AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMON CORRECTIONS FOR BALLET DANCERS

The following pages contain both technical and artistic corrections that are common for ballet dancers. As a teacher, being mindful of these corrections throughout your teaching will help your students develop into technicians and artists. Your role is to introduce dancers to think intelligently about the steps they are executing so that they can then lead and prompt themselves as they mature.

Ballet is a process of building one step, one thought upon another so you will notice that underneath each step there is a progression in the complexity of technical and artistic corrections. The younger the student and/or the level the simpler the corrections are. As you progress you will want to focus on developing these common corrections into their dancing. Have fun and watch the amazing progression!

POSITIONS OF FEET

- **Carla graphics**

POSITIONS OF ARMS

- **Carla graphics**

ARABESQUE POSITIONS

- **Carla? Graphics**

8 BODY FACINGS

- **Carla? Graphics**

WALLS AND CORNERS

- **Carla? Graphics**

BARRE WORK

RELATIONSHIP TO THE BARRE - TWO HANDS

- Use when introducing steps to younger students, pre ballet should always face the barre
- Why face the barre? Because foundational concepts are easier to learn and apply. For example: square hips, no twisting, elbows lifted
- Teach students what is the appropriate relationship to the ballet barre
- Teach students that hands should rest gently on the barre rather than gripping
- Hands should be placed on the barre in the same relationship as 1st position - hands are not outside of shoulders or smooshed together
- Elbows gently lifted and placed slightly in front of the rib cage with head straight forward
- Watch out for leaning on the barre thus bringing shoulders forward
- Watch out for students who look down at the floor. Use imaginary such as: “there is a tv on the wall in front of you and you are watching yourself dance”

RELATIONSHIP TO THE BARRE - ONE HAND

- Introduce 1 hand on the barre for students who are 8 and up and/or not entirely beginners
- At any age or level if students are having difficulty with a step at the barre take it back to the basics - 2 hands on the barre
- Heads always begin and finishes over the shoulder, chin slightly lifted
- Always begin with left hand on the barre as this is proper ballet etiquette
- Teach students to turn toward the barre from one side to the next as this is proper ballet etiquette
- Teach appropriate distance and relationship to the barre - not too close and not too far
- Talk about hand and elbow placement in relation to rib cage
- Talk about the hand moving forward and back slightly when weight shifts from one foot to another
- No gripping fingers
- Elbows gently lifted
- Watch out that students do not become too distracted by the mirror and twist open hips or forget to use their heads in the combination
- Be mindful of twisting in the hips in work to a la seconde

PLIE - TO BEND

- Heels remain on the floor in all positions in demi plié
- Diamonds are a visual cue in every demi plié
- For younger levels use the imagery of a piece of toast going into a toaster - young students inclination will be to lean forward and let their bottoms stick out
- In beginning to intermediate dancers 8 years old and older introduce the concept of a NEUTRAL PELVIS
- Knees remain over toes
- Watch that their weight in pliés remains equally distributed between both feet
- In grand plié clarify that their heels naturally release from floor in all positions but 2nd
- In 2nd position grand plié heels remain down and they descend with their bottoms ever so slightly above their knees
- Work on arm coordination and timing with plies
- Equal turn out in all positions
- Teach students how to count demi and grand plies both as 4/4 and ¾ tempo
- Be sure that at the ending of their pliés their knees are fully pulled up and engaged in both quads and hamstrings

- As students mature teach fluid and smooth movement with no stops through positions
- Watch the tendu transitions between 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th positions
- Advanced levels work on the lift off of the transversus plane prior to descent
- Older levels work on dynamic eye line, carriage of the arms with artistry

TENDU - TO STRETCH

- Knees straight and pulled up (knee caps up)
- Pre Ballet teach point and close (do not work on breaking down the foot until ½ way through Level 1)
- Level 2 and up focus on the break down of the foot - their ankles, metatarsals, toes
- Introduce the concept of midline - aka sagittal plane. Draw an imaginary line down the body
- Focus on Rectangle - shoulder/shoulder/hip/hip - stays still as the leg moves out and in
- Be mindful that rolling is common on the standing leg - watch out!
- Tendu a la seconde
    - Clarify what side is - a good image is “follow your skis” or “laser beams” out your toes.
    - Everyone has their own turn out and “side”
    - Remind them that their hips must remain square to the front
- Tendu Devant
    - Toes line up with the midline of the arch of standing leg
    - Lead with the heel on the way out and pull in with the toes on the way back
- Tend Derriére
    - Toes line up with the heel of the supporting foot
    - Lead with the toes on the way out and initiate pull in with the heel
- Eventually introduce musicality by teaching combinations with accents in and accents out
- Dynamic Focus - teaching students where to look with each tendu in the upper levels as they coordinate with the arms
- Level 2 and up focus on coordinating arms with the tendu combinations
- Review Rule about closing 5th in tendus a la seconde
    - Even number of tendus - close where you came from
    - Odd number of tendus - close where you are going

DEGAGE - TO DISENGAGE

- <u>Everything applied to TENDU applies here</u>

- This step is also called Battement Tendu Jeté because you are throwing the leg 2” of ground and beating the upper thighs as you close. This beating action is difficult to see in younger levels but as dancers mature technically this beating should become clear.

- For younger students teach that the step passes through tendu and lifts 2” and returns through tendu

- Teach staccato movement

PIQUE - TO PRICK

- Teach the movement takes place from the hip joint

- Knee stays absolutely straight

- Toes do not give in as the leg pricks

- Accent up and hits 2”

EN CLOCHE - LIKE A BELL

- Step passes through 1st position with heel down (not bearing weight though)

- Teach movement from the hip joint while the legs stays absolutely straight

- Thighs brush at the top as the leg passes through 1st position

- Upper body remains quite and does not swing with the like

- Step can be done 2” in degage or in RDJ and Grand Battement at 45 or 90 degrees or full extension

PAS DE CHEVAL - STEP OF THE HORSE

- Pass through demi and coupe on the way out

- Watch out to the back that the foot doesn't sickle when it picks up to go to coupé

- Height to 2” or 45”

- Accent out

- Stress the over curve

DEMI POINTE

- Instruct students how to spread toes rather than knuckle them - absolutely critical that this is taught at the beginning or this will become a difficult habit to break

- Help students find their individual demi pointe - every foot is unique!

- Watch for students who sickle on demi pointe by putting too much weight in their pinky toe

- In early training have students hold the barre for all balances to establish a high demi pointe and strong calf muscle

ELEVÉ - TO ELEVATE

- Emphasize spreading the toes on high demi pointe

- This is a great position to have new dancers hold at the top so they can strengthen calves and find their highest demi pointe
- This is also a great step to introduce accents up or accents down
- Watch that dancers hold onto their turn out as they descend back to the floor. It is common for turn out to be lost on the way down and as a result their positions will open and be sloppy
- Focus on lifting above the transverse plane and pressing down like “roots growing under the ground” below the transverse plane with each relevé

RELEVÉ - TO RISE

- Apply the same corrections from elevé
- Emphasize the use and coordination of their demi plie in this movement
- Heels fully on the ground
- Do not “pop” the heels

ROND DE JAMBE - ROUND OF THE LEG

- Quiet hips at all times
- Teach students that the action takes place in the ball and socket joint of hip
- Introduce students to the concept of outside and inside: (en dehor and en dedan)
- En Dehor - the working leg is moving away from the supporting leg “out the door”
- En Dedan - the working leg is moving towards the standing leg
- Teach students to “ring the bell” both devant and derriére
- Heel down when passing through first position though it does not bear weight
- Accent hits second
- Teach dancers to initiate en dehor with the heel from 1st position
- Teach dancers to initiate en dedan with the pinky toe from 1st position
- Double RDJ is 2 circles in the hip in the count of 1
- RDJ can be done on the ground, in the air at 45 and 90 or at full extension

ROND DE JAMBE A LA SECONDE EN L'AIR - CIRCLE OF THE LEG TO THE SIDE IN THE AIR

- Action takes place in the knee joint
- Teach at 45 degrees before moving to 90 degrees
- Upper thigh remains quiet and turned out
- En Dehor - lower leg from knee down comes straight in and circles outward/forward

- En Dedan - lower leg from knee down moves forward and then to retiré returning directly to the side
- Quality of movement should be like pushing through water
- Accent is out
- Watch that dancers do not twist hips and knee
- Teach students that the leg does not move from knee behind the frontal plane

GRAND BATTEMENT - LARGE BEAT

- Accent up
- Controlled (but not slow) descent
- Begin with a focus on clean technique and not height
- Teaching the position of tendu on the way up and down for beginners
- Teach students to initiate by pushing down through the floor to power the upward throw
- Watch out that the standing leg is not compromised and the knee buckles
- Maintain turn out at height of battement in both the working leg and standing leg
- Between each battement be sure that body weight is distributed equally on two feet
- Watch that students do not flex their ankle in the battement but rather pass through tendu and degagé with a pointed foot

FRAPPÉ - TO STRIKE

- Begin first with Cecchetti and only introduce Vaganova in Intermediate/Advanced levels
- Introduce frappé to beginner students as bug squishes -this introduces the action of the ankle flexing and relaxing ankle joint
- Devant - lead with heel and hold knee back on the way out and then quickly bring knee back open to the side
- Derrière - lead with toe and hold knee open on the way out and then quickly return with inner thigh and heel
- Accent is always out
- Emphasis holding out
- Eventually teach on relevé
- Double frappe - two beats at the ankle before a strike
- Triple frappe - three beats at the ankle before a strike

FONDU - TO MELT

- Begin by teaching to tendu a terre
- Instruct action that the knees straighten at the same time
- Emphasize fully straightening working leg
- Practice same rules for initiating movement to the front and back as you taught in tendu or devloppé
- Once action is clear move to 45 degree and then 90
- Finally in intermediate and advanced levels add relevé

ADAGIO - SLOW MOVEMENT

- The purpose of adagio is to teach students to move fluid and slow while also developing strength
- Be specific with counts and require dancers to hold 1 count out to build strength
- Coordinate arms with leg movement
- Pay close attention to supporting leg weight
- Watch that the supporting leg doesn't buckle
- Challenge dancers to let go of the barre both on flat and relevé - In their effort to get the leg up are they compromising weight placement?
- Adagio at the barre is a place to build extension, strength and artistry

PENCHÉ

- Students must have a strong 90 degree arabesque to move on to this step
- Teach that the tip is happening in 90 degree arabesque at the supporting leg hip joint
- Teach arm in 1st arabesque in center - needs to stay in alignment with nose/shoulder - it will want to wander outside of plane
- At the bottom of their penché coach them to be mindful NOT to release their upper back
- Begin the upward ascent with lower back
- Begin the penché first by lifting the body more in arabesque before tipping in hip

PAS DE BOURRÉE

- Best to teach either at the barre or with all students facing the mirror
- Teach as a triplet
- Begin with dessous - under
- Coupé is clear then the tight upper thighs on second step
- Best to introduce as a single step finishing in plié 5th position

PETIT BATTEMENT

- Teach the isolation of movement from knee
- Upper thigh stays quiet and turned out
- Teach slowly to begin so that they understand the movement as a hinge action in the knee not a swinging action of the thigh
- Heel should always remain forward slightly
- Watch that the coupé positions are accurately touched both front and back
- Watch for sickling feet

PETIT BATTU

- Many of the same corrections from petit battement apply
- There should be a clear sound that comes from the beating of the working leg to the instep of supporting foot
- Can introduce Vaganova BATTU which is above ankle bone in Intermediate and Advanced
- Action is from the knee not the foot

SERRÉ

-

SUR LE COU DE PIED - ON THE NAPE OF THE NECK

- Wrap foot fully around standing leg ankle
- This is a great step to counter the tendency in young beginners to sickle
- This position can help them begin to work on shaping and winging the foot

COUPÉ - TO CUT

- Teach Cecchetti in the beginning and then introduce in level 4 Vaganova
- Devant placement - working toe is attached just above standing ankle joint
- Derriére placement - Achilles tendon of working leg is attached to Achilles tendon of standing leg
- Wing foot
- Watch out for sickling
- Teach connective tissue - the process of moving through demi pointe from 5th to the coupé position - peel the foot

SOU SOUS - OVER UNDER

- Equal turn out from both legs
- Demi pointes in line with one another

- There is no space between the ankles
- Upper thighs engaged and crossed
- This position is great to teach balance and the idea that there is energy in this and it isn't static
- Emphasis slight winging of ankles as they become more advanced

RETIRÉ - TO WITHDRAW

- Retiré devant position - working toe touches in the dimple of the supporting knee
- Retiré derrriére position - working side of big toe is touching the back of the knee - not overcrossed pr disconnected
- Action of bending knee is from the hamstring
- Action of flexing hip is from the quad
- Teach that hips remain level
- Remind students of their rectangle and rib placement
- Position should look like a letter p and could place something on the thigh and it remains level and still
- Connective Tissue - emphasis that students travel up through coupé and return through coupé

PASSÉ - TO PASS

- All corrections from retiré apply
- Teach the difference of this step is that it is a fluid movement passing from front to back or back to front

DEVELOPPÉ - TO DEVELOP

- Devant - lead action out from retire with the initiation of the toes
- Derriére - lead the action out from retiré with the notion from the knee pressing back
- Be sure that dancers extend leg completely - hold/stop briefly
- Watch out for buckling in the standing leg
- Emphasis 90 degrees first
- No compromising for extension - continue with posture, placement, turn out always

ENVELOPPÉ - TO ENVELOP OR ENFOLD

- Same as comments above in developpé
- Enveloppé devant - lead back to RETIRÉ by lifting upper thigh and pulling knee open
- Enveloppé derrière - lead back to retiré by initiating with the heal while holding upper thigh back

CAMBRÉ - TO ARCH

- Isolate the bend back from the upper back - just under scapula
- Shoulders remain level
- Sternum bone presents upward diagonally
- Very important to emphasis upward lift before beginning the movement

SOUTENU - SUSTAINED TURN

- First clarify and review technique and artistry of sou sous
- Teach half soutenu at the barre first - turning from left to right or right to left
- When working at the barre on ½ turn draw attention how one foot replaces the other as the front leg
- Begin teaching a full soutenu by pointing out the foot placement of ½ soutenu and pointing out how the second ½ of the turn the feet stay as they are and the weight pivots back front by slightly shifting to back foot
- Teach correct preparation of tendu devant in plié - rdj to a la seconde - pique to sou sous
- Teach correct ending with dancer finishing soutenu in plie devant with weight on standing leg
- Coordinate arm placement - begin with hands on shoulder and eventually teach prep 3rd to 2nd - 1st
- Clarify spotting - in the beginning it is best to teach this flat to the wall rather than diagonal so that they can understand that the turn begins and ends with their head over their shoulder to the side wall while their rectangle and leg begin to the front wall
- This step is foundational as it later becomes linked to many other steps therefore spend time helping them execute this well because it will pay off in other steps

PAS DE POULÉT - STEP OF THE CHICKEN

- This is an exercise for dancers in intermediate/advanced levels
- Keep weight on standing leg when they battement side
- Release hip flexors in squiggle
- Throw leg freely a la seconde
- Watch that the supporting leg does not torc at the knee
- Watch the the foot remains pointed always - the temptation is to release the ankle at the height of the throw
- This is a swing and release of the working hip joint

FOUETTÉS

- Begin the process of foutté turns at the barre
- Begin with en dehor

- Begin by coaching relevé to retiré to plié devant - staying in plié RDJ-whip leg to a la secondé while staying in plié return to retiré devant without the turn
- Watch out that they do not pass a la secondé
- Work coordination of arm with leg
- Spotting is absolutely necessary
- Eventually add turn

A TERRE - ON THE GROUND

- Movements done by the working leg in which the toes stay in direct contact with the floor

EN L'AIR - IN THE AIR

- Movements done by the working leg in which the toes are 2", 45 or 90 degrees above the floor
- Often in the beginning, common steps like RDJ are taught en l' air first at 45 degrees and then brought to 90

ARABESQUE

- Shoulders should remain level and fairly equal in relationship to one another
- Working leg hip should open only ever so slightly when 45 and higher - the imagery of peeling a sticker of the wall ever so slightly
- Both sides of the back should work equally to lift leg
- Ribs should remain within their rectangle
- Help students find where there most bendable vertebra/place in the back is by doing bridges
- Standing leg should be engage at the insertion of the hamstring to pelvic bone - turn out muscles remain on even though the standing foot may not be flat turned out
- Instruct 90 degrees - foot is in line with top of lower back
- Bring clarity around arabesque positions by clarifying arm positions as they relate to the standing leg
- Watch that their foot remains completely pointed - often because the leg is behind them they lose connection and awareness to the foot
- Watch that the working knee remains engaged and pulled up - they may lose this feeling when the leg is behind them
- Sternum bone has the feeling of reaching toward the sun
- Standing leg kneecap needs to be pulled up- not sagging and relaxed
- Weight placed on instep/ball of foot not the heel
- Work on rotation of both legs and what that means for each student individually

ATTITUDE

- Note corrections above in arabesque- many basics apply to attitude
- For attitude devant be sure to instruct that the leg is held by the lower abdominal muscles
- For attitude devant be sure that the heel remains lifted - like holding a cup of tea up on their inside of their foot
- For devant watch that their standing leg does not buckle and compromise being straight
- For devant watch that their lower back doesn't buckle
- For derrière work on rotation of thigh on the working leg as well as the shape of the foot to complete line
- For derrière watch for a drooping knee
- As noted above in arabesque - really watch out for ribcage displacement to the opposite side or working leg

CENTER WORK

BALLET WALKS

- Pointed toes and stretched knees
- Each step should gently brush pass the ankle of the other leg
- Use imagery - like princess with glass slippers, little puddles they step over to avoid getting their slippers wet
- Step onto the ball of the foot - weight completely on ball of the foot
- This is a great time to incorporate work on ballet arms and fingers

FLAMINGO WALK

- Hands on hips or shoulders
- Use imagery - like a book on their head that doesn’t fall off, a flamingo, a giraffe
- Watch that the they are on their highest demi pointe with toes spread and not pronating to pinky toe
- Remind them to lift up and off their hips by using the lift of the core off of the transversus plane

PROMENADE - TO WALK THE PROMENADE

- Begin teaching this in retiré
- Instruct that the standing knee remains pulled up and straight always
- It is a gentle pump of the heel but never a bending of the knee
- Begin by teaching en dehor

- When teaching en dedan promenade be sure they initiate promenade from inner thigh/heel verses the position (such as arabesque) moving first

PORT DE BRA - CARRIAGE OF THE ARMS

- For beginner students teaching fingers on shoulders sets them up for engaging latissimus dorsi, not dropping elbows, relaxing fingers and wrists
- Elbows lifted in second - marble running down shoulders
- Butterfly fingers, 1st and 3rd finger touch
- Shoulders down by emphasizing engagement of the core transversus abdominis muscle
- Elbows lifted in 1st, fingers level with sternum
- Pinky in line with mid thigh in 5th en bas
- Teach intermediate and advanced students the importance of timing and coordination with legs

PAS DE BASQUE

- Begin by breaking the step down into the following concepts:
    - croisé devant
    - RDJ the leg to a la seconde while keeping hips quiet to the croisé corner
    - then spring/shift weight to opposite leg facing opposite corner
    - working leg to coupé Devant
    - chassé or step forward to croisé tendu derrière
- Teach this first with hands on hip first then add arms - outside Demi port de bra finishing in an arabesque line
- Musicality is important once the basic step is learned - the 1 (downbeat) is actually on the spring to the opposite leg

TEMP LIÉ - CONNECTED MOVEMENT

- ‘Rocking Horse Step’ working on transfer of weight and standing up straight
- Teach this first in 1st position to 2nd before introducing temps lié through 4th position
- Watch that students stay on standing leg when they tendu a la seconde
- Students should transfer their weight entirely in the middle of two feet in demi seconde
- Students should completely transfer weight to one foot on other side - note that they may keep some weight on their working leg toes if their standing leg weight is on the heel

TOMBÉ - TO FALL

- For pre ballet and beginners teach by doing it with them and having them copy you - only after this begin to correct and talk about the technique
- Fall out and away from center midline - not underneath self
- Back leg should fully straighten to tendu or degage line on tombé en avant - the opposite is true for tombé en arrière

- Pas de bourrée should see sou sous first and apply the quickness of a triplet
- Can finish this step in plié 5th position or in sou sous

BALANCÉ - (like a rocking step)

- Be certain that students understand that this is different than waltz - it is a down up down vs. down up up
- Teach pre ballet and beginners by having them copy and follow you rather than trying to explain the technique and steps
- Teach students balance de côté first then introduce en avant, en arrière, and en tournant

WALTZ - (like a triplet)

- Teach in parallel first
- Clap the ¾ rhythm and emphasize the HEAVY down beat on 1
- Tip: sometimes RDJ ¾ is a better tempo in for beginners as often center waltz music on CD's can be too fast
- Leave hands on hips and/or shoulders when teaching beginners
- After students are clear on the down up up in parallel add a brush on the downbeat (like kicking a soccer ball) without turning
- Finally add en tournant
- Teach clearly the following:
    - brush devant
    - two steps traveling en avant
    - brush derriére and two steps traveling en arrière
    - do not blur the steps with the turn but rather turn on the brush

PIROUETTE - TO WHIRL

- Teach spotting: *"your nose is the last thing to leave and first thing to arrive"*
- The standing leg needs to be fully straight and engaged - watch for half relevé and/or slightly bent knees
- Clean preparatory positions - 5th and 4th
- Teach beginner students to turn from 5th position first
- Watch out that students do not move the front foot out of 5th position as they press up for the turn
- For beginners/intermediate students teach 4th position double bent knee with weight centered (not shifted to front foot) - be mindful of the size of 4th (small)
- Ribs remain on top of hips rather than leaning away from retiré leg
- Hip is level not lifted
- Arms go with their turn and are engage from the back - typically in 1st position

- Emphasis the value of clean and clear ending positions to pirouettes - make them hold and demonstrate the finish

- **EN DEHOR -** coach students that en dehor turns are in relationship to the working leg turning away from the standing leg

- **EN DEDAN -** coach students that en dedan turns are in relationship to the working leg turning towards the standing leg

- For en dedan specifically - watch students standing leg turn out remains engaged at the top of the hip where the hamstring meets the pelvic bone otherwise students upper body will turn but their standing leg will be "left behind"

- Arrive in the retiré position in the first ¼ or the turn

PIQUÉ TURNS

- Step out - beyond the toes of the working leg - not under

- Step onto a straight leg (knee does not bend)

- Use standing leg to PUSH onto working piqué

- Leg in retiré quickly attaches to back of the knee

- Instruct preparation of tendu devant/RDJ a la seconde before stepping out

- Instruct coming down directly under yourself - passing through coupé and landing in plié tendu devant

STEP OVER

- Tombé step out is the first action so be sure they understand the proper technique of tombé

- Teach the working leg RDJ from derriére to a la seconde before stepping up onto a straight leg

- Spotting is key for accomplishing doubles/triples

- Retiré devant throughout the turn

- Teach the transitions between piqué turns to step overs

- Emphasis the ending position of a step over

CHAINES - CHAIN, TO LINK

- Instruct on flat holding 1st position

- Legs in a very tight 1st position on demi pointe

- Remind students of their rectangle/square hips

- Beginners can hold their arms on shoulders/hips then move to 1st position - watch that they don't open and close loosely throughout the turn

- Elbows remain lifted - students will be inclined to drop them

- Spotting is crucial and students will need to have an engage core to be able to relax and let their head spot while hold the position steady
- Chaines are two half steps put together - if students under rotate or over rotate a step they will not travel straight
- Knees stay stretched and pulled up so that students can feel turn from turn out
- Instruct students to maintain their highest demi pointe
- Clarify and instruct students in transitioning out of chaine turns to their final posé
- Transitioning out of chainé begins on the back half of the turn
- Chaines can begin with a chassé or a piqué
- Chaines can finish with a chassé or a piqué

MANÈGES - CIRCULAR

- For older advanced students to teach the principle of traveling in a circle
- Teach students to spot the outside shoulder of the dancer in front of them so that they keep the integrity of the circle
- Challenges spotting technique and students ability to find focus as the move the spot from place to place around the circle

GALLOP

- Don't "teach" this step - just DO it with them. This is a fundamental movement in all kids and they can copy. Trying to instruct only complicates it
- Helpful for rhythm
- Helpful for moving big in space
- All directions can be taught here - forward, backwards, sideways
- Once they understand gallop you can transition to chasse - (difference between pointed foot and heel step)

SKIP

- Don't "teach" this step - just DO it with them. This is a fundamental movement in all kids and they can copy. Trying to instruct only complicates it
- This lays down the foundations for "sauté passé" - which becomes a gallop and a skip
- Once students have the coordination of skip down encourage begin to instruct that they step with their toes rather than heels which is instinct

CHASSÉ - TO CHASE

- Opening and closing of the legs in a rhythm
- For pre ballet and beginners work on them to the front and to each side

- Clarify the difference between a gallop with pointed feet and a chassé - chassé moves through plié before the jump
- Chassé goes through plié - not a step
- Pointed feet in the air
- Connected thighs in the air like sou sous
- Eventually for advanced students this step can turn
- This is a primary transitional step for so many things in dance so take the time to refine technique

SPRING POINTES

- Excellent step for Pre Ballet and Beginners for coordination, musicality, patterns, and the introduction of repeated hops on 1 leg.
- Teach tendu devant - plie ct.1, sp ct. 2 - 6, plie ct. 7, straighten ct. 8 (repeat other leg)
- Instruct students to keep their weight on the ball of the foot of the standing leg
- Instruct that their leg devant is fully stretched and pointed like tendu
- Eventually students can begin face different walls and directions for this exercise
- Heels are always gently down when landing even on one foot
- Hips underneath (like toaster) and proper alignment of rib cage
- Keep watch that students knees remain over toes and that their arches/insteps are not rolling

SAUTÉ FROM 1st or 2nd

- For pre ballet and beginners introduce this step as a single - plié, sauté, plié, straighten then repeat
- Encourage students to fully stretch their legs and feet in the air
- Make sure heels touch the ground in every demi plié
- Look for diamonds in plié
- Encourage students to hold their arms gently - the extremes are either too loose like a monkey or to stiff and tight
- Eventually instruct sauté with both accents up and accents down - one works plié more and the latter the ankles

ECHAPPE - TO ESCAPE

- Instruct all the logical corrections - heels down, knees over toes, diamond in plie
- Students when closing 5th may want to overcross their landing
- Teach concept of UP/sou sous in the air and OUT/2nd position(like peanut butter jar analogy)

- When students land in 2nd positions they may roll in and lose turn out as well as pitch their upper body forward - keep watch for this and instruct alignment and correct technique
- Teach the coordination of the arms with the jump:
    - On the way up the arms move from 1st to 2nd
    - On the way in the arms hold 2nd and then return 5th en bas

CHANGEMENT - TO CHANGE

- Instruct all the logical corrections - heels down, knees over toes, diamond in plie
- Watch out for students who pop heels or scootch their toes to initiate jump
- Hips underneath (like toaster)
- Encourage the push and power of using toes
- Stretch knees in the air completely
- Watch that students do not overcross or undercross their 5th positions
- Hold rotators in air - this is new because they do not have the floor for “holding turn out”
- Accents can be both up and down depending on musicality

ASSEMBLÉ - TO ASSEMBLE

- When teaching beginners - straighten between every jump until they have the basics
- Encourage the downward action of brushing to throw leg à la seconde
- Both feet land in 5th simultaneously
- Keep upper body lifted not tipped forward
- Teach beginners with hands on hips/shoulder
- Teach them to assemble their upper thighs in the air
- Start with assemblé over - foot brushing from back to front then in intermediate and advance introduce assemblé under
- Introduce the concept of beat - back/front or front/back
- Assemblé can be done in all directions - en avant, en arrière, de côté, en tournant and even directly underneath oneself

GLISSADE - TO GLIDE

- Instruct all the logical corrections - heels down, knees over toes, diamond in plie
- Beginners should place arms on hips/shoulder - and eventually move to 1st position or other coordinating positions
- Stretch legs in the air in a la seconde

- The 2nd leg to close will want to overcross and/or turn in and scootch for the next glissade
- Hold rotators in air - this is new because they do not have the floor for “holding turn out”
- Glissade can be done in many ways - en avant, en arrière, de côté, changé, dessus, dessous

SOUBRESAUT - SUDDEN SPRING

- All of the same corrections apply as to sauté in 1st and changement
- Focus on the quality of the light and sudden movement
- This step can travel en avant, en arrière, de côté and directly underneath oneself

PETIT JETÉ - LITTLE THROW

- Teach at the barre to begin
- Watch that when students brush their leg to a la seconde that they do not transfer hip weight towards the leg but remain on the standing leg side
- Petit Jeté should travel directly en avant or en arrière but not side to side
- Emphasize the coupé position - clean and connected
- Petit Jeté for advanced students can add beats and combinations in which students travel both en avant and en arrière

TEMPS LEVÉ

- Teach proper placement as students will want to pitch forward to get more push from their quads
- Keep coupé attached
- Work to fully pointe the foot in the air
- Landing leg be sure that the heel doesn't pop and that the knee doesn't roll in
- Teach in combinations with other steps such as petit jeté and assemblé

ROYAL

- All corrections from changement apply
- Teach students to clearly beat and engage upper thighs prior to changing

ENTRECHAT TROIS - INTERWOVEN THREE TIMES

- Teach students how this is a connected movement of the upper thigh three times - interwoven
- Watch clarity of landing in coupé with knee over toes and no rolling
- Work on coordination of the arms from 1st to landing in 3rd

ENTRECHAT QUATRE - INTERWOVEN THREE TIMES

- Teach students how this is a connected movement of the upper thighs beating twice - each beat includes two legs to equate to four
- Instruct the back leg to initiate the beat
- Hold rotators in air while keeping the rectangles quiet

SISSONE - named after originator, looks like a scissor

- Teach students first facing en face
- Clarify the difference between fermee and ouverte - by practicing 3 closed and 1 landing open
- Watch that students do not lurch upper body forward
- Arms can start on hips/shoulders to begin
- Both heels down in plie, with knees open
- Watch for diamonds - this step is easy to turn in on
- Both legs move apart from one another - like a scissor
- Be sure that students jump from two feet simultaneously

TEMPS DE CUISSE - TIME OF THE THIGH

- Quick and light changing of thigh from back to front or front to back while remaining in plié
- Can be done from over and under
- An important step to pair with sissone

SISSONE CHANGÉ

- Begin facing one direction in plié and the changé happens in air and lands on the other side
- Advanced dancers only
- All corrections from sissone apply

BALLONÉ - TO BOUNCE

- Watch the position of coupé - attached and not over crossed
- Knee opens and thigh comes back in the action of the balloné
- Watch for rolling knees and ankles when landing
- Accent up

BALLOTÉ - TO TOSS

- Turn out in the air - knees open
- Tossing leg can be taught two inches off the ground but then aim to get to 45 degrees
- Pass through coupé on the toss
- Legs do the tossing where as the upper body stays still
- Opposite arm 1st as the tossing leg
- Focus on up in coupé then toss
- Slight cambré back when tossing leg Devant - advanced levels only

POLKA

- Do not try to instruct this with words - have them copy you/follow along
- This can be taught to beginners as AIAP -
- Eventually could do half turn (concept: wall facing)

PAS DE CHAT - STEP OF THE CAT

- For pas de chat the timing of the first knee coming up should coordinate with the thrust of the jump
- Quiet upper body and gentle shoulders/arms etc
- This step can be done over and under - from the back foot or front foot

EMBÔITÉ - BOXED STEP

- Teach first as ponies for younger students (basic movement is hop from foot to foot)
- Teach beginners 1st position - jumping to attitude devant
- Use imagery - like party girls in big hoop skirts jumping over puddles
- Use this step to build strength from one leg to the other
- This is a great step to notice your students stronger/weaker legs
- Focus on turn out of upper thighs in attitude
- Watch for sickling feet
- Upper core and sternum remain lifted
- Watch for tension in shoulders and arms
- Arms can be placed on shoulders/hips and eventually 1st position
- Eventually this step can be done turning

GRAND JETÉ - LARGE THROW

- Work on getting up and over an imaginary box or pond
- Step step throw (throw your leg up and over the box to the other side)
- Transfer from one leg to another
- Arms on shoulders or hips for pre ballet and beginners as they learn
- Be mindful that at this age students may repeat the same leg over and over rather than alternate. Encourage both sides as this will help strength development to be balanced
- Sometimes it is helpful to clap this step first (clap/step, clap/step, arm arcs while saying up,up
- Eventually work on arm coordination with 1st position and arabesque- be mindful that the arms don't swing

GRAND TOUR JETÉ - BIG TURNING THROW

- Instruct proper preparation step. Either chassé or step step. The focus of the eyes and the use of arms is different for each
- With step step preparation you look immediately with first step but with chassé you leave the head behind and look on the first step of the tour jeté itself
- Begin by teaching chassé salute devant with leg just shy of 90 degrees - focus on arms going up to 5th and arms in seconde in chassé
- Emphasis height of sauté devant before the flip in the hips
- Legs must stretch and thighs brush past each other in the air
- Scissors action in the air
- Land in arabesque with leg at 90 - this is important for weight placement otherwise they will naturally want to land with their weight back in their heels

GRAND FOUETTÉ - LARGE WHIP

- Many corrections from tour jeté apply here
- Land with correct arm positions and shoulders aligned in arabesque
- Upper thigh should be connected and rotated in the landing in plié even though their landing foot is not flat turned out while in arabesque

CONTRETEMPS - COUNTER TIME

- Upper thighs pass and beat one another
- Hips/rectangles begin one corner and finish In the next
- Instruct both types - first the little devloppé and then the straight leg devant

- Arms are oppositional as working leg passing through first on the way

SAUT DE BASQUE - STEP OF THE BASQUE

- This is a large step but teach first as a smaller action with leg brushing to 45 first /eventually throwing leg to almost 90
- This is an upward throwing action
- Land in retiré devant in plié
- Power of the pushing leg to jump
- There is a momentary position of both legs a la seconde
- Arms coordinate - a la seconde to first
- Spotting/focus is valuable

SAUT DE CHAT

- Be sure students know the difference between this and a grand jeté
- Emphasis the leg passing through retiré (turned in) on the way up
- Teaching powerful lift of the knee to 90 degrees on the upward throwing action
- At the top of the jump both legs need to arrive fully straight and feet pointed
- Watch that the step before the jump doesn't turn in to parallel and/or step with the heel
- Watch that the back leg as it passes through fai remains turned out

RÉVÉRANCE

- Teach B+ bow - Knees touch, 1 foot slightly crosses the midline and as they plié the foot should slide on floor slightly
- Watch for sicling
- Arms should breath - elbows softent, wrists soften as they bow
- Teach the etiquette of clapping at the end of class while standing still and making eye contact teacher/student/pianist etc
- This is an opportunity to bring students breathing down, finish class with affirmation and verbal prompts on the major take aways. You can even speak this AS you lead the reverence

CONCEPTS - listed by alphabetical order

ADAGIO

- Adagio is fluid and slow movement which develops strength and control

ALIGNMENT

- Alignment - head/shoulders/ribs/hips/knees/insteps/toes
- Help students understand this throughout all levels at an appropriate age development
- As dancers become advanced the level of difficulty in steps will challenge this
- Alignment is a key indicator if a student is ready to move to the next level

ALLEGRO

- fast movement typically composed of jumping steps
- Three speeds - petit, medium, grand
- Allegro challenges stamina and weight placement
- Help students classify and Identify allegro steps as they pertain to how many feet they jump from and land on
- 2 to 1, 1 to 1, 1 to 2

ANKLE

- **e**Help students understand the action of the ankle both flexing and pointing as well as the circular mobility their body allows
- Same with the toes - helping students understand that they can point the ankle while flexing toes

BALLET HANDS

- Gloves not mittens
- Easy wrists that are in line with elbow placement
- Watch for breaking lines in wrists and holding tension in wrists

BALLET FINGERS - Butterflies

- Teach first and third finger relationship
- Use imagery like sipping a cup of teaching, holding a butterfly
- Gentle not tense
- Watch thumb placement
-
- Teach from the beginning because of habits of tension are developed young it will be more difficult to break as the steps become more difficult

CONNECTIVE TISSUE

- Help students understand the concept that positions connect to other places within and on their body. For example - noting the connective tissue from 5th to retiré

COORDINATION OF ARMS

- As students progress be sure to focus on the timing and the clarity of arm positions in relationship to the movement of their legs
- Specific attention to this important for turns

- Specific attention to this importance for jumps and their power and speed

DYNAMIC EYE LINE

- This is the concept of eye focus in relationship to all steps
- Young dancers will be inclined to look down or within their personal bubble/space at their hands - work to encourage focus that is specific and direct
- Need to instruct where the eyes focus especially in relationship to the poet de bra
- The eyes remain directly in the center of eye sockets - so that when they lift their eyes it really is about lifting/tilting their head upward. Eyes remain centered

ETIQUETTE

- Clarify appropriate etiquette such as: turning toward the barre between combinations, no sitting down during class, no leaning on the barre, clapping for teacher, pianist, each other at the end of class and many more! Bottom line is etiquette is important on their development and professionalism as students grow.

FIFTH POSITION

- 5th must be equal
- 5th must be 45 degree or less or they will not engage their adductors and inner thighs
- Hips must not twist but remain rectangle

FLAT BACK

- Students must learn the importance of flat back when sitting with legs extended. Some may need to stretch and work on hamstring flexibility prior to this happening
- This concept of flat back is important for students in port de bra forward

FORMULA (for knowing where to close)

- Odd numbers of tendus close first to where you are going
- Even numbers of tendus close first to where you are coming from

INNER THIGHS

- Teach the anatomical name - Abductors - what are they! Where are they!
- Introduce the presentation of the inner thighs always in ballet steps
- 45 degrees or less in 5th position or else they will be challenged to engaged and present inner thighs
- Quads always work (avoid saying “don't use your quads” but rather emphases that inner thighs lead the way and overuse of quads will keep that from happening

ISOLATIONS

- One body part moves while the rest of the body remains still
- In classical ballet, stillness on body while one part is moving is key - for example en cloche, RDJ

LEG HEIGHTS

- Clarify 2”, 45, 90 and full extension

MIDLINE

- Otherwise known as the sagittal plane in anatomy
- Teach dancers the importance of not crossing their midline in fundamental positions (ex. 1st position, tendu)

NEUTRAL PELVIS

- Help students understand anterior tilt and a posterior tilt verses finding neutral pelvis

PERSONAL SPACE

- The concept of where students are in space in relationship to themselves and others
- Help clarify personal box
- Personal space in relationship to the ballet barre with two hands, one hand
- Number of walls/corners
- Windows - like where they are in lines and in relationship to self and others
- Personal space in relationship to lines and formations

PUSH

- Emphasize the importance of pushing through the floor with foot in tendus
- In jumps clarify that students push with foot and do not pop their heels

RECTANGLE

- Very important concept of shoulder/shoulder/hip/hip - movement in classical ballet typically does not disrupt the rectangle

TURN OUT

- Help students understand where turn out originates from
- Emphasis the individuality of turn out
- Clarify anatomy of the hip joint

SICLING

- Important to correct right from the beginning
- Can lead to rolling and/or sprained ankles if it is allowed to continue
- Sur le cou de pied is a good position to instruct the correct shape of foot

SITTING VERSES LIFTING

- Help students understand how to lift out of the hip
- Show them what sitting looks like

SPOTTING

- Focusing eyes on nose in mirror until their rectangle is facing side wall (¼ turn)

- Hurry nose/eyes back to font
- Do this exercise on relevé - little bourrée for younger children
- Keep hands on hips or shoulders at first

SPREAD TOES
- When on demi pointe students toes should spread out rather then knuckle

STANDING LEG VS WORKING LEG
- Introduce this concept early on
- So many corrections can be given more clearly when identifying this
- Knowing where weight is meant to be on a standing leg at all times is useful
- The action of the working leg is often in direct correlation to the standing leg

STAGE MARKS
- Inside and outside ¼ marks
- Upstage and Downstage
- Center - Center

TRANSVERSUS ABDOMINIs
- The transversus abdominis is the key ab muscle - 1 of 4 and often times the root of many placement and postural habits
- Think of their core like a spider web
- Engagement of this muscle creates the appearance of lift
- Almost all tension and incorrect placement in the shoulder girdle is due to disengaged transversus abdominis

TRIANGLE OF FOOT
- Weight of foot should be placed between ball of the foot, pinky and heel
- Like a pizza

WEIGHT SHIFT/TRANSFER
- Helping a dancer discover where their weight needs to transfer to for a specific step
- Moving quickly is often disrupted by incorrect weight transfers
- Watch where steps finish - weight finishing in their heels will create problems for the next step to come
- Weight shift and placement on one level should be hip arch, foot, watch rectangle that it doesn't lean away from supporting side

WINDOWS
- Early in their training teach dancers this concept of making lines and windows for exercises in center

WINGING THE FOOT

- Help students understand how to wing without losing the integrity of a pointed foot

- Help students know when to use the wing of the foot and when not to