

# Teaching The Teachers - ttt

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## **Building nets and bridges**

This text hopes to bridge the gap of time and space between our Budapest ttt project and past and future ttt's as well as to contribute to connectivity and discussion with anybody engaged in questions of dance and education.

The multidimensional net of information, knowledge, experience, questions and friendship that we build from day to day will not be adequately represented by this text production.

So what from this overfull, exciting, multidimensional week do I want to share here? So much material we produced: pages and pages of individual writing, of combined writing, big mappings on rough paper, classes that are documented on video, the public performance in which we danced together with local artists, the installation we created for the public presentation of our ttt week.

So many questions were raised and keep coming for me afterwards:

- About aims of teaching
- About ways of learning
- About the role of institutions, personalities, critique, affirmation, support, control, perspective in education
- About curricula, hierarchies, the role of somatic approaches in dance education
- About history and legacy and genealogy
- About empowerment and humbleness, recognition and the perspective from the margin
- About the role of words / wordings in reflecting, experiencing, communicating, building knowledge, transmitting information
- About different subjectivities as in being - feeling like - or pretending to be - a dancer / performer / artist / teacher
- About our role and function for the Budapest contemporary dance scene

## **A positive model of collaboration to be considered in the context of dance education**

All our activities and questions could become an inspiring experience by HOW we shaped our meeting into a constructive collaboration. And I suggest these ingredients / strategies as a valuable model for dealing with many of our questions in dance education.

### ➤ The group constellation

The nucleus of three local/half local participants nominated 4 participants from the outside. So the choice was probably based on a mix of professional interest and personal trust x3.

We were different but not too far from each other in background. We started in the first hour from what we share by simply naming who knows whom from where. In that way professional, personal, and geographical connections between us and also towards our hosting city were initially traced, revealed and therefore reinforced.

Thought and consideration went into the constellation of the work group in relation to an aspired supportive team spirit and possible content of this meeting.

= The complex consideration of “what supports what?” and weighing difference and communality in a group constellation reaches right into core questions of collaborative strategies. They have a strong artistic and political impact and have to happen and can be further examined in universities and any educational situation.

#### ➤ The moving body

We shared our dancing and teaching practices very matter of fact, everybody attended each of our open classes. We moved with each other every day. The sensorial level present in each of these physical meetings, the experience of our different bodies, ages, limits, energies brought a vulnerability and intimacy into our relationship that went far beyond an exchange of teaching models and opinions. It grounded us or unsettled us as people. It bound our questions and opinions to present tense experiencing and strengthened our abilities to trust each other.

= Present tense bodily involvement in movement practice generates things other than a purely reflective involvement. Different body practices generate different things.

If the moving body is a central motive in the discourses of dance education, it should be given a physical presence. The body moves (changes) the discourse.

#### ➤ The group's aim / the research subject

The main schedule of the week developed from Eva Karczag's idea to move through different venues of and for contemporary dance in Budapest. This plan was inspired by a sentence from Jennifer Lacey's text about the Bucharest ttt: “the basis of dance, of any performance form really, is someone showing up somewhere. The art and the thinking is in the choices of the how showing up in relation to the where.” How we showed up also shaped itself by wishes and invitations from the Budapest scene (open classes, the performance we did, the performances we saw). Goal and meaning stayed open to be found out, considered and reconsidered in the group but mainly individually.

= The subject of our meeting was never clearly defined but approached, recognized, examined on the way and in retrospect. It developed and keeps developing itself in the spaces created by practice, reflection and dissemination of knowledge. In this sense our collaboration draws on as well as develops supportive methods in the realm of ‘practice based research’ in dance.

#### ➤ Performing dance

Everybody in the group is an active performing artist.

We agreed on the need to have our role as facilitators, teachers, curators, mentors be grounded in our current artistic questions and interests. On day 5 it was my turn to facilitate the class and I focussed on performance. The introduction of two of my current artistic interests “pretence” and “folk dancing” stirred very new questions and emotions. Disintegration, distance, dis-identification plus the practice of watching and being watched offered new exciting thoughts about our individual artistic values and

subjectivities. New possible frictions between educational and artistic values appeared when practically trying out my performance propositions.

Also on day 5 we went on to throwing even more of ourselves into the work. Tamás Dora and Esther Gal invited us to publicly improvise together with 8 Budapest and international dancers, a musician and a light designer. That we all did it and nobody's egos, artistic values, or other representations of self got hurt is special, and was a result of our collaboration up till then as well as a big further step in our process.

= Issues like aims of teaching, strategies of supporting and affirming, openness to diversity, non hierarchical collaboration, subjectivity, somatic approaches to dance grow in complexity and get to an extreme personal intensity under the burning glass of performance.

#### ➤ Writing during the process

Next to all these activities and formats of 'being together' we had daily sessions of individual writing for documentation and reflection (inside our daily structure not at night at home). In writing and sending our daily writings to each other, to share and inspire, to learn from each other, we started to build a language as a group and moved into the realm of collaborative writing.

= Individual writing / wording supports individual reflection and integration of the experiences made and the discourses opened. In the overwhelming course of events of intensive gatherings, the writing also keeps track of questions to be followed up after the meeting has ended.

Sharing writing supports an understanding inside a group, it can give voice to themes as well as to individuals in the group that didn't come forward in the other forms of exchange. It's also a way to build common terms/ a common language, clarify vague thoughts and finally develop concepts. This is a specific quality of writing.

Present tense reflective writing in dance education generates things other than a purely physical involvement. Different reflective practices generate different things.

If the reflective artist is a central motive in the discourses of dance education, it should be given a presence. The discourse moves (changes) the body.