

# TEACHING STATEMENT

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“The body in its construction and function claims priority as a starting point for any true understanding of how to move safely and well.” Frey Faust, The Axis Syllabus©

As a movement teacher I am responsible for the safety and well-being of my students. It is my responsibility to inform myself of current research findings as well as diverse approaches to movement and bring these to the classroom for review, exploration, and discussion with my students. It is my responsibility to present myself, my motivations, goals, and knowledge honestly and clearly. It is my great joy to respond to students' questions and concerns and take their larger picture into consideration and adapt my teaching to their long-term career goals. It is my utmost imperative to inspire, support, inform, and empower my students so that they may become well-educated eloquent movers that can make informed decisions regarding their future training, health, and risk-taking.

For my BII – The Body's Intrinsic Intelligent movement training classes students will engage with theory such as anatomy, physics, biomechanics, and kinesiology by means of discussing images, reading research papers, watching instructional videos and joint function animations, exploring or building anatomical models from clay, drawing, journaling, writing assignments, and of course through movement. I help my students understand how the many individual parts of the body collaborate with one another and orchestrate collectively to facilitate complex movements and dancing. Touch and palpation exercises, and mindful movement practices help increase proprioceptive sensitivity and awareness so that the student can become more articulate, secure, adaptable, fluid and efficient at harnessing potential kinetic energies. Class exercises usually flow across the floor in a continuous manner and I often invite students to improvise with the suggested movement phrases because it is an important practice toward developing adaptive listening and response skills as opposed to set reflexes. The goal is to teach the student to develop the sensitivity toward finding new movement pathways, toward breaking out of old habits, and toward recognizing what it feels like when efficient alignment is maintained or lost. We practice safe transitions, and fall management patterns. Each class contains improvisational elements as well as movement

propositions to explore and dance together in unison, in formation, and in response to, for, and with one another. It is my goal to demystify athletic movement and teach my students easy and reliable ways to access abilities they previously did not think they possessed. Ultimately the student becomes less reliant on outside feedback. All students deserve equal opportunity to learn in class as well as in performance settings and I make sure that the roles I cast for choreographic projects are distributed methodically, fairly, non-preferentially, and non-hierarchically.

It is important that I make sure that the students understand what a certain exercise is meant to achieve and why, and how it contributes to our learning about optimal skeletal placement. In order to assess my effectiveness and student learning I use a number of tools, quizzes, individual and group projects, writing assignments, and presentations. As a mid-term exam I find the task to demonstrate and describe (in writing) a short movement sequence in as much detail as possible to be very effective for assessing student learning. Progress toward self guided inquiry becomes evident also through their overall movement quality and the sophistication of the questions asked.

Students learn best in a respectful, courteous, safe, playful, and curious learning environment, where they experience agency and can collaborate and explore with one another. Dividing larger classes into smaller groups to discuss and tackle creative movement assignments which we then share with one another is a great way to achieve this engaged state of playful learning. I always begin class with a check-in and a closing circle so we can all discuss goals and experiences.

Dance is an activity that touches people deeply and personally. Changing the ways we move and the ways in which our bodies find alignment is fundamental to physical, emotional, and psychological stability, and to our overall health. Changing bodies are vulnerable to self doubt. It is still common for dance students to develop eating disorders and struggle with body dysmorphic disorders, which is connected to the ableist, racist, misogynist and otherwise unfair and biased techniques and systems within which we still live and study.

My goal is to empower students and equip them with sound information about self care, injury prevention, and a sense of their rightful autonomy and authority when it comes to being the guardians of their own health and well being.