

Title: *How We Stand is How We Dance: Beginning with Bones and Breath*

A Somatic Approach to Embodied Anatomy for Dancers

Lesson Plan: Suitable for all levels of training and ages with modifications

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Context for Learning: Functional Awareness is a somatic approach in embodied anatomy through reflective practice to enhance our understanding of movement function, facilitate ease in body action, and improve dynamic alignment. This lesson presents the concept that we can improve our dance skills with body mindfulness both in the studio and outside the classroom. The approach is reflective, exploratory, and honors individual difference using breath and anatomical visualization of bony landmarks.

Objectives/Outcomes

Students will:

1. Investigate personal habits of movement and discern their usefulness through a reflective practice that advocates objective, nonjudgmental observation
2. Develop cognitive and embodied understanding of anatomical terms such as Atlanto-occipital/AO joint,
3. Learn dynamic alignment cueing through active learning guided discovery in an environment accepting individual differences and bringing the notion of non-judgment to self assessment
4. Experience the affect of anatomical visualizations as a source for embodied change

Introduction of concepts: The dance studio can be a space that provides a moment to pause, and allow for breath. It can allow students to move toward self-discovery without judgment. This session is a lesson on coming into body/mind awareness, which leads to choice and thus freedom in action.

Icebreaker: on the topic Short discussion with class or in pairs: Brainstorm on habits that are useful and support whole health and habits that may not be useful.

Investigation of core concepts:

Exploration: Becoming Aware of Movement Habits

Try this experiment:

1. Clasp your hands together with all the fingers crossed.
 - a. Notice which thumb is on top. Is it your writing hand or your non-dominant hand?
 - b. Open your hands and close them quickly and unconsciously. Does the same arrangement in your thumbs and hand arise?
 - c. Now release your hands and reweave your fingers to place the other thumb on top. How comfortable or uncomfortable is this? Does it take a little more time for your brain to tell your body how to place your hands in this way? Note the information. Be curious.
2. Try the same activity with your arms crossed.
3. Try the same activity with legs crossed

Your Findings and Why They Matter: Life expectancy for someone born in the year 2000 is almost twice as long as someone born in 1900. Life is long. Mindfulness in body/mind balance can support the journey.

Exploring Embodied Anatomy: Observe standing habit and preferences in standing & how your shoes wear out.

Tripod of the foot: Explorations in 4RS (recognize, release, recruit, and restore) and applied practice to dance class

Balance of the head at the AO joint: Body Mapping, explorations in the 4Rs, applied practice in dance class

Pair and Share with a Partner:

Conclusion: Class discussion to review concepts

1. The influence of Functional Awareness on dance training
2. The influence of Functional Awareness on movement in daily life

FA® reflective practice entitled: Beach Glass and Shells