

Teaching

Teaching Philosophies:

1. Seeing students as human and spiritual beings first, dancers second
 - a. Our students are dancers, but they are also young adults, sons, daughters, siblings, boyfriends, girlfriends, wives, husbands, co-workers, friends, employees, disciples, and a host of other possible titles. The BYU mission statement includes the words “working toward the balanced development of the total person.” Yes, dance is included in that total person, but it is not the entirety of that person.
2. Teaching correct and anatomically sound ballet technique
 - a. Regardless of level, ballet technique should be taught correctly. This will take patience, but in reality, “the slow way is the fast way.” Details cannot be overlooked, steps cannot be skipped, and there are no shortcuts. It is an intricate art form that demands exactness. Ballet vocabulary and curriculum have evolved from many different methodologies and being well versed in multiple schools of thought will enrich a student's education.
3. Fostering artistry through studio experience and performance opportunities
 - a. Ballet is a performing art. In the case of our company students, their artistry is fostered both in the studio and on the stage. However, if we have students who do not have stage performance opportunities, performance in the classroom is essential to the full ballet experience.
4. Creating a classroom/studio that is a safe environment for exploration, vulnerability, and finding joy. This includes replacing perfection with healthy striving.
 - a. Our classrooms and studios are lab spaces where our students should be able to experiment, create, and make mistakes in an effort to grow as artists. Brene Brown said “Understanding the difference between healthy striving and perfectionism is critical to laying down the shield and picking up your life. Research shows that perfectionism hampers success. In fact, it's often the path to depression, anxiety, addiction, and life paralysis.”
5. Meeting each individual student at their current stage of development, with the expectation of achieving their highest potential.
 - a. A professional career is the ultimate goal for many of our advanced dancers. In order to achieve that goal however, they will go through many phases of development. Our job is not to point out how far they are from becoming a professional dancer. Our job as teachers and mentors is to meet them where they are and help them progress further.

Some will grow faster than others, but if nourished correctly, they will all grow and progress.

- b. While my ballet company dancers are critically important, I am equally dedicated to all of my students. I have many dancers from other companies within the department. I have dancers who are not dance majors, but consistently take ballet at BYU. In my classroom, each one of these students is seen, valued, and given my attention. Of course we have high hopes of our dance majors contributing to the arts. But in reality, any student in our dance classes (major or non, company member or not) should be approached with dance being an important element of their progress at BYU and as a lifelong learner and potential arts patron.
6. Allowing for the spirit to co-teach and direct
 - a. I unashamedly rely on the spirit to co-teach with me. Of course, I prepare, I work, I do everything within my power to be ready for each class. But on a daily basis, I ask for and receive guidance and assistance for how I teach, what I say, and how I direct.

Teaching Strengths:

1. Organization
 - a. In both technique and lecture based classes, I come to class prepared with a detailed lesson plan centered around specific goals for each class and the overall semester.
 - b. In lecture based classes, all lectures, slide presentations, scheduling, and assessments are presented in an organized manner.
2. Faculty/student relationship
 - a. I operate my classroom/rehearsal space from a place of balancing high expectations with high support, and blending passion with persistence. Within this balance, I have found a high level of success in my ability to connect with students on both professional and personal levels..
3. Mentorship
 - a. Mentorship goes beyond teaching a set of skills. It includes establishing trust and respect, the ability to guide and direct focus, and assist individuals with decisions and/or problem solving.
 - b. As a director of Theatre Ballet (and TBSC in previous years), I work intimately with our dancers on a daily basis for consecutive years, providing mentorship both inside and outside of the studio/theater setting. We build relationships based on hard work, dedication, perseverance, vulnerability, and excellence.
4. Seasoned teaching experience
 - a. While I am new to full time responsibilities at BYU, I am not new to teaching. Having taught for nearly 30 years, I bring experience, expertise, & fine tuned detail to the craft of teaching ballet.

Outlined Steps to Improve Teaching:

1. Attend 4Pointe Levels 1 & 2 Teacher Training Courses and begin implementation (Dance 490 & Dance 498)
 - a. Level 1 training completed and certification passed (May 2024).
2. Peer-reviewed teaching
3. Field study
 - a. Groundwork for 2025 European Field Study (June 2024)
 - i. Assist in research, scouting, and early scaffolding of 2025 European Field Study.
 - b. Faculty representative for 2025 European Field Study (Summer 2025)
4. Read *The Courage to Teach* (Palmer)
5. Groundwork for initial teaching of Dance 460 (Sp 24)
 - a. Course redesign to include: consulting with other dance educators (within the state of Utah) to gain an understanding of what is being taught in the field of Dance History at other universities, researching & identifying a new textbook and other additional readings, exploring options for innovative learning opportunities (interactive timeline software), formulating all new lectures (including Google Slide presentations & required viewings), creating all new assignments and exams, mentoring a student Teaching Assistant.
6. Initial teaching of Dance 460 (Sp 24)
7. Second time teaching Dance 460 (F 24)
 - a. After examination and evaluation of Dance 460 (Sp 24), implement changes for course improvement
8. Collaborate with educators at other universities (focused in Utah) to identify what is being taught in the field of dance history (initial meeting with Angie Banchemo (UVU) 4/2/24) (Dance 460)
9. Collaborate with BYU faculty to identify key names/dates/events/pieces of choreography within specific genres of dance (Dance 460)
10. Read Grit (Duckworth) & focus on a company culture of healthy grit (Dance 490 & Dance 498)
 - a. Balance of high expectations and high support, blend of passion and persistence.

Citizenship Development Project

Citizenship Strengths:

1. Dependability
 - a. Can be counted on to attend meetings and fulfill assignments within the Department of Dance and Ballet Area.
2. Amicability
 - a. I approach conflict or disagreement with courtesy, open mindedness, and the intent to reach a harmonious solution.
3. Community minded
 - a. Both at work and in my personal life, I am committed to the greater good of the community at large. This includes service, sacrifice, and working together towards a common goal in an altruistic manner.
4. Driven by task completion
 - a. Whether on my own, or in a group, I am highly driven to complete tasks that are available for pursuit.

Outlined Steps to Improve Citizenship:

1. Explore & identify a campus organization to join
 - a. Begin exploration at the New Faculty Series
2. Dance History collaboration group with dance history educators from across the state of Utah
 - a. Initial meeting with Angie Banchemo (4/2/24)
3. Committee Work within the Department of Dance
 - a. Performance Council
 - b. BFA Committee
 - c. Recruitment Committee
 - d. Student Funding Committee
 - e. Student Scholarship Committee
 - f. Faculty Search Committee
4. Explore & identify a regional or national dance educator organization to join
 - a. CORPS de Ballet International
 - i. Professional non-profit Corporation dedicated to the development, exploration, and advancement of ballet in higher education and to the service and promotion of the art of ballet.
 - b. NDEO (National Dance Education Organization)
 - i. NDEO is a non-profit organization that supports dance educators in every setting and genre. They are dedicated to advancing dance education for people of all backgrounds.
5. Strengthen relationships with colleagues

- a. Due to the relatively small size (both faculty & students) of the Department of Dance, there is a high level of expectation surrounding citizenship. As faculty, we work closely with one another on committees and towards performance goals.
- b. As a new full time faculty member, I aim to familiarize myself with my colleagues' directorships, areas of research, and strengths with the intent of opening avenues for collaboration and partnership.

Addressing Equity in the Classroom

1. Within the Ballet Area, our students are predominantly female. As such, I have an important opportunity to model an example of female leadership.
2. In lecture based classes, I will be deliberate in providing examples in the arts of women and individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Particularly in Dance History, seeking out the history and voices of females and individuals of color, is critical to advancing marginalized roles in what has been a historically heavily white male dominated field.
3. Attend campus lectures on diversity and inclusion.

Scholarship Development Project

Scholarship Strengths:

1. Actively engaged in ballet pedagogy continuing education
2. Initial contacts made for potential collaboration/research in Dance Psychology at Faculty Spring Seminar. High and promising level of interest.
3. Extensive experience with corps de ballet work and coaching of soloists.
4. Experience with restaging/reconstruction of classical ballets.
5. Experience as artistic director/co-director of TBSC (2021-2024).
 - a. Significant growth in the technical and artistic levels of TBSC dancers.
 - b. Substantial improvement in retention of TBSC dancers, and promotion of TBSC dancers to Theatre Ballet.
 - c. Reduction of the technique ability disparity between TBSC and Theatre Ballet dancers has allowed for TBSC to participate more frequently in Theatre Ballet productions. This increase in available dancers allows for larger scale productions.

Outlined Steps to Improve Scholarship:

1. Restaging and preservation of the classical ballet repertoire
 - a. Restaging is time intensive, detail oriented, and nuanced. Exposure to classical ballets during their college years is essential to our students' success. The classical ballet vocabulary is directly linked to classical ballet works.
 - b. Restaging of *La Sylphide* for TBSC (April 3-5, 2024)
 - i. Including extensive research and teaching dancers in the Bournonville style of the Romantic ballet era.
 - c. Restaging of *Giselle* for Theatre Ballet (Feb. 19-22, 2025)
2. Artist directorship of Theatre Ballet (24-25 Season)
 - a. Co-director: Ashley Parov
 - b. Performance:
 - i. World of Dance (Sept. 19-21, 2024)
 - ii. TBSC Performance; TB performing *Italian Suite* (Nov. 7-9, 2024)
 - iii. *Giselle* (Feb. 19-22, 2025)
 - iv. Emerging Works; TB performing *Serenade* (March 27-29, 2024)
3. Continued research in ballet pedagogy
 - a. The act of teaching is both an art and a science. It is handed down generation to generation in verbal, written, and experiential format. The study of various methods of ballet pedagogy is critical to the success of our students' classical technique. This classical technique can then be seamlessly modified and converted into contemporary choreography.
4. Continued research in dance history

- a. As an undergraduate history major, dance history is one of my great interests. As with many other areas of history, dance history is currently undergoing a period of rediscovery, acknowledgement of past oversights or errors, and the need for greater inclusion. Progress and evolution is necessary in order for dance to survive. By looking at historical trends, we can help shape the future of dance. As stated by dance activist Phil Chan, we should be “finding a line between honoring history and tradition, while looking forward toward the future, and in the process, staging creative, engaging, and living art that impacts people positively today.”
5. Initial research in Dance Psychology
- a. Upon an initial assessment of BYU’s Department of Dance (and within that, the Ballet Area), it became apparent that the study of Dance Psychology is vital, yet lacking in formal exploration and research. Today’s dancers (including BYU students) are facing increasingly demanding physical and mental expectations. Similar to other athletes, elite dancers’ psychological well-being plays a significant role in their mental state, motivation, proneness to injury, overall health, and performance quality. Dancers deal with a unique set of pressures and requirements that requires specialized knowledge in psychology that is relevant to them. I intend to begin exploring Dance Psychology for the benefit of not only BYU students, but dancers in the world at large.
 - b. Read:
 - i. *More than a Body* (by Kite & Kite)
 - ii. *Dance Psychology for Artistic & Performance Excellence* (by Taylor & Estanol)
 - iii. *Dance Psychology* (by Lovatt)
 - iv. *Grit* (by Duckworth)
 - c. Identify potential collaborators for Dance Psychology through Faculty Center
 - i. Contacts made at Spring Seminar:
 1. Adriane Cavallini (Psychology; eating disorders & body image concerns)
 2. Karen Della Corte (Nutrition, Dietetics & Food Science)
 3. Lindsay Regehr (Student Life; body & eating concerns)
 - d. Gather initial data on areas of Dance Psychology research that would benefit the overall health and well being of BYU students.