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How to teach a demanding repertory

The beginning of this season I taught repertory for the graduation class in Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance. The piece contains very demanding material. The physical condition of the students must be very good because they have to endure 17 minutes of cardio movements and than few minutes slow motion and than 15 minutes slow partnering. It is difficult to explain the material especially if the technical level of the students are not quite there at the moment. Than it becomes a great challenge to make the students face their limitations, work on it and develop in just a few days. Most of the time they don't even realise how much they develop in such a short time just because they have the pressure of a performance at the end of the session.

- But even though they made a great progress I always wonder how could I do it better?
- How could i make it easier?
- How could I make the rehearsal more time efficient?
- How can I make sure they have the right physical condition to save them from injuries?
- How can I teach them the technical requirements for partnering in such a short time?
- How can I direct them from executing movements right to actually become the movement and become a performer with the right intensions and right concentration?

The LEAP session was for me like a personal coaching on how to communicate with my students. Teaching movement sometimes easier without talking. But teaching a choreography, a piece, with a specific concept is very difficult if I only want to show what and how to do it. After addressing my questions Eszter, Kerstin and Janka made me realise I need to become a motivational speaker. If students find their motivation to do it they will grow into it. They will

gain physical strength through doing the material, which will allow them to deepen their concentration.

What I realised I have to talk about with them before and during the rehearsals:

- Try to overcome physical tiredness by working with the concept of the piece: imagine you are the creature that moves that way and not a dancer executing some weird moves and tell them it will get easier with the time.

- I need to give them security that they can make mistakes and learn from them, they don't need to be perfect from the first rehearsal.

- Give leading roles: if a student is better in something make the others follow her/him.

- Give them a motivational speech about the they can do more than what they think they are capable. Often we limit ourselves by not believing we can do it. Pushing them to do it even they think they can not do can give them the joy of succeeding. If this is the case I need to show it myself that is possible or to show a video that is possible to do it.

- Cut out unnecessary movements and always go for the simpler choice.

- Work on timing: some things are easier faster or slower, find the right speed for the right technique.

- Always always always talk to them: tell them it will be hard, tell them it will be painful at the beginning, tell them they need to be patient, tell them to talk to me in order to find solutions.

I would like to thank Eszter and Kerstin to give me their time and thought on my subject and teaching me that communication is more important than the actual result.