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Creative Practice Teaching Packet

Anthropological Improvisation/ Bottom-UP

Course Concepts	2
Class Resources/Assignments	3-4
Student Feedback	5
Teaching CV	6
References	7-8
Evaluation of Student Examples	9-12

Creative Practice: Bottom-UP

Instead of approaching composition or choreography from a theoretical, top-down approach, I am interested in guiding students through a Bottom-UP approach. This means practice and body knowledge guide the explorations. A Bottom-UP approach also means we work as a group before we work as an individual, not only so collaboration skills are learned, but also so students can find their unique voice by going through the group and working in context.

Stealing concepts from social anthropology, we use three concepts as starting points:

Participant Observation, Generalized Reciprocity, and Creative Participation

By observing and participating together, we can breakdown barriers, encourage creative problem-solving and build positive relationships that allow for a higher variation in choreographic approaches and find alternative ways of composing.

In this workshop, improvisation functions as a tool to expand and practice our potential for creativity and communication. Through a variety of ways, we learn to listen and respond with our bodies as our ears. The goal is to bring our trained dance bodies together while not forgetting all of the cultural and social information our daily bodies carry. We seek to strengthen the intelligence of our professionally trained body and maintain the natural instincts of our non-performance bodies. We meet as professionals with a history of training in our bodies, but we also meet as two humans occupying the same space at that moment with the potential for anything to happen. The dialogue begins with the smallest simplest touch.

Our goal is to take people and their practices seriously and to pay attention to the detail of what they say and do. We maintain responsibility for ourselves and those around us, giving as much space and time to stillness as the movement so we can stay tuned for the possibility of anything to happen.

From the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski the method '**Participant Observation**' involves living in close contact with the natives while observing them from a distance. "By considering native reality with a *distant gaze*, the anthropologist manages to introduce "law and order into what seemed chaotic and freakish". Its aim is to gain a close and intimate familiarity with a given group of individuals and their practices through an intensive involvement with people in their environment. In the workshop we will use interviews, life stories and writing methods as ways to gather information.

Generalized Reciprocity is the exchange of goods and services without keeping track of their exact value, but often with the expectation that their value will balance out over time. As an individual we must find our role within the group.

Creative Participation is finally motivated by the 'need of uniqueness.' We also take time to acknowledge the desire to acquire the symbol of the distinct self. With this we can then also start to play with detaching symbols from their contexts and distorting the facts we gathered.

Resources for Assignment 1

· *To Dance is a Radical Act*

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-body-knows/201111/dance-is-radical-act>

· *How to Think Creatively*

http://blogs.hbr.org/schwartz/2011/11/how-to-think-creatively.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

[.Tso6QdhykR8.email](http://blogs.hbr.org/schwartz/2011/11/how-to-think-creatively.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter)

· *Cognitive Surplus*

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/clay_shirky_how_cognitive_surplus_will_change_the_world.html

Resources for Assignment 2

· Approaching knowledge, research, performance and the arts (PDF)

Resources for Assignment 3

· *Empathetic Civilization*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7AWnfFRc7g>

· *Nina Martin Interview (PDF)*

· *When Ideas Have Sex*

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/matt_ridley_when_ideas_have_sex.html

Resources for Assignment 4

· Outside resource of your choice

Resources for Assignment 5

· *Fall After Newton*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k768K_OTePM

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iGtJSxNUpl

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMj3Coktu40>

· *Drafting Interior Techniques (PDF)*

Resources for Assignment 6

· Love is an Action.

Module Evaluation

Engagement: 35 points

Application: 35points

Reading and Video Responses: 30 points (5 points each)

Total: 100 points

Week/Response	Title	Type	Topic
Week 1 Participant Observation	To Dance is a Radical Act	Popular Article	value of dance/movement
	How to Think Creatively	Blog post	creativity
	Cognitive Surplus - Ted Talk	Video	Collaboration
Week 2	Approaching knowledge, research, performance and the arts	Scholarly Article	Process as Research/Choreography
Week 3 Generalized Reciprocity	RSA - Empathetic Civilization	Video	Empathy/Humanity
	CQ Interview with Nina Martin about Ensemble Thinking	Article	Group Thinking/Individual Thinking
	When ideas have sex	Video	Collaboration
Week 4	Student's choice		Outside resource
Week 5 Creative Participation	Fall After Newton	Video	CI/Somatics/Listening
	Drafting Interior Techniques	Book Chapter	CI/Somatics/Listening
Week 6	My article	Article	Love and neuroscience
Week 7	No readings, etc. Will reflect on module as a whole via discussion.		

Feedback from Students at ASU: Juniors, Seniors and Grad students. 2/2012

- Mike did a really good job setting up the class as a facilitator instead of a “top down” approach. Students were asked to create their own knowledge, but Mike facilitated the development of knowledge. They really appreciated the feedback and support.
- The students also appreciated Mike’s participation in various experiences.
- They appreciated the structure of the class in that there was an overall two week focus with smaller daily focuses. It felt like all classes were essential and that the information scaffolded from start to finish.
- They noticed that everyone’s point of view was truly valued within the class. It never felt like they were looking for the right answer, so all answers were valid.
- They also thought it was good that sometimes there wasn’t an answer to problems posed, and that that was okay.
- They felt there was a nice balance between individual and group responsibility.
- They appreciated the broadness of each activity - in that, there were not any movement expectations in terms of how problems were solved.
- Overall, the daily structure of the class was great. They felt that all class time was well used. They felt like no time was wasted, but that they were not rushed. This was true both in discussion and in physical experiences.
- Students felt that Mike was very approachable.
- They felt that Mike really valued what students wrote in their papers and can see how Mike used that information to shape class activities. They also appreciated the extra resources that Mike gave in their papers.
- They can see how the idea of creative practice as research was apparent in Mike’s teaching in terms pedagogy and content.
- They really liked the range of experiences - from subtle to exaggerated, from theatre to movement. This allowed everyone to “get something” and connect to the material.
- They noticed that the experiences were an end in themselves instead of “this is an exercise that you can use for choreography.”
- They enjoyed that the class was very open in that everyone could really walk away with a unique understanding.

Michael O'Connor/ Teaching Résumé

EDUCATION:

2013-2015 AMCh, AHK. Theatreschool. Amsterdam.
2000-2005 BFA Modern Dance, University of Utah. *
1998-2000 Bowling Green State University.

IMPROVISATION/CREATIVE PRACTICE:

- 2015 **MTD:** 5 Weeks working with three 4th year students during their internship on improvisation.
- 2014 **SNDO.** 3 weeks. 'Basic Composition. Looking at Bottom-UP ways to compose.
- 2013 **SNDO.** 4 weeks. 'Choreographic Tools'. Designed to rebuild students' awareness and find their unique voice with relation to the group. Exchanging ideas leads to individuality.
- 2012 **ImpulsTanz.** Technologies of Love workshop. <http://impulstanz.workshops/id2162/>
Theatre Combinat. Post contact improvisation training warm up for company. 10 lessons.
Arizona State University. Contact Improvisation fundamentals. 3 weeks with all levels.
Arizona State University. 2 Months. Guest Faculty Artist. residency w 3rd yr students.
- 2011 **SEAD.** Contact Improvisation. Guest Teacher.
- 2009 **TanzQuartierWien.** 33 hours: import export Improv Jam on Love. Insel 8.
- 2008 **TanzQuartierWien.** Performane training. Workshop for non dancers.

CONTEMPORARY TECHNIQUE CLASS

- 2013-15 **SNDO.** 5 weeks. Release Technique. For 1st and 2nd years.
- 2014 **Henni Juriens, Amsterdam.** 1 week. Release Technique.
Marameo, Berlin. Release Technique.
- 2009 **Arizona State University.** 6 weeks. 'Release Technique' 3rd and 4th year.
- 2007-10 **cie Willi Dorner.** Audition workshops for: Danceumbrella (UK). Tanz im August (DE).
La Raffinerie (BE). Philly Live ARTS (USA), Crossing the Line, NYC (USA), etc.
Rehearsal director. Company warm up.
- 2002-03 Gliwice Musical Theatre Company..

FIELD METHOD FEEDBACK WORKSHOP

- 2009-15 **TanzQuartierWien.** The Field Wien: Initiated and developed branch in Wien for artists to learn how to give and receive feedback. <http://thefieldnetwork.wordpress.com/>
- 2012 **Istanbul, Turkey.** Field Day. 2 day workshop with mixed artists.
Arizona State University. Field Day. 1 day workshop for art major students.

*Teacher Training, Pedagogy, and Kinesiology courses completed as part of my BFA at the Univ. of Utah.

REFERENCES:

Karen Schupp: **ASU professor**

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<<http://dance.asu.edu/>>

<http://www.karenschupp.org>

Jeroen Fabius: **AMCh Director**

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Ria Higler: **SNDO Faculty**. 1st year mentor.

ria.higler@ahk.nl

Katie Duck: **SNDO teacher**. Colleague.

katie@kateduck.com

Kersten Olivia Schnellander: **ImpulsTanz. Field Method** Facilitator

kerstinschellander@hotmail.com

Guy Cools: **Dramaturg**

+43 660 6295145

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Deborah Hay: **Choreographer**

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Esther Steinkogler: **cie Willi Dorner Current Rehearsal Director**

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David Zambrano: **Choreographer**

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Katrin Roschangar: **TQW: Training/workshop Wien**

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Tanzquartier Wien GmbH

Centre for contemporary dance and performance

Museumsplatz 1, A-1070 Vienna

+43 699 19146426

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to share my knowledge of Michael O'Connor. I had the pleasure of working with Mike while he was Artist Faculty in the Arizona State University School of Dance. During Mike's ASU residency, he taught our advanced level of Creative Practices for seven weeks, created an evening length dance piece, and facilitated a cross-disciplinary Fieldwork session for ASU students. Based on my interactions with Mike during this time, as well as my knowledge of his work as choreographer and performer, I highly recommend him as a guest artist at your institution.

In the classroom, Mike facilitates learning experiences that value individuality, collaborative learning, risk taking, questioning, and cultivating community. Students in the Creative Practices class were introduced to ideas relating to Participant Observation, Generalized Reciprocity, and Creative Participation to advance their skills as collaborators and improvisers. Through these experiences, students' awareness of their creative practices became much more astute. Mike excels at providing specific yet open ended creative tasks that require students to create and test their own knowledge based on personal values and movement practices. Throughout the course, students felt that all points of view were truly valued, that they were challenged both as individuals and a class, and that Mike was very approachable. I was impressed with the range of class experiences Mike provided, his willingness to individually engage with the students, and that students were able to fully articulate the underpinnings of their creative practices after working with Mike. I am highly confident that Mike will bring the same creativity, organization, and sensitivity to his work with your students.

As part of Mike's ASU residency he also developed an evening length duet, *A General Theory of Love*. Students were invited to observe the rehearsal process, to ask questions about the development of the work, and to contribute ideas and feedback. Mike helped students understand how different practices within dance relate by being transparent about how his rehearsal process related to his teaching in the Creative Practices class, and how the experience of teaching the Creative Practices class informed the development of his work. This understanding is essential to students' future success within the professional dance field. Mike provides an outstanding example of how educational and artistic practices are interwoven.

Besides working with School of Dance students, Mike held a FieldDay workshop for students across the Herberger Institute in the Arts (which includes Arts; Arts, Media and Engineering; Dance; Design; Music; and Theatre and Film). In this workshop, participants were introduced to Fieldwork, which is a methodology for providing non-prescriptive feedback. Workshop students said that they felt more empowered to give and receive feedback after participating in FieldDay, and that they were inspired by the interdisciplinary aspect of the workshop. Mike's certification as a Fieldwork facilitator in addition to his expertise as an artist educator allow him to provide several different types of experiences for students.

In closing, I highly recommend Mike for a residency at your institution. I am positive that your students will have the same empowering, engaging, and rewarding experience as the ASU students. Please do not hesitate to contact me via email (karen.schupp@asu.edu) to further discuss Mike's qualifications.

Sincerely,



Karen Schupp
Assistant Professor of Dance



INTERNSHIP ASSESSMENT FORM FOR DANCERS

In order to get an overview of the internship and the progress of the intern we request that you fill in this form and return it to the school. Please give the student feedback by on his or her progress by discussing this form with them and asking them to sign it.

This evaluation form has been designed for the Contemporary dance department at de Theaterschool, Amsterdam (Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, AHK).

Name production / company	Michael O'Connor/a waiting dog
Function Intern	Dancer/performer
Period	January 22-Feb 24, 2015
Total Internship in weeks	5 weeks
Average hours per week	20-30 hours



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Function Intern	Dancer/performer
Period	January 22-Feb 24, 2015
Total Internship in weeks	5 weeks
Average hours per week	20-30 hours

Assesment SNDO CHOREOGRAPHY

Student	: Antonia Steffens	Attendance: 10.5/12
Teacher	: Michael O'Connor	Credits: yes/no
Year Group	: SNDO1	

Learning Curve
Artistic domain

	1	2	3	4	5
1. shows commitment (1)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. displays perseverance and discipline (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. demonstrates creativity : is innovative, determined, inventive & inquisitive (2,3) (P)**	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. demonstrates creativity in his/her investigation of body movement language (2,3) (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. can develop concepts & impart meaning relative to body, time and space (4,5) (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. is capable of selecting and structuring artistic choices (2,6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. is able to inspire, motivate and direct co-workers (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. is decisive , clear and concise during the artistic process (7)					x

Technical domain

	1	2	3	4	5
10. grasps technical jargon & terminology ; applies them theoretically & in practice (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. can place the language of body movement within a context (8,10,11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. is capable of analysing the language of body movement (8,10,11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. is able to develop the language of body movement (12)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Socio-professional domain

	1	2	3	4	5
19. is capable of articulating his/her views (18) (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. is able to give and receive feedback (26) (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. can organize and lend structure to a work process (23)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assesment

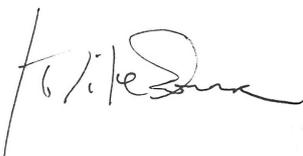
I	D	S	G	E
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I = insufficient, D = doubtful, S = sufficient, G = good, E = excellent

Suggestions for future progress

Antonia, I appreciate your eye for detail. Overall though, I would notice that sometimes you seek to draw a grid and to organize and structure things in a 'yes or no' way. When a table or grid is placed over something to organize it, part of the thing is lost behind the lines of the grid (if you follow this metaphor). Be open to trust the exercises and your colleagues. Be inquisitive in their process while allowing them to feel free to speak. Working with your 'weakness' and deciding to show that solo at the lunch lecture shows you are aware of yourself on a deeper level and brave to share that with others with the intention of growing. Search for more articulation in the exercises, and try surrendering to the moments that get you bothered or defensive. Try allowing yourself to be pulled, rather than finding your identity by pushing.

Date, 14-Oct-15

Signature, 

*) = refers to The Educational Qualifications/Profile of a Choreographer as decided by the National Network of Professional Dance Education, Spring 2002.

**) = qualifies for Propaedeutic examination



Assesment SNDO TECHNIQUE/MOVEMENT RESEARCH

Student	:Andrea		
Teacher	: Michael O'Connor		
Year group	: sndo2	Attendance: 8/9	
		Credits:	yes/no

Learning curves

Artistic domain	1	2	3	4	5
1. shows commitment (1)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. displays perseverance and discipline (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. demonstrates creativity : is innovative, determined, inventive & inquisitive (2,3) (P)**	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. demonstrates creativity in his/her investigation of body movement language (2,3) (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Technical domain

Technical domain	1	2	3	4	5
10. grasps technical jargon & terminology ; applies them theoretically & in practice (8)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. is capable of analysing the language of body movement (8,10,11)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. is able to develop the language of body movement (12)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Socio-professional domain

Socio-professional domain	1	2	3	4	5
20. is able to give and receive feedback (26) (P)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. can assimilate and apply information (25,26)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessment

I	D	S	G	E
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I= insufficient, D = doubtful, S = sufficient, G = good, E = excellent

Suggestions for future progress

Andrea, Appreciate your work in class! You seem very focused and committed. One of your strengths is using the space and your whole body with energy. You are not shy and you seek to fulfil the movement phrase with hunger and appetite. Check out in the video the slightly splaying of our ribs as you go down into pli . Its only mm or cm we are talking about. You had found a stronger alignment during our time together and just on the video day went back a bit to your old habit, so you can see that in the video. I would like to see you get a stronger spinal, unglulation integration going. Sometimes you break at the neck, the ribs, or the knees (in relation to the pelvis), leaving your body to work in pieces instead of as one body. Think a seahorse or a snake. Notice your knees sometimes are not over your feet and pointing out when you are in parallel position. Also be confident to go at your own rhthym. While staying with the group or on the counts, there is still space/time to find your personality with the movement. I see in the video sometimes you hold back when your instinct was to do more. Don't doubt yourself. I think the two things I am speaking about are connected. Find ways to have one body, instead of 3, and the doubt will disappear as there is only 1 decision to make.

Date, 8-Mar-15
Signature,

*) = refers to The Educational Qualifications/Profile of a Choreographer as decided by the National Network of Professional Dance Education, Spring 2002.

**) = qualifies for Propaedeutic examination