.

Back Stretches 2 x plain

2 x diagonal

4 x 4th continue work on weight shift to front foot in release forward.

N.B. started this last week in relation to LB & adage 21.

Feet

See card for week III

Monday: (1) arms 2nd

Tuesday: (1) Merce's arms

Wednesday: (1) change feet i.e. R 4 bars, L 4 bars } repeat en croix

Repeat (also faster) - work on dropping weight of foot whilst arms reach to new position - double stretch through the body

Thursday: changing feet (as for Weds) means changing arms twice as often.

Friday: as above

Mid. Back 3's: **Monday:** (9) to find ease in long curve

Tuesday: as above

Wednesday: (6) (1) 1st phrase of 8 - then throw back side to side on straight (1) then plié (2) push down with legs to straighten firstly then straighten up the back to centre, to relevé etc. (To continue on Monday: throwing into plié and tilt on 1 A on 2 (check hips centre)

Brushes Continue tendu and back weight centre 27 (worked on with E group last year) + ideas from last week.

3 x 3's see card

Monday: (1)

Tuesday: (1) & (2)

Wednesday: (3)

Thursday: ((2) only) not done in favour of time for exercise on six

Friday: return to 4 x 3's as at finish of last week adding Merce's arms + back as in (2)

Ex

Monday: Hinge: - arms (feel length of back into legs into floor) through 1st to 2nd as you lower into hinge 4. Curve 5 and 6 relax over 7 centre 8. Work on neck - tailbone connection - length of middle back and holding with back of thighs.

Tuesday: As for Monday

Wednesday: As for Monday

Thursday: Comb. 1 (R & L) on 6, 2 (R & L) on 6

Hinge (x 2) on 6 (arrive in hinge on 3, 4to curve, 5 to soften forwards, 6 to centre)

Upper Back (6) [see card UB1]

Long Back Continuing work of shift of weight from the reach of the back whilst working deeply into the joints of the legs (and softly).

Monday: LB 1 [A] variation} - reach 1...continue reach 2 fall forwards onto right 3... left joins and has weight 4... as back centres, around through 5th and circles behind into parallel lunge right behind, weight between feet 5 Reach back forward and transfer weight onto left ('lie' on thigh as in back stretches 4th). Mid curve takes weight behind. Step to back foot and left joins 7... lift centre 8..

Tuesday: Repeat - more reach - clarification of changes of weight - no cheating back leg forwards on fondu before stepping on it.

Wednesday: 4... weight on left, arms 5th, right foot coup and turned out (to down stage right) continue rest of exercise turned out - step to back foot into 1st position and fold, still in curve, back to parallel en face.

Thursday: repeat Wednesday's version

Friday: 2 versions; travel front then travel back. Both begin parallel and finish turned out.

Pliés

Monday: (see pliés 4 2nd side week III)

Continue working on different co-ordinations of back in relation to the legs. Challenge habits, preconceptions, observation skills.

4 x 12's } set of demis - 12 bars 1st, 2nd, 5th, 5th

4 x 8's } followed by deep pliés 1st, 2nd, 5th, 5th

Tuesday: 4 repeat

Wednesday: 4 cont - reaching into tilt and finding useful placement of back & neck over feet in relevé especially for those with minimal turn out i.e. how do you tilt side and still get weight of the back over the feet when they are facing the diagonal? Relevé and tilt and head profile placement of neck to tail-bone.

Thursday: repeat

Friday: repeat

Tendus

1st - 5th (3)

Monday: (1) recap week I concept of correcting the alignment for maximum rotation from top of thigh.

Tuesday: (1) deeper lunges (especially those with short achilles)

Wednesday: adding back

Thursday: CONNECT 2nd str and développé / adage

Friday: (2) and (3)

Ronds

1 Cont prep.

I II III Simple patterns - concentrate on placement of weight

IV V 1 cont (1)

Fondu

1 (a) Weight of back over standing leg allows for easy and soft use of joints. See F '95 card for details.

Dev/Adage

Not done Monday or Tuesday in favour of time on ronds and fondu

Wednesday: D 2 simple preparation; lift in 2 sides waist; placement of spiral curve, reach of back - transfer weight into lunge (CONNECT upper back - 2nd stretch AND tendus.) Always back's weight leading to fondu; incoming foot reaching to brush forward (right/left) and behind (right/left). Lift foot and back together; centre back from spiral and arms 5th to centre and arms 2nd as working leg comes into passé.

Friday: repeat as Wednesday for sense of full class

Battements

1 [A] (see blue card it's clearer!)

To drop back and lift with ease, still being with weight over standing leg (- passé with working leg)

Monday: 3rd batt. drops through parallel -return centre+ret
Tuesday: repeat beginning in reverse (just to stay awake)
Wednesday: two versions as above
Thursday: to batt. side (after drop of leg and back) instead of ret.
Friday: as for Thursday

Across **Monday:** A 65 Add 2nd phrase and move through space more (i.e. enjoy studio 8!)
Tuesday: prep. 60
Wednesday: A 60, phrase I: no turn on 7, just huge circle of back
Thursday: Add turn and speed up with back as deep as before
Friday: 60 add phrase II

(NB: Don't repeat next Monday!! Didn't work last week)

Prep Sm Jumps (See card for week III)

Big Jumps (see card for week III)

Wednesday: BJ 66

They had trouble with directions whilst working on all other technical details therefore only did first side (USR to DSL)

Thursday: USL to DSR to learn and work on

Friday: prep; simple jetés on 3 with full batt and accent on 2 (change legs). Repeat side to side. Concentrate on full battements (especially hard to find brush action against floor when going round the corner!) Also sort out spacing which is a mess.

F Group September 1995 - Week 4

Opening The “Crumple”.

Allowing weight to sink to the ground. Finding centre with length in lower back in plié - push down to straight legs and maintain length. Uncurl with neck over tail bone (further to travel than most of them imagine).

Reaches 3 x 8's Reach 8 + 4. Lift to centre 4, plié 4, straighten 4.

Back Stretches

4 x 2nd, 4 x Diags, 4 x 4th

Building stamina in the back

Allowing back leg to lift in 4th, to check weight is forward in fondu.

Feet See card for week IV

Most of them changed position of thighs as they went from 2nd to front. Therefore, as week went on, simplified opening pattern, giving time to concentrate on keeping the thigh in 2nd position as tendu reaches forward.

Mid Back 7 Cont

Slow, careful beginning - change of dynamic for fast throw. Prepare by setting the combination as a slow circle, making sure that it is executed deeply.

Monday: slow only

Tuesday: slow right and left, fast right and left/repeat
in 2nd

Wednesday: slow right, fast right, slow left, fast left (change of pattern to keep them 'awake') Repeat in 1st and 2nd

Thursday: as Wednesday but faster. Add pli : open 5..6.. - stretch 7..8..

Friday: as for Thursday.

Brushes Tendu changing weight 4

(see Mid back ex for week V which will combine this with the back in 1 [A])

Monday: just legs - slow and specific about length from back of legs; use of foot reaching

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: add back as (3) on card

Thursday: repeat, work on standing foot - relaxed enough to allow weight to shift fully and therefore be able to pause (as weight is on the leg).

Friday: repeat, more quickly - more courageous 2 sets, 1 just legs, 1 with back

Ex on 6 Hinge and spiral

Monday: arms to 5th 1 lead down as you lower into hinge, arrive on 4, spiral 5, curve diagonal 6, centre curve over 7, stand centre 8.

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: plain hinge + pause (x 2) As above with spiral (x 2)

Thursday: as for Wednesday

Friday: combination for stamina:

no 1 x 2

no 2 x 2

plain hinge x 2

spiral hinge x 2

Upper Back See card on 6's

Monday: phrases 1 x 2

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: learn changing weight in 2nd and execute separately & slowly

Thursday: parallel right and left, 1st right and left, 2nd more slowly right and left, right and left

Friday: as for Thursday

(NB: Next Monday : no 4, next Tuesday: combine all 3 phrases of 6 bars)

Long Back 1 cont (1) (2) & (3)

Monday: develop ideas from last week

(1) find arch in upper back only (no-one in this group could feel it when horizontal!) Slow work to discover where it comes from and how to use it to lift the torso.

Tuesday: to consolidate

Wednesday: 1 cont (2)

slight change of tack - lots of slow work up to this point in the class and they need to relax a bit therefore put together a more fluid phrase of elements we've worked on so far.

Arms: CONNECT battements ex., where they found co-ordination of arms unusual and difficult. Therefore put them in here so that they would have a chance to practise the co-ordination ready for later.

Thursday: (3) combination of these ideas

Friday: as for Thursday

Pliés

Monday: 1st and 2nd only - 3 sets each no arch in relevé

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: 1st, 2nd, 5th & 5th - just curve - centre 3,4,5,6
arch in relevé (2nd phrase - didn't do - they're not connected enough yet)

(keep working on this next week)

Thursday: timing and pattern as above: 3 sets in 1st, repeat 2nd from curve to centre - deep curve with deep plié from tilt to centre - tilt with arms in 2nd during deep plié

Friday: 1st curve - lift
2nd curve - lift
5th tilt to front foot - lift
5th tilt to front foot - lift

Tendus 1st - 5th 4

Monday: (1) & (2) 4 x 8's - repeat with back

Tuesday: deeper lunges & deeper tilts

Wednesday: (3) x 2

Thursday: (2) + (3)

Friday: (1) + (2) + (3) all versions - getting increasingly deep and with extra pliés in 3rd version, more sense of weight dropping. Continue this thought in ronds

Ronds 1 cont

Monday: (1) + (2) accent of fast rond on "**and** 6" pause on 7 close on 8

Combine 2 versions of phrasing

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: deepening curves and fondus - imagery from bowls and weight of fruit (see card) Shallow curve on 1 .. centre 2.. fast ronds x 2 just off floor

Thursday: combine 2 versions of phrasing with this work on weight. One with slow leg and slow drop of weight - arrive at 'bottom' together. 2nd version with working leg whipping around, softening and deepening comes after.

Friday: repeat

Fondu Mer co-ord 1 (a)

Monday: begin croisé to down stage left, simple push to relevé version - right leg to front, side behind, half turn to down stage right - curve takes weight forward onto right, left reaches off floor to the back THEN lower slowly to fondu right as left touches

the floor, tilt towards right and fond left behind - front (right arm 3rd), close left into 5th plié as back circles into centred curve (arms 1st), straighten legs and centre. Repeat on the left beginning down stage right and finishing down stage left.

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: not done in favour of time on ronds and développés

Thursday: forget it : they have sore calves

Développé adage 1

(Later - like next week - need to build some stamina first)

Therefore opening 2 phrases only. From pitch attitude swivel around into passé in deep tilt (refer to big jump of last week)

Monday: recap - just version that goes into extended lunge side

Tuesday: not done in favour of time for fondu

Wednesday: (no fondu) whole version of 2 x 8's using same concluding phrase from fondu exercise as this seemed to be useful

Thursday: repeat and work on reverse

Friday: right leg to front, reverse

Battements 2 cont

Monday: [A] as on card - 7

close 5th front 8, batt side 9, close 5th behind 10.

Tuesday: [C] 4 x front, 4 x reverse

Wednesday: [D] 4 x front, 4 x reverse

Thursday: [C] x 2 [D] x 2 to front, repeat to back

*****Brilliant work on this - got into 5th, used the floor, all were well-placed, terrific use of dynamic range *****

Across MA 14 'Lying on' thigh & use of mid-curve to initiate travel - go for being dangerously close to falling all the time.

Mon & Tues: MA 17 1st phrase of 8

Use of mid back to travel backwards

Use of focus front to reveal this and conversely how mid-curve is hidden if focus is dropped and attention drawn to the rounding of the upper back (work on this in big jumps later in week - also refer to A60 from last week)

Wednesday: add 2nd phrase with turns (yesterday's work on mid back got completely lost having added turns - they obviously didn't understand it deeply enough as turns aren't usually a problem for this group - or maybe just too much to think of at once. Next week's plan will therefore include sustained work on travelling in different directions through space led by different areas of the back.) (Simple nagging didn't help) Worked instead on clear change of directions especially following multiple turns - runs and use of focus for this and on shifting through space at speed (considerable speed!)

Thursday: comb 14 & 17

8 bars from 17

8 bars from 14 (counting twice as fast as on card therefore 2x8's)

8 bars - 2nd phrase from 17 turning to finish to

DSL and run to corner

Friday: 4 phrases of 8 bars - with full class, less time for this

- straight into fast tempo and see if they can retain all corrections

Prep **I II III:** small jump no7, on 10 counts - just to 2nd with jumps in 1st

IV V: variation (2) on 2 x 8's with pause to find balance on relevé and to check that enough weight has been given to the push

Sm J **Monday:** Week IV no (1)

Tuesday: Week IV no (2)

Wednesday: as for Tuesday

Thursday: combination - (2) then (1), repeat beginning with up stage as front

Big Jumps see card for Week IV

Monday: Continue work from Friday in bigger space. Use of battement to change direction - must always be in front of own body

Tuesday: version of Fridays jump with 3 runs to finish for greater ground covering

Wednesday: didn't jump as they had sore calves

Thursday: Maninya jumps (1 up 1 along 'shunt'). Following work on how to direct leaps in space in terms of forward and back, now continue with up and down. Also CONNECT with A60, MA 17 etc. (i.e.. all previous work on tilt into curve using mid back as initiator).

Friday: repeat LARGER!

F Group Week 5

General thought: see ronds and points brought up last week - what to do and what to reveal.

Needs: revealed last week - travelling through space determined by reaching the back. Connection between this and preparation work on back leading shifts of weight from foot to foot earlier in the class (like Coda from ronds ex of last week). Some of them work very clearly on these things in centre work but don't seem to apply the same principles when they're travelling.

Five of them (nameless for confidentiality) - haven't found use of long curve yet - still tuck their chins in or use head and shoulders only when they're working at speed. **Theme for this week:** dropping weight - therefore begin work on swings.

Strong rhythmic use of legs early on in class is not being carried through - ex A M.A. 17: 14 working leg into coup during turn then reaching out to help lead into new direction in space, also as break for the turn (applied slowly). Most of them are too floppy with working foot - yet glissés earlier in class have precision. Still need to work on grand battements for big jumps. Part of the problem is not retaining a strong connection between back and legs. Work on this in particularly, earlier in class.

Opening See card for Week V

High curve - long curve - feel the difference. Also change of lower back from reach forward into tail bone down curves - feel the difference (especially for those who still

go over too far in curves) CONNECT with adage 2, 3rd phrase (high to deep curves).

Reaches 3 x 8's. Repeat new set given last week.

Back Stretches 4 x 2nd 4 x diagonals 4 x 4th

Work on shift of weight to front foot in 4th led by reach of the back. Maintain length in 'empty leg' at back. (Don't allow it to lift as we did last week, but retain sensation.)

Feet **Monday:** Bring weight centre 2 [A]. Variations on 12 bars

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wed. Thurs. Fri: See card Week V

Continue to work on keeping thighs 'in 2nd' as they work to front or to back. Back initiating changes of weight on the feet.

Middle Back Lengthened curves to work on, keep circles slow - later in the week return to fast throw, this time finishing in curve instead of arch, as last week. With accent and weight down, can they still retain the length? Also be sure as they work in tilts (both side to side and as part of a circle) that they are open in the shoulders and working 2 long sides of the waist.

Monday: to find and feel the difference between long curve and upper back only curve. To feel how this sensation changes if they approach it from different places (last week couldn't find high arch when they were horizontal).

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wed. Thurs. Fri: See card 'Mid-curve - 3's Week V'

Finding length in curve even when you arrive there quickly.

Also stamina of concentration. Detail within this phrase makes it hard to be specific when it is taken fast. Towards the end of the week it got a bit sloppy when they thought they knew it - provided an important lesson in concentration on clarifying what they already know.

Brushes Mid-back swings - tendus

Prep for prep for 1 [A]

Monday: [A]

Tuesday: [A]

Friday: [B] + [A]

Not done Wednesday and Thursday in favour of time for upper back ex which proved to be a problem. Returned to it on Friday and found them much more able to find centre quickly and get on legs etc.

Ex on 6 Recap as Friday:

- no 1 on 6 (x 2)
- no 2 on 6 (x 2)
- no 3 hinge centre on 8 (x 2)
- hinge and spiral on 8 (x 2)

Upper Back See card for Week V

Monday: last phrase of 6 x 3's

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: recap 2 phrases from last week and combine 1, 2, 3
in parallel and 1st

Thursday: complete combination 3 phrases x 2 parallel
3 phrases x 2 1st
3 phrases x 4 in 2nd

Fri: repeat

They found it hard to remember last week's 2 phrases (how deeply did they understand it ?) Hard also to work deeply on such a long sequence and to retain stamina of deep work in back and legs in 2nd. By Friday they had managed it well - mid week it looked as though it would never come together.

Long Back Swings 6/8 LsB 4

With tendu in diagonal arch (rather than passé) (for the sake of those who can't always feel square hips against the spiral arch). CONNECT same tilt in spiral - curve as in upper back phrase (not coming 'centre' for tilt).

Monday: simple version on 8 in parallel (& 1st on 12 for time to concentrate on not tucking under in deep plié)

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: parallel and 1st, both on 8

Thurs. Fri: 1st only, on 12, with diagonal reach (ref. diagonal back stretches) and long 'empty' leg in lunge as in adage to diagonal arch tilt - curve etc. Again back leads change of weight especially on release into lunge

Pliés

Monday: continue pattern of last week reaching to arch in relevé - 2 way push/reach that this requires plus lift in 2 sides waist that they discovered last week when the arms were held in 2nd (not 3rd that would have been more natural and allows you to 'hang on' with bottom arm) during deep plié with deep tilt

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: pliés 6 - connect tilt from spiral arch as upper back and lower back 4 necessitates push down into relevé to counterbalance spiral arch, so if they haven't done it to date they'll have to now! CONNECT also with push on opposite foot in spiral hinge (ref: ex on 6).

Thurs. Fri: as for Wednesday

Tendus

Most of them have 'found 5th', therefore begin from there and stay crossed - build stamina for being in 5th rather than coming in and out of it as we've done so far. (The only people who haven't yet got there are ones who have not sustained their concentration on the problem)

Monday: prep 1 (intro. to temps lié sequences) - see card for week's work - fast tilt towards working leg in fondu coup.

CONNECT big jump of Thursday and Friday

Ronds 4 (c)

Continue work of last week, sense of weight dropping in fondu, whilst lift of back gives counter resistance. What degree of lift is appropriate not so much that weight of body is lifted 'off legs', what does that mean? To discuss - what to do physically and what to reveal to the audience. How are they different? Crucial placement of weight on standing leg to free working leg. Problem is exaggerated,

and therefore has to be dealt with when back is added as well, circling with or in opposition to the working leg. Weight on standing leg must be allowed to shift, therefore soft ankles required.

Mon. Tues: 4 (c) Beginning of 2nd phrase to deepen curve and fondu with weight down as last week - 4 fast ronds to free working hip as much as possible.

Wed Thurs Fri: 2 x a terre 2 x en l'air. Always softening back and going as low as possible at start of new phrase.

Fondus Mer co-ordinations 1 (c)

Continuation of last weeks' work on the pushing down necessary for strength in relevé. Softening of joints especially ankles as their calves are giving them problems. Support in back of thighs to hold alignment. Lift in stomach that some of them still drop when they concentrate on dropping the weight.

4 bars - front

5 bars - side

4 bars - behind

5 bars - side as before.

All concentrating on back then legs co-ordination. Trying to lift neck over tail bone pushing to straight legs. CONNECT work of opening reaches, aiming for long lower back in plié and trying to maintain it as legs straighten. This is the same, but it's harder to keep the back 'open' in crossed 5th position.

Dev/Adage 2 (3) cont

Mon & Tues only:

Variation on last week's opening (draw long leg into 5th front then change back into tilt right and pick up to passé. Continue as on card 2 (3) cont. Connect fin of this - back tilts, leads weight into tombé lunge side, wrap into curve (head leads to long curve then lower back increases the work to bring weight back onto feet: see brushes parallel to 1st) then pick up front foot to passé and high curve - deeper curve (see opening stretch and also mid-back 3's sequence for this week) fondu and long curve - tilt and bring back leg in rond to front (see M A 16 for this same change of back with working leg in the air)

Battements Use of back to change weight

Monday: prep 4 1st version - glissé after circle of back.

Find centre with weight on straight leg

Tuesday: repeat - it was further to travel than they imagined!

Wednesday: to full height battement on 7

Thursday: repeat and also add new version that requires additional shift (loose, sideways) of hips before battement on 7.
CONNECT shift from one lunge to the other in upper back ex.

Across **Monday:** M.A. 2 on 8 x 3's (Pause in attitude fondu 6 23

7 23, then through mid back to turn and run behind 8 23.

CONNECT with work on this from last week).

Tuesday: work on arch leading changes of weight & dynamics of last section - swift leg and soft back

Wednesday: M.A. 16 (CONNECT with adage) On 10 x 3's

Thursday: M.A 2 (3 x 2's) + M.A. 16 (8 x 2's) up to curve and passé (again CONNECT with adage) run forward on 62 turn on 72 fall into lunge on 82. (NB This combination was made on 3's. Setting it on 2's gives a greater sense of urgency!

Friday: repeat in context of full class (no discussion).

Fast: Also with turns to finish.

Have to get over their fear of turning at speed. Talked about different approaches to this, most important being the belief that (1) it wouldn't matter if they fluffed it (2) bodies were well prepared by all previous work, joints soft therefore *if they fell* it would be without undue tension and therefore not dangerous (3) they could invent new transitions for themselves, if necessary, so that having fallen about a bit, they could still continue.

Prep 5 'Up' of relevés and accent of jumps (+ push down)

'Down' of shift into new position (+ lift up)

To what degree or where do you push or lift up to make these things work physically and yet reveal what you want to show.

Monday: (1)

Tuesday: (1)

Wednesday: (1) right and left, (2) right and left (didn't have enough stamina)

Thursday: (1) right (2) left (compromise)

Friday: as for Thursday

Small Jumps Simple sets in place: different ones each day.

Big Jump **Monday:** following preparation of last week Big Jump 60

Tuesday: rhythm was unclear therefore new comb. on same rhythm

Wednesday: add problem of 'dancing together' and being aware of each other's spacing.

Thurs & Fri: big jump 27 version on 3 x 3's. CONNECT fast tilt with fondu coup. change from tilt to mid curve into runs behind.

F Group Week 6

General: They are building stamina of concentration (as well as physical). Need to be increasingly courageous when they first learn a combination - not always leaving it until it's 'known' before they try to perform it deeply. This doesn't mean being careless but to do, fully, what they think it is and not be worried that they might misunderstand the intention; rather to believe in themselves and that they will understand and if not, at least make an intelligent guess. Increasingly to look for connections for themselves (whilst I continue to point them out when they seem to be missing them.)

Look for more control through feet on landings as they fall to lunge, as well as in big jumps.

PS Softness in long curves is developing enormously. By the end of this week they had become able to work the legs with enormous strength and length whilst using a real softness through the back.

B. suddenly looks as if she knows what she's doing. (Just as I was about to tell her that I thought she was missing the point entirely. In a one to one interview it became apparent that her concentration and hard work during the last 4 - 5 weeks is only now having a physical result. Good thing I didn't get at her when I was so frustrated last week.)

Opening Finding placement of diagonal curves without 'bunching' in stomach or shortening one side of the back. Weight remains on opposite side (sense of weight in the hips as well as the legs) whilst curve spirals to the side - finding connection between this and push down in relevé and spirals as in plié exercises.

Reaches 3 x 8's parallel, forward, right and left
 1st, forward, diagonal, right and left
 2nd, forward, right and left

Back Stretches 4 x 4 x 4 x

Wednesday: learn 1st (last week's opening stretch was a good preparation)

Thursday: 2 x 2 x 4 x 4th 4 x 1st

Friday: as for Thursday

PS didn't do 1st.....try for it next week

Feet See card Week VI

Mid Back (Will stretch out in combination with brushes as below)

See card for Week VI

How to 'feel' what mid-curve is when it begins from somewhere other than on centre or horizontal (as in lower back combinations). Not to push hips forward when reaching further back into arch as on Thursday/Friday - long 'front' of hips. Finding open upper back in tilt when it comes out of mid-curve i.e. not to release on centre and then reach to side. Tendency seems to be not to open completely.

Brushes Continue work on hanging from mid-back, as last week, and on finding centre quickly.

Monday: (have done the 2 halves of this already as separate exercises)

Prep version as on card. Back on centre in open pli . Return to tendu (and arms 1st to 2nd)

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: circling towards straight leg, into curve and pli , curve and fondu

Thurs & Fri: parallel, circling towards working leg - 1st towards standing leg. Next week continue this by learning reverse and also final test of weight on standing leg with little circle at finish (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)

Ex. on 6 on 8

Monday: prep. for no. 3 - pli  on centre (arms 2nd) 1... spiral right 2 ..., change hips forwards into hinge 3..., reach into right arm 4..., reach heels to floor and stand centre 5... as right arm reaches through 5th over to curve (long) 6..., deep pli  (maintaining curve) 7..., centre and arms 2nd 8...

Rest of week: add curve after spiral then change hips, demi pli  on 8. Adding this 'complication' was possible because Monday's work was so clear.

Up Back
brushes

Not necessary after swings and brushes, and more work in upper back with

Long Back

Monday: Long Back 10

Change to fall from spiral of back

Tuesday: as for Monday, but fall from lead out of thigh into 2nd

Wednesday: two of each

Thursday: Long Back 4 (4) i.e. no prep version

Concentrate on placement of hips which shift sideways only when weight changes onto one foot. Adding spiral with weight on opposite hip (see opening and pliés). Drop lift swiftly on 5 and pause on 6 of 1st phrase. This fast drop and rebound as a preparation for tendus and small jumps with back rebounding to centre

Friday: clarify (especially open chest with arms in 1st in arch, arms forward mustn't bring shoulders forward)

Pliés **Monday:** 6 (cont) changing from spiral right into spiral left then tilt into curve etc.

Tuesday: as for Monday

Rest of week: concentrate on reach of heels against spiral (as support system). From tilt on relevé this time see card. Excellent exercise, though I say it myself. Terrific test of placement with softness in upper back and they danced it with real grace - akin to adage.

Tendus Lengthening back of working leg into placed 4th as last week. Retain this sense of length in working thigh as it becomes a fondu in the lunge. Weight falling to lunge and pushing back onto straight leg. Ease of movement in ankles/knees/hips to make these changes with fluidity whilst hips remain placed. Getting onto straight leg securely (ref. battement of last week) in order to free working leg in time for fast ronds (see card for Week VI) **BRILL** (I think they're learning something)

Ronds **Monday:** 4 (d)

(NB: do this after the fondu exercise, as at finish of last week, in order that thighs are thoroughly prepared for this demanding combination. Otherwise it can easily become a superficial balancing act).

Took all week with same exercise to get weight sufficiently onto standing leg to be able to work the back, as the leg, in a continuous rond/circle

Fondus **Monday:** continue with Mer co-ord 1 (c) 4 + 5 4 + 5

Tuesday: 4 to front 5 fall side lunge and wrap into curve on pli  , 4 to back, back then fondu coup/release, then extend right to arabesque on straight leg, tilt to left and return to fondu/swing right leg behind - from leading into turn in tilt left. Land lunge front to DSL. Mid curve and pull left leg into 5th behind, release back and send right leg in rond front - close 5th behind en face. Repeat left (turn finish to DSR) Not done

Wednesday, Thursday or Friday in favour of time on adage.

D  velopp   **Wednesday:** adage 20

(not done Monday/Tuesday whilst setting all other material especially time on fondu (as adage))

Forwards version only. Mid back ex, with the hips not pushed forward as arch deepens, was crucial preparation for this.

Batts 4

Simple set - required stamina. Also tests, to the limit, the placement of weight in 5th position ready for fast changing feet. CONNECT same problem after fast rond in tendus.

Mon-Thurs: begin with different legs to front or back so that a different leg has to hold the last battement on 1

Friday: right to front, left to front, right to side as last week - 2 plain, fall to lunge and circle back up onto straight leg, repeat right, change legs at finish. Repeat whole set beginning on left - NO REVERSE! (very tough)

Across

- Monday:** M.A 7 Prep 6 x 3's
- Tuesday:** Put whole combination on 8 x 2's (think about change of quality)
- Wednesday:** phrase I with double turns (ha ha) But it worked!!
- Thursday:** MA 12 Fast changes led by the back. This is more intricate and complex. Harder to cope with that much detail in the body and make it travel through space (Ref. same spiral curve in arabesque as M.A 7 above.)
- Friday:** as for Thursday

Sm Jumps

- Monday:** Jump into coup (from 4th) as prep for (and re- cap of) M A 7 which will come later this week (note we did this earlier in the term and they found it very hard. Will it be any easier now? As B J 66)
- Tuesday:** as for Monday
- Wednesday:** add back CONNECT rebound after drop from lower back ex and tendus use same dynamic. Didn't do arch
- Thurs & Fri:** discuss & work on swiftness in working leg which needs to emulate the back following the jump and leading into 2nd

Prep

1st

Simple patterns for stamina and placement

- Monday:** 1st x 4, 2nd x 4 push to relevé and hold 1,2,3 plié 4 into 5th change x 3
- 1st x 4, 2nd x 4 etc. Left foot forward into 5th all with arms hanging down - so they have to find strength in the legs
- Tuesday:** as for Monday
- Wednesday:** 1st x 4 relevé 567 plié 8, repeat 2nd, repeat 5th right, 5th left THEN into comb. as above right and left - 8 x 8's

Big Jumps

Monday: 27 to continue with from last week

1. learn sequence with faster spiral on 2 x 3's

2. combine with Friday's version = 5 x 3's

Tuesday: as for Monday. Show change of weight in jumps. Class is on stage today, so work on jumping in & out of wings safely.

Wednesday: big jump 27 continued, dealing with weight falling in different directions following the jump

Thursday: as for Wednesday

Friday: change of focus today, as *there have been many repeats this* week and a lot of HARD work for stamina. Therefore chose Amanda's solo entrance from Dipwop, no counts, freedom of phrasing. CONNECT also with softness in backs curve as you fall to lunge forward as in MA 12. Cake mixture dropping easily off a spoon (Delia Smith). Most of them needed to add more water.

F Group Week 7 (last week before half term)

General: Maintain stamina as built up last week. Greater complexity - longer combinations for stamina of concentration. More intricate patterns for small jumps - can they still retain placement, and emphatic and musical soft landings?

Shape arms or 'dangle' them. 'No arms' can clarify the movement of the back if they genuinely move 'from the back' e.g. wrap around from fast spiral. 'No arms' which have an element of tension distract and take the eye away from core of movement. Shapes given to arms this week will all serve to clarify the movement given. Practise this choice especially in small jumps and use that element of choice in big jumps (keep working on Amanda's comb. (big jump) from last Fri). Always to be aware of that choice - so that not to use them involves consciously dropping tension. Not enough simply not to think about them. Adv. students can have moments of shaping and moments of dropping in one phrase: work on this also.

Opening Reiterate length in diagonal curve. Use of back of thighs especially as you make the change from the long drop forward in tiny pli  to the lift of the back to centre. Important shift of weight here so as not to require gripping in front of thighs.

Reaches As last week (diagonals in 1st). Pushing down to straight legs and weight into opposite hip as back spirals. Pli  and lengthening of lower back 'pulls' upper back to centre.

B Str **Monday:** (1) 4 x 4 x 4 x
 (2) learn 1st (as planned for last week)
Tuesday: add 1st to whole set = 16 slow 5's

Except for C still recovering from lower back injury, all are strong enough for this. Some have to drop arms sometimes to eliminate tension in shoulders.

Feet See card for Week VII

- Monday:** B 12 (3)
Tuesday: as for Monday
Wednesday: adding curve and pli e
Thursday: new comb
Friday: repeat

Mid Back See card Week VII

Following questions that arose on Friday of last week - recap on where this is initiated and how it will deepen through upper back and, **in parallel only**, into lower back. Need for 'free' hips in turned out positions. Again working on finding mid-curve when coming from somewhere other than centre - this time from high curve. Softness of long drop as discovered last week to reiterate here (on the 1...) Different softness (more released) in final flop forwards. Length of 'easy' arms lifting to 5th 'on the back' as back lifts to centre

Brushes 1 [A] Cont.

- Monday:** learn reverse - still to curve on coup. CONNECT and prepare for placement of long curve over fully stretched standing leg in M.A 9 (2nd phrase).
Tuesday: new ending, coup and fondu on centre then tilt towards standing leg, curve, centre, close on straight legs
Wednesday: right, left to front and arch, finish circle towards straight leg. Right, left reverse and curve, finish circle towards working leg

Thursday: Learn 2nd - come up to centre as for reverse version. Tilt away from tendu side, through curve to tilt towards tendu then fall into plié 2nd (arms 3rd) and rebound to centre (arms 5th) brushes etc. into coup and tilt over standing leg on fondu.

Friday: forward x 2, side x 2, reverse x 2

NB: Didn't do Tuesday (needed the time on mid-curve): Wednesday repeated Monday's plan, fr. and reverse.

Ex. on 6 **Monday:** as last week on 6 x 2's (plié and spiral together, then as before reaching into long curve on 6, coming centre on str legs on the & before repeating)

Tuesday: No 1 x 2

No 2 x 2

No 3 (as above) x 4

Wed - Fri: No 1 x 2

No 2 x 2

No 3 x 2 - all slow for stamina

LB 4 (4)

Monday: continuing from last week add coda = 8 + 12. Same tilt from spiral arch into curve on plié as they've been working on in pliés ex. Fluid upper back in more complex pattern continues to test placement of hips.

Tues Wed: as for Monday

Thurs Fri: LB 4 cont. (with variation on opening phrase) (more complex). How to isolate 'fall' of upper back without dropping the sense of reach forward from tail bone to under shoulder blades? Arrives in reach into

hip from different place - tends to leave back reaching forward - can they find openness in upper back here too?

Pliés **Mon Tues:** 20 long and easy - curve on demi-plié 723
Wednesday: add relevé on 823 (back lifts weight onto front of feet)
Thurs Fri: alternating - curve in 1st, arch in 2nd, tilt opposite way in 5th
 curve, arch, tilt etc.

Tendus **Monday:** 4 Faster crossings into 5th. Maintain strong, turned out
 standing leg as working leg continually re-iterates its turn- out.
Tuesday: as for Monday and add 2nd version with back to curve in 4th
 and tilt in 2nd. Push down for slow shift of weight
Wednesday: repeat both versions
Thurs Fri: Tendus 5 coup and fondu + curve - centre with arms 5th
 connect with all other work this week on lifting arms 'on the back'. Weight
 stays 'in 5th' to make this easy, staying on straight leg

Batts **Monday:** 2 plain, into coup and curve, out and to 4th plié, change feet
 and batt behind, close 5th, repeat left, reverse
Tues Wed: repeat. Pathway of leg from fondu and coup as in adage -
 lengthening then lifting. Back makes complementary arc through space in
 opposite direction. Co-ordinate the two.
Thurs Fri: see card overleaf forward x 2 side x 2 behind x 2

Across **Monday:** A 27 (strong relevés). Long curve on relevé 5th connect
 with swing brushes 1 [A]
Tuesday: add 2nd phrase (see MA 9)

Wednesday: repeat for fluidity - double turns at finish and deeper in curves

Thursday: MA 10

Friday: Repeat - more courageous (not much time to spend on it in context of full class - this sense of having to get stuck in straight away gives them the urgency that the material needs)

Prep See card Week VII

Sm J Each time this is repeated, emphasise a different aspect of the material by bringing different connections from earlier in class into this one crossing.

Monday: small jumps 27 (connect A 27) skimming and rhythmically accurate

Tuesday: not done allowing more time for big jump

Wednesday: repeat small jump 27

Thursday: not done

Friday: repeat small jump 27 this time to emphasise arms on back as it lifts out of curve into sisonne (bring them to 5th here and then open 2nd)

Big Jump **Monday:** continue Amanda's Dipwop solo - 2nd section, with individual phrasing

Tuesday: repeat, find placement of hinge

Wednesday: repeat (own phrasing)

Thursday: combine 2 sections in own phrasing

Friday: set on counts, quite fast 2's as most of them chose to draw it all out. Can they keep softness and feeling of suspension when legs have to move swiftly underneath?

F Group Week 8

General: Need to work slowly again following 10 days holiday - plan to build stamina over 2 weeks as opposed to the 4 we took at the beginning of term. Also take time to recap concepts that were only just being assimilated prior to the half term break. Individually, through correction, to remind people of what we've jointly agreed (in one-to-one interviews) that they should focus on next.

Through this half term to try to challenge / break habitual patterns of timing, phrasing and co-ordination.

Stage 1 talk about timing and phrasing with greater clarity so that they are aware of it in simple forms (began this last half term but didn't develop it)

Stage 2 to work with different phrasings in different areas of the body.

Stage 3 to work with co-ordinations which feel less 'natural' and have to be understood with precision/performed with clarity in order to find their own logic (initially not appearing to be logical). Physical 'tongue twisters' deliberately obtuse. Talked about this afterwards and some described being 'aware' of the cogs in their brains not ticking around fast enough.

Opening See card

Reaches Forward, side, side, parallel and 1st, diagonal curves in 2nd
 Reach - 2 x 8's Lift to centre - 4 plié - 4
 Reach into new position with push down to straighten legs

B Str **Mon Tues Wed:** 2nd x 2 Diagonals x 2 4th x 2

Thursday: 2nd x 2 Diagonals x 2 4th x 4

(1st - not until next week, at least, as it is so strenuous on lower back)

Feet See card Week VIII

Monday: (1)

Tuesday: (2)

Wed Thurs Fri: (3)

Mid Back See card Week VIII

Following coaching session at finish of Week VII where some talked of the need to have an image for each different curve, use the slower start to this week for more concentration on the different qualities or changing emphasis as curves are isolated in different areas of the back. Re-iterate the necessity of working truthfully with their own bodies - comments like "everyone else seems to be going deeper than me", reveal that they are not concentrating on their own achievements! (And have lost the purpose of the exercise to boot....) Remind them for example that the mid back lengthening may be invisible.

This exercise was re-named '7 weeks in a nutshell' - contains almost all the key concepts from the last 7 weeks.

Brushes **Monday:** 14 (3)

Tuesday: 14 (2)

Wednesday: add back: forward - curve
 2nd - tilt towards working leg
 Behind - curve

2nd - tilt towards standing leg

Thurs Fri: 1 set with back as above except for arch with working leg - arabesque. 2nd set change feet

This was good. Got on their legs securely for 1st time this week (as a group that is)

Ex on 6

Monday: No 1 x 2 } recap

No 2 x 2 }

also prep for 4 - upper curve 1, pli   2, uncurl to shallow hinge 3, 4 (all keep heels on the ground and work for ease in upper back and neck)

pause on 5, stand centre on 6

Tuesday: as for Monday

Wednesday: as for Monday

Thursday: to hinge on 4 (as above) let heels come off as hinge deepens, stand 6

Fri: repeat as Thurs

Brushes & Back

Not on Monday

Tuesday: 9 cont (a) tilt, curve, centre right and left (1,2,3,& 4, curve & coup by 7,8 centre 9 10 11 12) right and left - forwards only

then as above but - tilt, curve, arch right and left - forwards only

Wednesday: reverse, otherwise as above

Thursday: (not done - time spent on clarifying mid back ex)

Friday: forwards x 2, reverse x 2 (not done - finish this early next week)

Long Back 9 cont slow and soft

- Monday:** 1st phrase on 6
- Tuesday:** 2 phrases on 8 x 4's
- Wednesday:** repeat as Tuesday
- Thursday:** repeat, faster and more fluid with different phrasing - ex:
have to use drop and rebound at this speed - no time to pause at all in
opening phrase. No stop especially after long reach forward.
- Friday:** LB 25 1st section only

Plié No 16

- Monday:** just demis, phrasing continuous from curve through centre to
arch
- Tuesday:** as for Monday
- Wednesday:** add 4th for demis (back centre - arch) then 5th for demis
(back curve - arch) PLUS - deep pliés, 1st, 2nd, 5th, 5th
- Thursday:** repeat as Wednesday except alternate head initiating lift
which continues to relevé (with relevé in arch, back centres afterwards)
- Friday:** as for Thursday

Tendus Travelling forward and back Temps lié No.1

From mid back to travel back, from head to travel front. CONNECT mid back for this week:
change emphasis of these curves.

- Monday:** forwards only
- Tuesday:** reverse only
- Wednesday:** forward and beh
- Thursday:** a lot of time spent on going over this very slowly so that it is
understood physically. Felt in fact.

Friday: repeat, consolidate - it is clear now

Ronds

Monday: 4 (a) (1) from 5th - recap concept of being with weight in 5th. Work on stationary standing leg (in terms of maintaining turnout).

Slow work in 2nd part on back and leg making ronds in continuous phrasing.

Tuesday: repeat faster: fluidity in 'rond de dos'.

Wednesday: 4 (a) (5)

Thursday: repeat, challenge to 'go for' timing of last port de dos

Friday: in reverse, reverse back also. Very hard but they had a good try at it.

Fondus

2 cont

Monday: Didn't do - not enough time

Tuesday: en face - version with low attitude 2nd right and left, add back reaching to arch with attitude 2nd

Wednesday: begin facing DSL - en face in 2nd - opposite corner (swivel) to close

Thursday: add circle from arch to tilt DS, pull into working thigh in passé to counter balance this and continue circle into curve of repeat. Also with high legs (no pressure on those who aren't ready for this in Week I, but some of them have obviously been doing class the whole time & are looking very fit).

Friday: repeat as Thurs

Dev From 4 (twist and curve etc.)

- Monday:** prep - easy on the thighs (1) forward and reverse
- Tuesday:** repeat - bigger steps forward and behind (CONNECT MA 11)
- Wednesday:** not done in favour of time on fondu
- Thursday:** as for Wednesday
- Friday:** repeat as Tuesday

Battements **Monday:** Plain: 2 in each position, then in and out in 2nd

Tuesday: same pathway for working leg as last week when it came from coup and curve. Shift of weight necessary for this, coming from 4th plié. (Can be glissés rather than batt, following 10 day holidays, still useful to discover change of weight). Drop over (collapse back) 9, pick up to passé and back centre and arms 5th 10..pause 11.. close 5th behind 12...
4 forward, 4 behind

Wednesday: repeat

Thursday: 2 plain, drop, lift, pause, close - en croix, on 8

Friday: repeat

Across M.A 11 (adage crossing). Not too strenuous for Week I but needs to be specific (of course) with sense of freedom in falling bits. Change timing - to be conscious of how this makes different demands physically.

- Monday:** on 8 x 4's - then much faster with new counts on 10 x 2's
- Tuesday:** with whole turns on 623 (in tilt right) run to arabesque and tilt left and on 923, 1023 in passé left before diagonal curve into arabesque on right fondu to down stage left (11 & 1223) Huge step to back leg in fondu 13, pause for 14 15, run 1623 right, left, right = 16 x 3's.

Wednesday: A 53 1st attempt at real distortion. This in response to a rather bored look that the class has following half term and with 3 people missing - King Arthur Project. The rest of them look as though they need something more stimulating to do, to remind them why they're still here.....

on 12 x 2's

Thursday: repeat, add B'ham simple introduction of 6 x 2's (= 3 x 6's)

Friday: exaggerate hips pushing forwards in both sections.

Prep See card Week VIII

Port de bras feels un-natural - begin to challenge usual co-ordinations here

Monday: (1)

Tuesday: repeat

Wednesday: (2)

Thursday: repeat

Friday: (3) (2) (1)

Small Jumps See card Week VIII

Changing positions on 4 (not 5 which would be more natural)

Tuesday: work on travelling, otherwise the same all week.

Big Jump **Monday:** see card Week VIII - development of small jump (ext leg in 2nd pulls into runs)

Tuesday: repeat, work on that stretch and timing

Wednesday: continue (see version 2)

Thursday: (3) simple version to work on rhythm. Nobody using grand battements so also practise with no jump

Friday: recap (3) with no jump, then (3) jumping (2) using these 'techniques'

PS not enough time for this, therefore gave a new version for a quick recap.

F Group Week 9

General: Last week's recap very useful. Understanding of different areas of the back not as deep as I'd thought, but it improved during the week.

Continue with work on using back to travel the weight, whilst also developing the ability to isolate work in different areas of the body and to work with unusual co-ordinations.

CONNECT different areas of emphasis in the arch. Tendus this week (reverse version) travel from breastbone leading weight forwards or head reaching which makes weight fall back. Lower back 25 - breastbone leads fall to front. Across 9. Pull to arch in spiral (on 523) lead with head. As weight is about to fall back, change energy to emphasis on breastbone therefore fall front. If this is done 'truthfully' then arch cannot diminish as weight travels - it would feel safer to lift out of arch to move weight to front. Connect tendu with weight tilting over standing leg - frees working leg for rond. Same thing as preparation for final turn in A9

Opening See card Week VIII

Find tilt side from drop forward - no curve in upper back before centre and straighten legs.

Tiny demi following hang allows lower back to stretch out even more

Reaches 3 x 8's as Week VIII

B Str x 4 in 2nd, diags, 4th all week

Feet See card Week IX

Monday: (1) ref. last week's work on keeping working hip down
whilst working thigh reaches

Tuesday: repeat

Wednesday: (2)

Thursday: (1) + (2)

Friday: repeat

Mid Back Continue, recap different areas of spine initiating movement. Changes of back from the head this week (was the least clear last week - lower back was more deeply 'felt', understandably as we've done so much work on that). Isolating areas that do the work, without distortion, was very hard for about half of them.

Isolations 4

Wednesday: (2)

Thursday: (2)

Friday: repeat, add changing weight

Ex on 6 & UB As plan for last week (take a break from the very slow spirals)

Mon Tues: No 4 on 8

Wednesday: No 4 on 6 (arrive in hinge on 3, stand centre 4, big arch 5, circle through side &, curve on plié 6, centre on straight legs &)

Thursday: No 1 to right }
As above on 6 } x 2
No 1 to left }
As above on 6 }

Friday: repeat

B + Back **Monday:** 9 cont (a) to conclude - forwards x 2, reverse x 2
Tuesday: repeat
Wednesday: 18 (changing accents adv) (same rhythm as centre part of 9 above)
Thursday: repeat with back towards working leg in pliés in open positions
Friday: repeat faster, challenge to still keep hips in place and to find the moment to shift the weight so that working leg can lengthen away (visibly - brushing against floor, before it lifts). (not version with tendus en croix)

Long Back LB 25 2 phrases of 8 x 3's
I as last week (first phrase)
II as detailed on card (side 2)
III repeat, work on weight shifts from breast bone or head. CONNECT tendus
IV add turn at finish of 2nd phrase (they found this very hard)
V repeat - try to get all shifts of weight (and turns) coming from the impetus of the back (or hips)

Pliés 15 return to full set this week (not too slow however). Cont. to work on continuous phrasing of the back

Thurs Fri: to deep plié in arch

Tendus 1,2 (a)

Development: a more elaborate version of last week's

Monday: forward x 4

Tuesday: repeat and work out reverse (on their own - to test whether or not they understood logic. They showed 10 different versions) Set my version.

Wednesday: reverse my version - make connections with lower back 25 and A9

Thursday: 2 + 2 is better for spacing - then repeat

Friday: as for Thursday

Ronds

Monday: 2 cont (5) Getting 'on legs' at beginning of week therefore simple pattern. Meanwhile be very specific about timing especially to show stops in the movement.

Tuesday: repeat with reach of back to side, curve, centre. Then in reverse (arch instead of curve), all very swift to test weight on standing leg and working hip down as worked for last week.

Wed Thurs Fri: 4 (f) rond de dos and shift in space - as smooth as possible (weight needs to be forward). Reverse next week.

Fondus Lynn's 2:3 Loosening hips

Monday: 3 on 8 : swing of right leg to overcross behind and tilt right into 4th plié and centred curve - repeat left (lifts from 4th plié)

Tuesday: 3 on 12 continued from overcross as above, throw left thigh around to centred attitude behind en face. Pull into passé, close 5th front to DSR. Repeat left

Wednesday: add turn on final throw to attitude

Thursday: to work on impetus coming from legs connect: A9 final turn (back sets up weight in right place over standing leg - throw of rond as impetus for the turn.)

Battements 6 [A]

Monday: on 12, front, side, behind, repeat left

Retain same pattern all week - work on 'hitting' top of battements, placement of hips in pli   and curve (10) and not 'disturbing' the standing leg.

Across Continue with distortions: -

Monday: 51 - no counts (discussion about how they hang on to counts when they're learning material - encourage to try a 'new approach of going for phrasing and sense of the energy of the material)

Tuesday: set it on 12 x 2's

Wednesday: combination with last weeks = 6 x 2's + 12 + 12

Thursday: A 9 See general comments. Also CONNECT with lower back 25 reach in lunge, dropping through curve to turn and with Monday's big jump through curve to repeat chass   other side.

Friday: repeat and add turn in pass   423 of 2nd half. Control finish of turn to 'pull' leg down to pli   from work of mid-back.

Prep Some clearly have one leg stronger than the other in small jumps therefore work on changing positions en l'air that 'require' 2 legs to reach before landing.

Mon Tues: all en face

Wednesday: corner to corner for 4th, 4th, en face in 2nd

Thursday: repeat .

Friday: combine with small jump (see below)

Small Jump See card Week IX

Tuesday: begun

Wednesday: repeat

Thursday: not done in favour of time on big jump

Friday: combine with prep above = 4 phrases of 8 (7 & 8 as
assemblé into 1st, en face).

Big Jump 52

I chassé and scoop (very good!!)

II jeté right 1,2 left 3 x 2 run right 1 jeté left 2, right 3 repeating

III 3 x 3's as on card

IV combination as overleaf

V repeat

F Group Week 10

General: Last week, because they found isolations harder than I'd expected them to, we focused on this and not so much on unusual co-ordinations - return to this thought for this week's plan.

Note: this is the last 'full' week of work. Next week assessment class on Friday and rehearsal for it on Thursday. Following weeks people are out, tech. runs for workshops etc.

Opening See card Week X. Hard for them to find mid curve on horizontal plane - work on this again next week.

Reaches 4 x 8's

3 x 8's as last week - 4th phrase to relevé 1,2,3,4 through heels 56 return to plié 78

Back Stretch 2nd x 4

diagonals x 4

4th x 4

1st x 4

lifting to centre - relevé - heels down - plié (connect reaches) straighten legs and curve again on 1

Feet See card Week X Concept of 8 = 1

Wednesday: add back, lengthening curve with lengthening leg, testing weight in 1st by changing feet. Phrasing, timing giving different qualities to each movement.

Mid Back See card Week X

'Finding' mid curve in different planes. Being stable in demi-plié whilst isolating the movement in the back especially drop lift (623) not 'bouncing' in the plié.

Brushes Sharp glissés 17. From 1st. Tilts test ability to keep hips on centre and low centre of gravity. CONNECT square hips and change of back in small jump 2 (1) with jeté 7 land 8, then spiral and repeat.

PS Didn't get to a new idea as it seemed more interesting to develop the musical ideas of 17 above, especially as it was so hard for them to keep their internal sense of where the beat was when they worked across the music. Therefore made new versions of [A] and [B] instead.

Isolations **Monday:** No. 1: allowing shoulders, ribs to 'distort' unlike last week mid-back ex when we tried not to (although it was hard to isolate clearly without distortion).
Tuesday: repeat and add change weight
Wednesday: not done
Thursday: put tog with last week's = 3 phrases of 8 in parallel and 1st Repeat with change of weight
Friday: repeat

Ex on 6 **Monday:** learn 'real' no 4
Tuesday: No 2 right, No 4
 No 2 left, No 4
Wed Thurs: repeat
Friday: no 1 right
 my no 4

no 1 left

my no 4

no 2 right

Merce 4

no 2 left

Merce 4

- Long Back **Monday:** swing (advanced) 7
- Tuesday:** add fall to lunge right again - diagonal curve left and left leg
rond side to behind. Finish turn to USR. Tilt left and weight onto left
(parallel to en face) bringing back to centre
- Wednesday:** 2 versions as on card
- Thurs Fri:** repeat: work on phrasing, especially turn at finish which
moves into pull up to centre - connect with sequence across- turning into
runs forward (again without a pause).

Pliés **All week:** No. 8 Working on accurate timing which gives space for real
stillness. Stop (even if they're not in the right place) on 4 & 7 - so that they can 'see' where
they are.

- Tendus continue with back leading weight No 6
- Monday:** 2 x 6's (2)
- Tuesday:** repeat - get higher up on the stilts
- Wednesday:** reverse
- Thurs Fri:** right, left forwards transitional brush through 1st
right, left behind
see notes on card for connections

Ronds 4 (f) CONNECT A 36

Monday: reverse version

Tuesday: reverse version and turn

Wednesday: forwards and reverse, repeat with turns

Thursday: turns to whole set

Friday: repeat PS not done - return to fondus instead.

Fondus **Mon - Thurs:** Lynn's: continue with 3 as last week. Now in reverse.

Friday: New version with whole turns. Forwards and in reverse.

Développé See card Week X

Monday: (1)

Tuesday: repeat

Wed Thurs: not done

Friday: as 4D version, combine développé and battements

Battement **Monday:** 1st - 5th 8

Demi - pliés only

Tuesday: repeat

Wednesday: add deep pliés - amazingly they found this easy - proves how good their placement is and how much they've understood 'useful' phrasing

Thursday: repeat - work on phrasing that takes care of the knees

Friday: incorporate these ideas into dev ex + batt.

(see 4D 1995)

Across **Monday:** didn't do anything across the floor - took plenty of time to clarify everything set so far, made sure we had time to work on lots of jumps as we're in studio 8.

Tuesday: A 7 (new version)

Wednesday: repeat adding whole turn in arch 8 = 1 and phrasing of last turn in arabesque and curve into runs

Thursday: combined class with 4D, so will have to split group for a lot of the work - therefore limited time across floor. Repeat as Wednesday and add opening phrase from A 36 counted on 8 x 2's finishing with turn + 2 circles (of leg and back) as in ronds.

Friday: post assessment (ballet) so only have 1hr class.

Work on MA 10 for freedom of movement: serves as preparation for 'unseen' combination which will be similar, next Friday. Repeat and work on weight changes that allow for all these transitions to be smooth.

Prep **Monday:** 22 (1)

Tuesday: 22 (2) and (3)

Wednesday: ch x 2 4th (back foot comes forward) 4th other side 2nd (travel back into it) close 5th (right behind)

Thursday: (1) + (4)

Friday: repeat

Small Jumps Begin to deal with rhythmic intricacy & phrases with minor changes - do they notice the difference and can they show the 2 versions back to back without getting physically confused?

Monday: 2 (1)

Tuesday: 2 (2)

Rest of week didn't do -continue work on this next week.

Big Jump **Monday:** combination as last Friday (as we didn't have time or space to do it full out last week)

Tuesday: concentrate on small jump as above

Wednesday: big jump 7 connect A7 and lower back 7 version (1)

Thursday: repeat with turn in arch (instead of on arrival) version 2

Friday: 1 of each version

In retrospect: This wasn't a very exciting week - it seems hard for a lot of them to maintain their usual high level of concentration. Last week having no music for a few days (because of filming going on in the building) forced them to keep things together. Nevertheless, some good work on prep. stuff. Coming across floor and jumps were less exciting. Turns still cause many of them too much anxiety.

F Group Assessment Week: 11

General: To recap and clarify all key concepts in time for their assessment class which we will do on Thursday (for us) and Friday (for examiners). This is a very important mark, carrying 50% of their technique grade for this term.

Whilst I think that their courage has been the most exciting aspect of their work, they'll probably be too nervous in their exam class to rise to their normal heights. Therefore concentrate on showing the depth of understanding they've developed in terms of coordination and phrasing, & use of the back in many different ways.

Appendix C

Results of Questionnaires

The following questionnaires, given to all students at London Contemporary Dance School at the end of each course, are designed to aid the technical faculty in their understanding of the students' responses to the work. Although they are written in confidence and the specific comments therefore cannot form part of individual interview material, they are crucial to the effective planning of future courses.

The questionnaires were completed by all students who took part in the ten week course given in the autumn of 1995 and detailed in the teaching notes of Appendix B.

Copies are given here as not all the hand-written originals are easy to decipher. Please note that a large proportion of the students in this class do not have English as their first language. Their comments have been copied exactly as written.

The students' views on the efficacy of the training they received, are consistent with observations made by the writer, and accordingly support the argument in favour of the methodology proposed.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**1**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
Very well organised
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No*
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? 7-8
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
 Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
I learnt how to use my body in a quite different way - that is - to use it as deeply as I have always tried to but with more simplicity \ Not to complicate what I'm trying to do. - Also - to concentrate fully from the beginning to the end of the class.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc.?
Everyone in the class seemed to be very committed and consequently very hardworking. \ The level of concentration within the class as a whole was inspiring. \ Because the movement is so beautiful \ always (almost) get at least half an hour of travelling in each class was brilliant -
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.
Re no. 15 - so far there hasn't been enough time to really get to grips with everything as I've still got a lot of 'Q's'. Also for the degree students, to assess them on one class seems strange - to have 2/3 mini assessments throughout the term would maybe be fairer, but this relates to assessments throughout, not just this course.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**2**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? *very* Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? -----
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No
21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor

22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.

23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No

24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No

25. What did you gain from this course?

a lot. Most important of all, I enjoyed it very much . and then I got a lot of practical and theoretical information on how to improve my technique and my dancing in general.

26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc.?

In my opinion Mary's teaching is absolutely outstanding because of how she perfectly organised and structures her classes and how she helps the students by giving very specific information, by observing very accurately and by being very demanding and at the same time so positive and encouraging.

27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Mary has been the person who helped me a great deal in making a very basic change in the way I work and dance. Through her as a person and through her brilliant tteaching I discovered so much and I can't express how grateful I am for everything she has given me.

with lots of love to you, Mary
[signature]

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995

3

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? ! Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? ! Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No

Logically? I don't know. It followed logically the first term our previous E-group had with Mary (Spring 95). And I guess it was consistently more difficult a course in the succession of terms in this college.

8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No

and some revelations I had in this class, I was able to put into usage in ballet.

9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No

**but I have to admit that I wasn't concentrating on spotting differences either; I just concentrated working on the "crucial current issues" for me in both classes.*

10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No

11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No

12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No

13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No

**sometimes - when you felt low yourself - it was hard to keep believing that "no attention" in fact means that you're doing fine and keep on working like you do now. Even though I theoretically did know that this is what Mary means.*

14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No

15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
- but I must say - I could continue working in these classes and loving it for the next 10 years... one remains curious what more could one achieve with Mary as only 14 weeks gave so much already.*
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? *maybe4*
(cause of a cold)
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
- well obviously not every every single day, but that's human. Almost every every single day.*
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No
- I could have given more time, theoretically speaking, but in this college you end up having SO MUCH TO DO , that there really isn't time actually for such work.*
21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought? Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation? Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
- A LOT! Again a huge clump of more security that this (=dancing) is indeed what I love and want to keep on working on. I mostly gained 1.5 hours of being happy every day. Technically I felt that things I had never actually believed possible for myself, started to appear even somewhere within possible reach. Also I think I could store somewhere within me the essential concepts of Mary's work and HOPEFULLY apply them to myself, when I'm no longer in her class.*
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc.?
- Exceptional it was because Mary had such clear aims and intentions for what we were expected to reach by the end of each week, half term, term etc. And that showed in the progress of the kind of class material we were given. The work thus felt extremely motivating, if HARD, and fulfilling at the same time. You found yourself able to do things you didn't actually expect to be able to do!*
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.
- I also think that the policy Mary has about how to deal and be with people works very well. There are no favourites, people are treated as responsible adults and their ability is trusted and encouraged so the class atmosphere is mostly really enjoyable and it's easy to concentrate 100% and give everything into working. As there's no "personal stuff " going on between the teacher and the students. Also I appreciate the fact that Mary clearly tries to come up with different sorts of things*

for us to be doing, so that we don't always end up doing the same sort of things across the floor.

That I find really challenging.

Also, Mary is very well prepared; i.e. knows her exercises well by heart . So you as a student feel appreciated; the class has been prepared for you properly - you want to give the same work back and do it properly. I could go on endlessly, it seems, but the paper finishes here.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**4**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
To a certain extent, yes; but personally I feel that the different contemporary technique are so varied that to follow on logically is near impossible - yet each technique obviously has its own strengths , benefits.
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
Because I feel that any new knowledge & experience will help to add to one's own dancing : technically and in performance.
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No N/A
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? 2 (for a funeral)

18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
Especially as one was given individual corrections to think about and work on - which I found useful and rewarding.
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No
To a certain extent - not as much as I perhaps could have - but , I realised the benefits of at least thinking through certain elements of the class in my own time as I found it helped me to clarify the origins of certain movements.
21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
 Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
 Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
I think, like many dancers I am a bit of a perfectionist and I am rarely totally satisfied after a class, although I still get enjoyment out of them.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
Strength and stamina - due to the steady build up of exercises over the duration of the term. Also, confidence in being able to pick up exercises more quickly and allowing myself to travel through space more freely.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
The emphasis on the need for musicality and phrasing - and the encouragement to move freely, yet maintaining technique and control at the same time.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**5**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No

2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No

There was always new information given so that we could develop and broaden our understanding of the technique.

3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
very

4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No

5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No

6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No

I was able to use and bring information and movement styles to each of my classes which helped to develop my dancing as a whole.

7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No

Style wise no, but technically, yes

8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No

9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No

10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No

11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No

I felt the class was set at the right pace.

12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No

13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No

*Crooked neck, slouched lower back, sagging stomach, stiff arms, tense back!!!
Oh well, I'll keep working!!*

14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No

15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No

Since I enjoy this style so much I would like to be able to carry on as there is so much more I would like to learn.

16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No

17. If you missed classes, how many?

18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No

There were times I felt I could have worked deeper and fuller.

19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No

20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor

22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.

23. Was the *method of course assessment* appropriate to the subject? Yes/No

24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No

25. What did you gain from this course?

I have had space to develop a movement style that I feel comfortable within my body at the same time as expanding my knowledge and understanding of the technique. The work has also built up strength.

26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?

It has been great to work in a class that has so much energy and enthusiasm. The style of movement allowed me to experiment and work in a way which helped my dancing to develop and grow, most of all I have been able to express myself through the work.

27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995

6

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 2. | Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 3. | Were the classes well organised? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 4. | Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 5. | Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? | <u>Yes/No</u>
90% |
| | <i>A: turn out compensation</i> | |
| | <i>B: use of kneecap</i> | |
| 6. | Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 7. | Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 8. | Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? | <u>Yes/No</u>
50% |
| 9. | Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? | <u>Yes/No</u>
90% |
| 10. | Were these contradictions resolved? | Yes/No |
| 11. | Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 12. | Was the expectation for good performance realistic? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 13. | Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? | <u>Yes/No</u>
90% |
| 14. | Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? | <u>Yes/No</u>
70% |
| 15. | Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 16. | Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 17. | If you missed classes, how many? | <i>Due to illness 3-4
+ tiredness</i> |

18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
Yes, but I don't think the question is asked specific enough.
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
60%
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No
60%
21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought? Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
What do you mean by that
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation? Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
Yes, maybe teachers could come more often to see people relaxed.
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
More believe technique, new dimensions of energy, released quick moving, hopefully better alignment
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
Mary sums up all the things you've learned. She moves fast, slow, jumps, travel, lies on the floor, shape becomes energy. Works with dynamics !!!! is musical.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.
It would be helpful to have more time to talk with Mary, to get to know her . An experienced dancer and teacher could help us with more discussion about technique related subject - matters, i.e. why can't I balance everyday?

WHAT ARE WE AIMING FOR?

THANKYOU VERY, VERY MUCH FOR THIS COURSE AND FOR THE USE OF PEDAGOGICS, WHICH SEEMS TO BE A MAJOR LACK IN THE DANCE TEACHER COMMUNITY !!!

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995

7

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|
| 1. | Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 2. | Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 3. | Were the classes well organised? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 4. | Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 5. | Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 6. | Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 7. | Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 8. | Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 9. | Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 10. | Were these contradictions resolved? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 11. | Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 12. | Was the expectation for good performance realistic? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 13. | Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 14. | Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 15. | Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? | <u>Yes/No</u>
2 terms |
| 16. | Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 17. | If you missed classes, how many? | <i>King Arthur</i> |
| 18. | Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 19. | Did the course encourage independent work and thought? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 20. | Did you give time to course work outside of class? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 21. | How would you assess your capacity for independent thought? | |

Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor

22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.

23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No

24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No

25. What did you gain from this course?

Greater technical improvements and strength, as well as more self-confidence in my dancing. I feel I have also gained more freedom in my movements.

26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?

I find Mary very encouraging, which is a nice change from past technique teachers. The class as a whole is very focused but more often than not the energy level is high. Which obviously gets good results.

27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

I think it was important to have 2 terms. It took the first term to struggle with class principles which meant this term was free to focus on other things.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**8**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from *previous techniques* studied in the school? Yes/No
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? *3 or 4*
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
A sense of self-achievement, understanding of physical capabilities. Enormous enjoyment and a chance to realise my abilities.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
Unusual group feeling and a real sense of being pushed, physically and mentally.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**9**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No *MA*
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No *MA*
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
I don't Know !
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
I would say yes, though hesitate because of my injury.
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? ?
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No

20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No
21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?

Discovering the back: articulation of joints and especially spiral. Reinforcement of the importance of deep tissue work and weight distribution. Finding the upper body, strength and stamina. Rediscovered different levels of concentration: different dimensions of concentration. Learning to work to extremities of movement, not being afraid to fall and make discoveries that way (- very important step for my injuries) Specific muscular strength and importance of strong technique within that. Found tension points - particularly in spine - and experimentation of ways to release that energy. Training of energy flow and dynamics that are appropriate to musicality and phrasing. Learnt and still learning to trust myself as a competent dancer. The importance of weight and its 'rebound' factor, as far as how heavy specific parts of the body are. Enjoyment and satisfaction of moving : (also see above) How articulate the body can be. A deeper understanding of my body. Really, really found my ham strings and 'turn out' muscles. An understanding of being "on your legs" while all around the body is elsewhere: Re-discovered a particular level of concentration through dance exercises which is concerned with process and not result. More aware of my bodies true capacity. Learnt the importance of a well structured class and musicality. The flow of movement combinations. The dimensions of movement - reinforced.

Although much of the above I have been previously aware of, this course has highlighted and reinforced them in a BIG way! Dance - can be simple.

26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?

Structurally. My first class this term , I was amazed at the way the class was structured and its logical progression and having seen this throughout the term, this amazement still stands. They (the classes) are challenging and exciting. the musicality and phrasing is beautiful. The movement combinations made me feel real pleasure of movements and weight following through and the joy of flow. The fact that everything was 'there' as the excercises were set, there was little or no confusion as they were presented and articulated beautifully. The nature of the work is such that I made discoveries - exciting ones - on a daily basis. The class was also structured in such a way that the use of energy was v. positive i.e. followed a logical progression. Individual attention v. specific and subtle - great!

27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Thank you : (I think that they are pretty much covered!!!!)

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**10**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many?
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
Not as physically as I had thought.
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
A deeper understanding of my body, a better understanding of how to physicalise movement that I visualise mentally.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
The demonstration of movement was very physical and so clear.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**11**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? *3 weeks due to King Arthur*
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
Strength and technical accuracy. Also, have gained confidence and courage and find that I want to take risks in class.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
All class combinations are varied and interesting, as a result they are extremely enjoyable to do. The daily variation in exercises is challenging and demanding and forces the group to be focused and attentive at all times. There is always great energy in class, which in my opinion illustrates the sheer enjoyment and pleasure that everyone is experiencing from doing the class.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**12**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------------|
| 1. | Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 2. | Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 3. | Were the classes well organised? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 4. | Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 5. | Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 6. | Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 7. | Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 8. | Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 9. | Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 10. | Were these contradictions resolved? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 11. | Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 12. | Was the expectation for good performance realistic? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 13. | Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 14. | Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 15. | Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 16. | Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 17. | If you missed classes, how many? | |
| 18. | Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 19. | Did the course encourage independent work and thought? | <u>Yes/No</u> |
| 20. | Did you give time to course work outside of class? | <u>Yes/No</u> |

I did but I know I could have done more.

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.

23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No

24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No

25. What did you gain from this course?

I've discovered basic, simple changes in my posture which I think can help me move more freely.

26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?

The course is very much based on technique, but at the same time there's been plenty of time to move and jump.

27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

I think it would be very useful to have more than one contemporary technique a week (especially now in the third year) so that we could use what we've learned in this course and adapt it to another technique. Now it gets to separated, and it's easy to "forget" when you start doing a new style.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995

13

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions?
about what we're capable of! Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
Um..... subconsciously also depends upon your definition of logic!
7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
Not logically as such, but because it's very different from Juliet and Duncan you have to find some connections in order to swim!
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
Nothing major.
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
(except for the odd tempo!)
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to *begin to* investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? THREE?

18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

*Um.... BODY CON BUT NOT
Really. Not much else... OK.... I admit....*

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought? Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
...Here?
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation? Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
FLUCTUATES!

23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No

Assessment of dance? But if it must be done then ...yes.

24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
- For the continuous assessment.*

25. What did you gain from this course?

A bit more confidence a great appreciation for being in a group with such fantastic people ... an inkling of just how much harder even the basics of teaching are than I ever imagined (i.e. our minus - Mary session!)

26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?

(all the above...) if it's possible to get an entire class feeling like they're flying (classes with Alan before half term) then... (Note: the comment refers to the musician Alan Lisk.)

27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

To take into account the fact that often when faced with a sheet like this, what you want to say goes right out of your head so if the answers are a little superficial...but it's a very positive sign that some form of two - way evaluation is being done!

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995**14**

Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
 2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
 3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
 4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
 5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No
 6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No
 7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
 8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
 9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No
- I think there is now enough collaboration between the teachers in the school!*
10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
 11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
 12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
 13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No
 14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No
 15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No
 16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
 17. If you missed classes, how many? *I don't know*
 18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
 19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
 20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No

21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
Concentration first of all, ability to work independently and to explore the technique demands by myself as well.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
I found this class very techiqly demanding very often but I also found that whiúth teachers corrections I could satisfied those demands and this made me going forwards from day today.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.

Student Evaluation For Technique Class - F Group 1995

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Please explain your answers where possible. The more detailed your comments, the more helpful this questionnaire will be to your teachers.

1. Did the course challenge former ideas and assumptions? Yes/No
2. Did the course add new information and/or give a new perspective to your existing knowledge and understanding of the subject? Yes/No
3. Were the classes well organised? Yes/No
4. Did the class follow a logical sequence throughout the week and the term as a whole? Yes/No
5. Were the specific demands of the technique clearly presented? Yes/No

I really appreciate the clarity and logic!

6. Were you able to integrate knowledge gained from other practical courses in this school with the information presented in this course? Yes/No

For the first time I found that very similar information was presented in both technical classes.

7. Did this course follow on logically from previous techniques studied in the school? Yes/No
8. Did this course add a new dimension to your understanding of those techniques? Yes/No
9. Did you discover contradictions between information given in other practical courses and this course? Yes/No

I thought there were some slight contradictions, but after more thinking they turned out to be same thoughts with different words.

10. Were these contradictions resolved? Yes/No
11. Were the physical demands made by the teacher appropriate? Yes/No
12. Was the expectation for good performance realistic? Yes/No
13. Did the teacher provide constructive individual attention during the classes? Yes/No

Very well balanced individual and general attention.

14. Did the teacher provide time for discussion outside class time and were these discussions constructive? Yes/No

The discussions were very factual and clear.

15. Was the duration of the course sufficient for you to investigate and assimilate the work conceptually and physically? Yes/No

16. Did you find your record of attendance acceptable? Yes/No
17. If you missed classes, how many? *one(and watched one)*
It was very very beautiful and useful to watch once.
18. Did you participate in the course as fully as you could have? Yes/No
I didn't in the beginning, but didn't realise it.
19. Did the course encourage independent work and thought? Yes/No
20. Did you give time to course work outside of class? Yes/No
21. How would you assess your capacity for independent thought?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor
22. How would you assess your capacity for perceptive self-evaluation?
Excellent/Good/Fair/Poor.
23. Was the method of course assessment appropriate to the subject? Yes/No
24. Was the method of course assessment closely related to the course content? Yes/No
25. What did you gain from this course?
A dream (at night) about a high jete up to the ceiling and floating there for a long long time.....more and more love to music and movement! All kinds of feelings . And strength and technical abilities of course.
26. In what ways was this course exceptional, that is, inspiring, exciting, etc?
I liked the good energy of the class and the clarity, positiveness and honesty of the teacher. People went beyond their own expected limitations, managed to do things they didn't believe they'd be able to.
27. Please add any comments that you think are important to this evaluation.
Very very nice classes with beautiful moments!
[signature]

Appendix D

Introductory Questions: Notes on Aims and Intentions

The following questionnaires were given by the author to a group of second year students at the outset of their course. The intention was threefold: to encourage them to think beyond the details of their training programme, to consider their overall aims and intentions, and to glean specific information about the areas of work which they perceived as problematic. Their responses formed the basis of individual discussions, leading to specific goal setting for the term in question. The areas of work highlighted as problematic were a useful source of information feeding into the planning of teaching strategies for individual students. The answers given demonstrate a willingness on the part of the majority of students to analyse and communicate their feelings about their dancing.

Questionnaires of this kind are specific to the author and are not given as usual London Contemporary Dance School practice.

In the interest of confidentiality, the names of the students concerned have been replaced by the letters A - N.

January 1995 Introduction Questions**Student A**

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Enjoyable and easy to watch and for me to enjoy what I'm doing.

Which dancers do you most admire?

Many dancers for many different reasons.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Soft, but with energy (the opposite of what I am just now)

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Tense

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Mostly all class work

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Keeping calm and things that work turnout (I have a tendency to have problems with hips).

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Co-ordination, quality of movement and to make movements more softer and deeper.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

I can't think of any at the moment

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

To keep on working deeper in the body and to try and connect each movement rather than have everything separate making it harsh and un-co--ordinated.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student B

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

One who eats everything given to them, has spunk, energy, love....someone who makes some form of connection to the people who watch them and give something back to them.

Which dancers do you most admire?

Those who eat..... (Karen Woo , Lucy Burnheim)

How would you like your dancing to be described?

As above

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Differ from class to class. When in college I think tense, inhibited, brittle, spikey, embarrassed but somehow, outside of college I begin to live and enjoy it a bit more and become more expansive, free, relaxed

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Travelling (anywhere, anyhow)

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Not throwing a tantrum when things go wrong! Placement dependant things that are a nightmare and anything on demi-point for excess periods of time (plus the old chestnut of pirouettes - I need to de-bolt my neck)

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

As above and strength

Are these goals reasonable ones?

In so far as we have 12 weeks. Rome wasn't or so I keep telling myself.

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

Mostly the bit for 'written comments' if it is blank! I mean, I don't really understand how one can grade dance.

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Tension, negativity, adage.

January 1995 Introduction Questions**Student C**

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Versatile, full of expression and personality

Which dancers do you most admire?

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Full of vitality, personality and enjoyment

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Cautious, methodical, neat, controlled

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Travelling across the floor and also slow adages

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Rhythm

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

I tend to fear jumping and rhythm . However I enjoy them when I can do them.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes, once I feel I have become accustomed with the new technique style.

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

I understand the categories, however the levels of marking confuse me. Especially when each teacher interprets the marking scheme differently.

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

I feel I need help on being less anxious about my dancing. Sometimes if I fail to pick up an exercise immediately, then I get tense and nervous. I keep telling myself to relax more but this doesn't always work.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student D

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Difficult to say. I would like to be involved creatively as well as dancing and to learn more about work going on using all sorts of techniques especially contact and physical theatre. I think it's important to first get an understanding of your body and it's limitations and possibilities so you can then go on to apply different ideas to what you've already learnt. Plus of course I would quite like to be employable!!!

Which dancers do you most admire?

Those working in Candoco and the Chomondeleys - those who are primarily performers and who know why they are moving and how they move to put across an intention.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Clear, organic, exciting, interesting, absorbing.

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

At times tense, especially in the upper body, lacking in clarity and centre.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Travelling across the floor.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Finding correct placement to work effectively within whilst challenging the limitations of my body.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Placement, co-ordination, continuity and differences in dynamics

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes, in that any small improvement in these areas would be an achievement.

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

The class assessment mark - with whom are you being compared? The year, class, school?

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

With learning how to direct my energy efficiently - I think I tend to attack all movement at the same level and therefore waste a lot of energy and fail to achieve a diversity in dynamics.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student E

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

I'd like to be an expressive, strong, happy dancer. I'd like to have enough strength and skill and technique in my body to be able to move with the kind of energy and power I like.

Which dancers do you most admire?

I admire for instance Stephen Petronias dancers and Russel Maliphant. In general I admire dancers who seem to have found something of their own and being at peace with it; who really want to do dancing.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

As the above.

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

A bit clumsy, slow, non-technical, too ft kind of - well - at the moment. I am too weak, I don't have enough strength in the muscles to carry my (damned) hypermobile skeleton. Also, I'm not the happiest positive person which affects me in the way that I'm not always able to work with as much intensity and focus and self discipline that I feel I should do.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

When realising new things and being able to sustain them. Hard work when I know that I'm striving on a correct path in the right direction. I love musicality and energy of movement.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Simply keeping the 'classical' alignment as my skeleton is so loose, tendus and arabesques to the back, fourth and fifth position because of the impossible shape of my legs. I'm somehow too loose and 'curvy' to hold myself easily.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Strength and precision. Also as I know Cunningham uses a lot of work in the back area, I'd like to improve in that, as my upper body seems somewhat like an unknown territory to me. also I'm going to try to loose weight to ease the strain on my poor hyper extended joints and backbone.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Well, I always tend to hope for too much and then get disappointed with myself. But I think that they are. I am gong to try at least. It's so hard t o tell though in what kind of a state one finds oneself from time to time.

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

I'm quite OK with it actually. Perhaps the 'class principles' is a bit obscure and physical eloquence.

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Technique. But do you know - I am a bit wary, a bit worried. As you are so completely different, beautiful straight line and long limbs and sort of 'angular exercises. I am a bit afraid I will not be able to do your things, being so utterly different from you body structure wise. For instance, exercises in 4th and 5th are really a 'pain in the bum' to me. A constant frustration as I find it so hard to try to work in that position due to the shape (and bulk) of my legs. Also I'm just quite confused about the correct use of the leg muscles with my hyper-extended legs. And, as I said, my upper body is fairly under used as it is now, I'm sure.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student F

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Strong, emotional, happy

Which dancers do you most admire?

Sheron Wray, Scott Clark and loads more I can't think of.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Lyrical, charismatic, exciting, emotional

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

A bit too tense. Sometimes lyrical and fluid. I would like to be able to understand the movements more so I can relax into them and dance with more control and muscularity.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Travelling and slower movements.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Getting rid of tension, fast foot work, holding my turn out without gripping my bum muscles

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

My general posture i.e. dropping my lower back and increasing the strength in my stomach, I would like to gain an ease of movement and fluidity while travelling. I want to also concentrate on strengthening my ankles and feet.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Understanding my postural alignment, finding a better understanding of dynamic and a strong centre to work from. I'd like a better understanding of where I am coming from as a dancer and artist as I often feel lost within technique.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student G

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Released, dramatic

Which dancers do you most admire?

Pina Bausch's group

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Expressive, controlled and released

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

I think I'm too tense, not relaxed enough - I didn't perform last term, but my own work tends to be dramatic. I find it difficult to put adjectives on my own dancing.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

The continuity that makes it possible to work on certain personal technical problems and overall difficulties. I like the travelling - it links the standing work.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Footwork and leg work to the back - rond des jambes - placement, weight changes, releasing upper body.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Quick tendus, glisses, weight changes, placement, jumps, upper body

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

Understanding of class principles

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Weight changes, placement in first position and 4th and 5th. Also with feet and foot work.

January 1995 Introduction Questions**Student H**

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Contemporary and Jazz (West End)

Which dancers do you most admire?

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Dynamic, exciting, beautiful

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

A bit reserved, I need to let go more and have more confidence

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Sequences across the floor and jumping

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Getting my weight in the right place, working to my maximum all the time

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Strength - being able to throw my top half around and maintain my lower half. More speed in quick movements.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

General strength, dynamics, balance, placement of weight

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student I

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

One who combines fluidity and strength.

Which dancers do you most admire?

Sean Feldman, Russel Maliphant

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Eloquent, powerful

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Tense, dramatic but in a limited or perhaps limiting way. At times, however, I do have the ability to be more sinuous - a state of mind as much as one of body.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

The concentration of the opening exercises, the energy of the jumping sequences.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Combining the discrete elements into a fluid travelling phrase.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

The ability to connect movement to movement - fluidity of co-ordination, as well as greater clarity in articulating the oppositions through which I hope to be (fluidly!) posing.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Perhaps 'quality' is the most difficult of goals to achieve, but I think I have improved in this area and therefore consider it worth persisting.

Which categories (if any) on the current assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Eliminating unnecessary tension. Correct placement.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student J

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Fluent, strong, versatile, but my own person.

Which dancers do you most admire?

As above and those with a confident easy stage presence.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

On day as above, but until then it would be good to know people feel relaxed watching me and can see something working.

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Tense, especially so after my ankle - I am very wary and as a result a little inhibited sometimes.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Working through beginning excersises and discovering daily, strength building excersises and moving across the floor using what I've learnt or am learning.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

PLACEMENT and keeping on my legs - I find both very difficult and both put me off and distract me.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

PLACEMENT and being able to relax and take the movement rather than be taken by it (if that makes sense). I want to feel by body more a one and fluidly.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

I hope so, it depends on my ankle and how tense I get and how I can keep my mind from panic.

Which categories (if any) on the current Assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

N/A

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Tension in the back (old story) and an idea of where I am working correctly so I can persevere with that. I'd like to feel comfortable with my body especially with placement and my hips (and my feet). If I could kick that I'd be a very happy bunny!

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student K

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Contemporary - Neo-classical

Which dancers do you most admire?

Non-specific, but those who are able to show emotion and feeling through their movement.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Powerful, lively and energetic, yet able to show fluidity and softness.

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

One who can show a lyrical sense of movement, but has difficulty in releasing all tension (especially in shoulders!)

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Travelling, jumping, moving phrases.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Releasing tension in upper body and showing the transitions between movements in a phrase.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Basically in finding a way to release my tension, as I believe this would help my work to improve overall. Also, to improve the use of my back, as I am aware of a weakness there.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes..... although the tension will be difficult to release as it has become almost a habit for several years now. Also, my shoulders are naturally tight, and do not seem to be improving much, despite specific exercises.

Which categories (if any) on the current Assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

N/A

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

To be able to use my back and shoulders correctly, producing clear lines, yet without strain.

January 1995 Introduction Questions**Student L**

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Contemporary

Which dancers do you most admire?

Mia Lawrence, David Parsons, Rossel Maliphant

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Powerful, clear, expressive

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Tense, inhibited, clear

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Being able to let go and move.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

I really don't know. It's all so bloody hard.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

Strength wise and stamina mainly. I would like to be clear without being rigid and stiff.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes

Which categories (if any) on the current Assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

I think they are all fairly unclear and overlap a lot.

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

I am sorry, but I find it really hard to communicate by filling out a sheet, I'd rather have a talk to be honest. I do appreciate though, that you want us to set goals etc.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student M

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

Neo-classical/contemporary

Which dancers do you most admire?

Rambert and Phoenix dancers - also AMP dancers and Darcy Bussel

How would you like your dancing to be described?

Enthusiastic enjoyable, confident, musical

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Linear, musical, technical, expressive, not too strong though.

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Moving across the floor, the parts where you get to let go a bit more and then I feel like I am dancing.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Feeling the movement and not just copying what I see. Trying to remember my posture and placing during the shorter exercises.

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

I would like to become stronger generally - especially in my feet and stomach. I feel I also need to be a little more expressive in class and not forget that even the small exercises are still dance. Become more confident.

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes - I've already been working on them this year - they are really goals that I've carried through from last term and hopefully will achieve this term!

Which categories (if any) on the current Assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

Physical eloquence category.

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

Flexibility and stamina. I need help controlling my landings from jumps. Postural correction and I need to build up a stronger centre.

January 1995 Introduction Questions

Student N

What kind of a dancer would you like to be?

I would like to be a dancer who has the technique which gives them a freedom to move in any particular way, and also they know how to use these techniques to talk with their bodies to present something to the people from their soul through their bodies in their own particular way.

Which dancers do you most admire?

Dancers with the qualities as above.

How would you like your dancing to be described?

As the sort of dancer I described.

What kind of a dancer are you at the moment?

(Some adjectives: lyrical/linear/tense/dramatic/passive/inhibited/etc.)

Tense

What aspects of class work do you most enjoy?

Combinations through the centre.

What are the hardest aspects of technical work for you?

Foot work and placement

In which specific areas would you like to see improvement during the next 12 weeks?

In those two things (foot work, placement)

Are these goals reasonable ones?

Yes

Which categories (if any) on the current Assessment sheet do you not fully comprehend?

No

With which areas of your work do you need particular help?

I need to learn how to work deeper in my technique and not only physically, but mentally as well and I have to improve my concentration in the class.

Appendix E

Categories for the Assessment of Technique at London Contemporary Dance School

The following categories are used by all teachers at London Contemporary Dance School for the assessment of each student's participation in the course work. While the categories are general enough to apply to any technique, the teacher's comments and grades for each category refer to the specific understanding, both mental and physical, of the particular style in question. Therefore each individual's relationship to the material of the class can be analysed. Further, detailed comments are given in writing and regular one-to-one discussions between teachers and students help to ensure that concerns are aired before they develop into problems.

1 Understanding of Class Principles

The ability to adapt mentally and physically to the specific principles of a technique and the movement style of the class, whilst showing a respect, understanding and responsibility for individual physical structure at this present stage of its development.

2 Physical Eloquence and Clarity

The ability to reveal the origin and detail of a movement and to move with simplicity and integrity in a co-ordinated way.

3 Energy and Physicality

Commitment to, and pleasure in, working deeply in the muscles and in using space. Use of energy appropriate to the movement.

4 Musicality

Having an accurate rhythmic understanding together with a sense of phrasing; that is, the ability to use music to shape the dynamic of movement.

5 Stamina

The ability to sustain movement through concentration and efficient use of energy within the context of long movement phrases both fast and slow; to sustain that energy and concentration throughout the class and throughout the week and term as a whole.

6 Elevation

Having the technique and strength to jump with ease and land with control.

7 Quantifiable Commitment

Motivation; that is, the ability to bring both a positive energy and curiosity to the class, fully and consistently participating in the work.

8 Overall Progress

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List of Abbreviations

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Impulse	The International Journal of Dance Science, Medicine, and Education
IOTPD	International Organisation for the Transition of Professional Dancers
ISSTIP	International Society for Study of Tension in Performance
JOPERD	Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
NDTA	National Dance Teachers' Association

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