

## Lesson Plan & Reasonings for Teaching Dance to Adult Beginners

When teaching dance to adults with little training it is important to design a curriculum that will promote successful skill acquisition. Pride is a much more prominent attribute in adults and can inhibit learning if not address properly. When teaching a kick to the side to adult beginners I would use demonstrations, touch, verbal instructions and cues as well as transferring the skill to the floor.

I would start with the adults supine on the floor with their eyes closed delivering verbal instructions of moving one leg along the pattern of the desired kick. Starting on the floor decreases the chance of injury and allows the movers time to get the kicking pattern into their body before adding gravity. Furthermore, by starting with a more exploratory approach the mover's do not have a sense of right and wrong and are not held back by a demonstration.

After the movers became comfortable on both sides on the floor I would have them stand and watch a demonstration of the kick adding the element of verbal instruction to what they are seeing. By explaining while demonstrating I am able to better control the perception of the mover while they observe. This combination keeps them focused on the main components of the kick (Magill & Anderson, 2013). It is important that the demonstration be correct (Magill & Anderson, 2013), as adults can perceive more than the younger student.

Following the demonstration, I would allow individual time to work on the skill using the mirror. I would facilitate this process by giving individual feedback as I see needed. This time allows the mover to problem solve and figure out the application of the skill on their own body (Magill & Anderson, 2013). There is less performance-based pressure on the student and they are able to observe other novices practicing, which is a useful tool for beginners (Magill & Anderson, 2013).

Once the movers feel more comfortable with the movement I would pair them up and have them work together in viewing and critiquing their newfound skill. The couples can actively engage in the learning process (Magill & Anderson, 2013) as I give them verbal cues of what to look for and work on, such as "keeping their hip down," "grounding the supporting foot," or "keeping the upper body level." I would encourage them to take a hands on approach. For example by resting their hands on their partner's shoulders to help stabilize the upper body, as touch helps create change.

After the partner work I would expect the movers to be more confident with their skill and be able to perform the skill alone with verbal cues from an instructor. Typical dance classes start with this method, but by prolonging it I think it promotes a healthier learning process and

increases confidence of the mover while decreasing the chances of the adult mover shutting down during the class.

As we age it is much easier for us to get discouraged when we fail. We have developed pride and that can hurt us as learners because, unlike children, we feel that we are at a higher-level at all times. To be a beginner is a vulnerable place because we must admit that we are lacking in knowledge. By gradually integrating elements of a new skill into the learning process educators can work around pride by having the student establish a baseline to build on throughout the class.

#### Reference

Magill, D., & Anderson, D. (2013). *Motor learning and control: Concepts and applications* (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.