

Movement Fundamentals

Key concepts – breath, movement originates from center

Exercises – roll downs in circles (from top down), multidirectional (to encourage interaction) 4 steps and plie series, swing/releases, tendu exercise (with a flex foot to press foot (squash the marshmallow) part added

The World is Alive With Color!

- Know/learn the basics of color theory – color wheel, complimentary colors
- Think of the context of colors – places, times, periods, events, environment
- Consider the triad and where is most of your color (choose one) Floor/flats, body/costumes, or equipment/flags
- No firm rules (advanced designers will push to break conventional rules) but instead strive for harmony

Resources:

Designers Guide to Color (there is a series of paperbacks by a few authors)

Photography magazines

Design magazines

To less extent – fashion/apparel magazines

View on Colour – European magazine

Sabre Fundamentals

Key concepts – NOT a rifle!, tape mark 1/3 way from tip, keep flat position low (at hips), “hand taco”, catch like a rifle in the meat of the hand and ok to wrap on catch

Exercises – flips, spins (add chasses under), spins and stops (with body positions)

Art of Performance – see handout

You Make This Look Good

- Use costumes to help hide/expose abilities
- “Multiples” – use same color palette, more variation on top (make pants/lower more similar –var. by width of leg for ex.), minimum of 3 – 5 variations to everyone being different, less effective for smaller or less skilled groups
- Homogenous or uniform look – work within a “range” of an individual member looking good (don’t expect it to make everyone look great as an individual, but don’t make anyone look horrible as an individual), think of members as art materials on a canvas instead of human beings dressing up to go out to dinner (unless that is your costume concept for which multiples might work better)

- Fabric – go for movement and durability, nylon lycra, stretch velvet, non-stretch fabrics require more complicated patterns and an expert understanding of body mechanics (do not use non-stretch unless you are a professional tailor/costume maker)
- Dying fabric – use professionals (not Rit) denverfabrics.com is a good resource
- Taste – taste is what you like, having taste implies an educated and discriminating awareness, showing taste implies a sensitivity to your audience and their taste, being tasteful implies application of all of the above, tasty means that it worked

The Mysteries of Judging

Think TOTALITY don't dwell on isolated scores or comments, look for overall/cumulative feedback.

Different contest dynamics can yield different scores

- viewpoint (know what your show looks like from high and low angles and understand how high the stands are can impact how the GE/EA judges see your production)
- color of the gym can wash out color effects
- the size of a contest can impact your number (judges will have to open up spreads in scores to accommodate several units that are similar to yours)
- if your unit is alone in a class – score might not be the same as when you are with other units in your class
- DON'T switch back and forth between classes – the numbers do not translate.

Critique Techniques

A lot of bad, but isolated, examples of bad judging situations were brought up and the point that was made is that judges are accountable for the numbers that they give and units must hold their circuits accountable for providing/training quality judges. At the same time realize where good judges come from – good instructors, designers, educators, etc. Judging well and running color guards well are both insanely difficult tasks and take time to learn. We need to treat each other with respect and nurture each other for the sake of the kids with which we work.

Key concepts:

- Be prepared – know what questions you want to ask the day before the contest
- Watch your competition – don't be frustrated with your ranking without seeing for yourself
- Build relationships with judges instead of building walls by being angry or hostile
- Critique dialogue may impact future reaction from a judge (they may look closer at an aspect of your show to critique it) but a good judge will credit only what they see and not what you tell them they should see. This was a frustrating point for me when I instructed as I wondered if being nice in critique allowed judges to not worry about putting me last (I now realize, after looking back, that that was silly of me). Intimidation in critique will only scare people away from wanting to judge (it is very hard to find people that want to judge if there is a history of hostile instructors)

- Remember - Think TOTALITY don't dwell on isolated scores or comments, look for overall/cumulative feedback.

Bit by Bit

- Designing well is an organic process – cannot reduce to a simple recipe
- Communicating an idea – mood/emotion/story/concept, choosing emphasis
- Know the whole show as you develop it – “Paint the whole painting.”
- “Never be afraid to paint a bad painting.”
- Assess as you go based on your original compelling idea before you make any changes – reconstruction – keep to your design base that you started with
- “Decisions you make the last month are worth a lot!” – make them carefully as you have your students counting on you.

All the Floor's a Stage...

These are some recommendations from the panel:

- Have whole basic structure planned out before you start to teach it
- Write backwards from effect moments – have students put down dots but not necessarily their dots
- Write for your biggest venue
- Small rehearsal space? – make floor/stage area smaller
- Younger instructors - stage segments simply and logically first and then develop/add choreography. More advanced usually stage and choreograph at the same time in smaller segments
- Free Form – don't use it as a way out, use principles of design (esp. balance, emphasis), careful with routings, use it for: texture, contrast, cleansing palate, create patterns
- Transitions – designed and not functional, think way ahead (PLAN), don't make them look forced, make transitions interesting “moments” so the viewer cannot tell where they are, keep audience with you, transitions can connect “moments”, be creative with cool ways to bring out/exit equipment, think continuity and flow, as “What information is that offering? What does it tell the audience?”
- Multiple Event/Layered Moment – determine emphasis (everything else compliments what is being emphasized), consider venue (smaller arena may cause these to become split focus moments), be sure audience can see all events at once (put them in same line of vision)
- Motion – create emphasis, dimension, etc. through speed, energy, mood, flow, absence of motion. Check pacing (is there stagnation or variety in types of motion)
- Drill – can be used as an effect, is more difficult with choreography
- Floor Design – allow for both boundaries and space for full floor effects. Use repetition of shape or motif and incorporate into overall design (staging/costumes/flags/etc.)
- Method – most designers have a series of sketches, notes, pictures and move performers around as they go along. Beginning instr. start simple and logical. Always

go back to your intent. STUDY ELEMENTS OF DESIGN – about where performers are placed and how they get there

- Frequent problem issues – Clarity!, lack of design, restaging too frequently

Cleaning Power

- Time in season determines how detailed you get in cleaning (i.e. start season with cleaning every 4 counts and end with cleaning “and” counts)
- Have performers watch each other!
- Make sure choreography is appropriate to the form they’re in and visa versa (set them up for success)
- Have students count out loud (have clear expectations of members when cleaning segs)
- Tell them how far to go when running a segment (listen to members if they say “it is better to stop on count 9 instead of 8 as we are in mid air on count 8” or whatever)
- Watch body before equip. as that is often the cause of variations or errors
- Go ahead and ask students where they are on certain counts and make a quick decision based on majority or individual that you feel is getting the right motion etc.
- Don’t clean out the performance quality! Your members should be doing the segment of work as though it were a performance. Make sure members are not bored/going through the motions or uptight and paranoid about being wrong. Keep the cleaning process part of the overall experience. If it gets to the point where the group can’t get through the phrase without tons of errors, maybe it should be watered. You can’t clean something that can’t be individually achieved by your performers.