Welcome to the second issue of the Bill Evans Dance Teachers Intensive Newsletter! We hope you enjoy this newest issue, and welcome your comments, questions, and photographs for future issues -- we’d love to have this newsletter continue as a collaborative project and become a shared conversation across this wonderful community of people.

Best wishes for a summer of celebrations and rejuvenation,

Cynthia Williams, Geneva, NY, June 2013

Certified Teachers Profile

Current Profiles: In this section we ask people who have held certification for a few years what they are currently up to, and how their experiences with the Bill Evans Dance Technique certification process has shaped their teaching/dancing lives. Here we hear from Clarence Brooks, Marlene Leber, and Jenny Showalter.

Clarence Brooks: I am an Associate Professor and Director of Dance in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. The newly revitalized dance program is in its infancy – now nine years old. Established in 1961, only two other professors had taught dance at FAU previous to my tenure here. Now with two adjunct dance faculty members joining me in teaching dance courses, the dance program appears to be growing. After nearly eight years teaching without dance peers, it is a pleasure to have colleagues.

I hold a certificate of movement studies (CMA) from the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies in New York. My focus upon entering the year-long certificate program was on personal analysis and self-reflection: understanding my body and the effect that coming out versus being closeted engendered in my body through movement. This work enabled me to heal wholesomely and holistically by allowing me to examine my movement history, in part, through videos and photographs.

I left New York for graduate work at the University of Washington where I intended to work with other CMAs on faculty there, but sadly the Laban studies program had been dissolved and the teachers I had yearned to study with had moved on by the time I arrived. While there I had the unique experience of learning and performing Vaslav Nijinsky’s “L’Apres midi d’un faun” from Labanotation as coached by Ann Hutchinson Guest. The value of Laban’s work in preserving masterpieces long after the choreographer and original dancers had transitioned was immediately present to me. Under the mentorship of Karen Scherwood, I developed and taught a Laban Movement Analysis course to University of Washington undergraduate students during my final semester in graduate school.
I moved to Florida to teach dance at Bak Middle School of the Arts, a wonderful arts-magnet school in West Palm Beach for six years before accepting a position in higher education. For nearly a decade after graduation, I had no one to speak the language to since I found no CMAs to converse with in my community.

When I read an announcement about a workshop in Evans pedagogy/technique, I considered it a godsend since I was not entirely satisfied with my progress in incorporating LMA into the technique classes I was teaching. William Evans’ mastery and eloquent delivery of the material was so evident from the start that I knew I had to seek out his intensives yearly. I immediately appreciated and was grateful for not having to “reinvent the wheel,” so to speak, in blending the LMA work into technique classes.

For the past several summers the Bill Evans Teacher Intensives have become my place for professional development, exploration, networking, and recuperation. The range of dance educators, movement practitioners, choreographers, and dancers who participate each summer is as impressive as the distinguished panel of teachers that William hires to impart the intensive course work. Along with reawakening and deepening my interest in LMA, the presentations by my fellow BETI colleagues have enabled me see ways of widening my use of the material.

The Evans Method is how I teach dance technique courses, how I choreograph, the language I use when coaching, and my means for reviewing and evaluating what I see and do. Seeing how embodied and expressive William is in his seventh decade of living gives testimony, in my opinion, to the healthiness of his technique and is an inspiration to me as I continue performing into my fifth decade of life.

Community building is a current focus of mine and this summer I am bringing two newbies to the International Somatics Conference in Brockport. Recently during one of my two years as the Florida Dance Education Organization conference chair, I brought Don Halquist in as keynote presenter to work with dance educators and students from around the state. I am pleased to report that now with six Labanites, (the term by which we in the tri-county area including two of us from BETI reference ourselves), the Laban family has grown in south Florida. We are just starting out planning regular gatherings to share our work with one another. But we dream big and have exciting plans for the future.

Marlene Leber
Marlene has been teaching, choreographing, and performing in the greater Cleveland area for almost 40 years. As well versed in musical theater as modern dance, her choreography has been seen on the stages of Mentor High School, Kent State University, Lake Erie College, Cleveland State University, The School of Fine Arts, Shaker Heights High School, Hawken High School, Cleveland School of the Arts, and Hathaway Brown School where she has directed the dance program since 1993. Marlene has performed extensively throughout the Cleveland area both in contemporary and Musical Theater venues, but her true love has always been modern dance. In 2003, Marlene and colleague Jennifer Burnett presented their duet Resolve at Cleveland Public Theater as a part of the Food For Thought showcase directed by
Gina Gibney, and in 2005 Marlene was the recipient of the Outstanding Contribution to Dance Education Award from the Ohio Dance Association. Marlene served on the 2012 dance standards writing team for the Ohio Department of Education and was the lead writer for Gifted Standards in Dance in 2009. She has also served on the Arts Partnership panel for the Ohio Arts Council. Marlene holds a BFA in dance from Lake Erie College and is currently serving her 8th year on the board of directors for Ohiodance. Marlene completed the Bill Evans Teachers Certification program at SUNY Brockport in 2011.

In describing the effect the Bill Evans Dance Teacher Intensives and certification program has had on her teaching, Marlene wrote: It has generated greater confidence in my teaching abilities...period! It has also validated some of the things that I had already been incorporating throughout my many years of teaching. This program has instilled a desire to be more patient with myself in order to be able to more efficiently assist my students. I am more “present” than ever before, and I feel comfortable with the language as well as my understanding of the material. The results this program has produced are inspiring to me as a teacher and life-changing to my students. The pedagogical values have impacted my life on so many levels by allowing me to re-discover what I valued about myself as a person, dancer, and artist.

Marlene noted that what made her decide to participate in the certification program was remembering what a difference it made for me as a dancer and a person when I began to incorporate BF and Laban concepts into my own technical and creative development. The changes were remarkable. I felt that my dance training had just begun and I had already been dancing for almost 20 years when I was first introduced to this material. I also felt that there were still holes in my BF and Laban understanding after college. I believed in the benefit of this body of knowledge, but I lacked confidence in my ability to teach this material well. When I found out about this teachers training program, I knew that Bill was the person I wanted to study with because I was already familiar with his body of work and master teaching skills. It was a no-brainer. I had found it. The community of dancers that Bill has built around this material was inspirational to me, and I wanted to be a part of it regardless of the fact that I was discovering this information much later in my career. It was life affirming, not just dance affirming.

Looking at the way her life will be changing as she retires from Hathaway Brown School this year, Marlene commented: I am in a period of transition in my teaching career right now and haven’t devoted much time to how I plan to reinvent my teaching life once I leave Hathaway Brown School. I can’t imagine my life without dance or teaching, but it will definitely take on another form once I leave this amazing institution of learning. I have always been happiest as a freelance artist/ teacher and will continue to nurture the relationships I have forged over the years through my involvement with area universities and as a board member of Ohiodance and a panelist for The Ohio Arts Council. I have been teaching for almost 40 years, the last 20 in a private, all-girls institution, and right now I am anxious for change. I am convinced that leaving Hathaway Brown will provide me with the space and time I need to reinvent and rediscover myself again. The BETI program has given me the strength and courage to reinvent myself. I don’t mind not knowing what the future will hold. I do know it will be impacted by this program, and I do know that it includes dance.

I don’t know what the future will hold, and I am oddly excited about the uncertainty. I do know that the community of dancers I have met through this program will continue to sustain me whether or not I
am supporting them or they are supporting me. Whatever adventure I choose to embark upon will always be impacted by the values I have learned through this experience...always! I feel confident in what I have learned and that the learning will continue. I am so grateful that I have been able to immerse myself in this program even though I am in a state of transition with my career. My participation in this program has never been just about the information; it has also been about the community, the values, the spirit of giving, and the joy. It has allowed me to rediscover my love for all things dance and that it’s never too late to learn anything. I have felt inspired by the young dancers I have had the joy of taking class alongside of and learning from, as well as the wisdom from those of us who have been doing this forever, and I have loved sharing the laughter. The act of learning just gets me fired up, and oddly enough, teaching gave this to me. Like Bill says, “I teach what I want to learn”, and there is so much more I want to know. I feel an obligation to share it with others, whoever those others may be in the future. I just want to pay it forward. That’s what this program has given to me.

Jenny Showalter, Co-Artistic Director of Treeline Dance Works, has recently been presented in France, NY, MI, CT, OK, OH, IN, TX, CA and IL. Showalter has served on faculty at Ball State University, St. John Fisher, The College at Brockport, and currently teaches at Arizona State University, Scottsdale Community College, Grand Canyon University and Glendale Community College. Her choreography has been commissioned for the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (NY), Vision of Sound (NY) and Heidelberg Music Festival (OH) and at various universities. Showalter is also in the Bill Evans Dance Company. She holds an MFA in Dance, BS in Exercise Science, is a personal trainer, Pilates instructor, and Registered Somatic Movement Therapist. www.treelinedanceworks.com

For those who know me, I have once again been on an adventure to teach the work I believe in, yet again in a new location! I have moved several times since finishing my MFA in 2008 from The College at Brockport and forming Treeline Dance Works in 2009 with Co-Director, Lyndsey Vader. My focus, as with many dancers, has been to experience it all...teaching, performing, directing, traveling, and all the while maintaining sanity! I am currently teaching dance in Phoenix, AZ at Grand Canyon University, Arizona State University, Glendale Community College and Scottsdale Community College. Having such a diverse teaching load has once again challenged my process as an educator, but I have pulled from my dance experiences thus far.

Particularly, my time spent working with Bill Evans as a student, company member and demonstrator has proved beneficial. Not only for the knowledge I gained from him, but also as motivation to continue expanding the work he has done and exploring what it means to me.

Immediately, after starting my MFA studies I was inspired by Bill and his pedagogy. I felt alive and
challenged while dancing his work and free to express myself. As I pursued my studies I had the opportunity to assist him in modern technique classes and in the summer of 2008 he hired Courtney World and I to be technique demonstrators for his summer workshop at The College at Brockport. The first summer in this role was challenging, but I fell into a comfortable stride as the summers continued and in reflection have discovered so much from these experiences. Most notably, when Heather Acomb and I began traveling each summer to assist, I started to not only demonstrate but lead others and share my heart more fully.

I believe it was also the summer of 2010 when the term "Bill's Body" came about. I remember standing in class and all the sudden hearing "I need my body," as Bill looked directly at me. I'm sure my eyes became large as I walked towards him thinking, "how in the heck am I going to do this?" People often ask me to describe the experience of this equally humbling and pressure filled role and it is hard to summarize. Probably one of the funniest memories was when I demonstrated something different than he expected and he said, "I'm having an out of body experience." I thought to myself, "well now, so am I."

I knew that Bill trusted me and it was a role I tried to assume humbly as I became good at quick embodiment of his ideas and concepts. It was not always easy to be examined so closely by others, but it taught me that mistakes are part of self-discovery. The experience gave me access into the work in a completely different way. I was hearing directives, making split second decisions/connections and then embodying the ideas. Ultimately, I had to trust myself and trust being supported by the wonderful people who take his workshops. There were moments of complete joy and also frustration, but I am thankful for the opportunity. I am also thankful that I have shared in the "body" role with so many talented movers!

I feel that the Evans' pedagogy in particular has sustained my beliefs that teaching dance changes lives. I have witnessed Bill in multiple settings leading students with passion and patience and I have adopted these qualities more fully from my years of working closely with him. The Evans technique has offered me new ways to use my own uniqueness and movement signatures within a framework that encourages expanding the dimensions of dance.

The things I am interested in my students learning are vast and ever changing just as in Evans' methodologies. I find it freeing to one day explore one concept and the next day discover a completely new way of teaching the same idea! I am finding some sense of my own technique forming and it has been exciting. The most beneficial thing I have learned through doing this work is to be ready, be open, and trust that wherever you are you can make a difference in people's lives. ♦
Bartenieff Fundamentals Uncovered: Beyond the Basics In this section we offer perspectives on the Bartenieff Fundamentals, in this issue with Effort “uncovered” by Cadence Whittier, Associate Professor of Dance at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, CLMA, and co-director of the Integrated Movement Studies Program.

BARTENIEFF FUNDAMENTALS

USING LMA EFFORT TO ENHANCE BODY CONNECTIVITY

This article explores how to use Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) Effort theory to expand your expressive range and strengthen your body connectivity. We are in the realm of Effort when we consider the overall energy, emotionality, and dynamic quality of any given movement. Consider the following quote from Rudolf Laban’s text Language of Movement:

“We not only alter the positions of our bodies and change the environment by our activity, but bring an additional color or mood to our movements from our psyche… An observer of a moving person is at once aware, not only of the paths and rhythms of movement, but also of the mood the paths in themselves carry, because the shapes of the movements through space are always more or less coloured by a feeling or an idea.”

When Laban writes about “mood…coloured…feeling…”, he is writing about Effort. Expressively, Effort heightens the feeling-tone and emotionality of a movement.

There are four main categories within the Effort framework and each category is broken down into two polar parts:

- **Time Effort — Sudden and Sustained Time**, describes how a person’s intuitive sense of time causes him/her to move. Is s/he urgent? Or, does s/he linger?

- **Space Effort — Direct and Indirect Space**, describes how a person attends to his/her environment. Is it pinpointed or expansive?

- **Weight Effort — Strong and Light Weight**, describes how a person engages his or her mass as s/he moves. Is s/he moving powerfully or delicately?

- **Flow Effort — Bound and Free Flow**, describes the energetic quality of a person’s ongoing movements. Are they controlled or unconstrained?

Functionally, embodying different Efforts will change the physical organization of your body: your muscle tone, proprioceptive responses, neuromuscular connections, Breath Support, and body sequencing will all shift and change as your Effort-life changes. Experimenting with Effort as you perform your Bartenieff Fundamental (BF) sequences will therefore create different moods and dynamic statements. For example, a Core-Distal (Starfish) Opening and Closing performed with outpouring power (Free Flow and Strong Weight) looks and feels quite different than a Starfish
Opening and Closing performed with contained delicacy (Bound Flow and Light Weight). Take a moment to embody both of those examples:

Do you feel the force and momentum that accompanies the first example? Similarly, do you feel how the second example promotes an airy but controlled movement quality?

Use of a particular Effort or combination of Efforts will change how you execute the BF sequences. Use the following Table as a “map” for exploring the functional and expressive benefits for each Effort quality. Add to these benefits as you explore Effort in your Bartenieff Fundamentals sequences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Functional Benefits</th>
<th>Expressive Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudden Time</td>
<td>Moving with speed and agility</td>
<td>Performing with an urgent attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustained Time</td>
<td>Drawing movements out; Suspending movements</td>
<td>Performing with a lingering attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Space</td>
<td>Moving with precision; Channeling a movement in space</td>
<td>Performing with focused awareness or a single-minded attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Space</td>
<td>Moving with multiple points of focus</td>
<td>Performing with an expansive attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Weight</td>
<td>Moving with power and force</td>
<td>Performing with a bold and commanding attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Weight</td>
<td>Moving with delicacy and lift</td>
<td>Performing with a gentle or soft attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bound Flow</td>
<td>Moving with control</td>
<td>Performing with a contained and measured attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Flow</td>
<td>Moving with fluid ease</td>
<td>Performing with an outpouring and carefree attitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Navigating through LMA Effort provides you with both flexibility and specificity. Put this idea into practice by performing each Effort quality in isolation as you rehearse your BF sequences from the BETI modern dance classes. For example, play with:

- **Strong Weight during Thigh Creases.** Raise your leg with bold determination and lower it back down with a firm “stomp!”

- **Indirect Space Effort during Starfish Openings.** Expand your focus and attend to the vastness of the space around as you open into a Starfish supported on your side.

- **Sudden or Sustained Time during Diagonal “X” sit-ups.** Indulge in the moment when you first arrive on your sitz bones or prolong the descent down the diagonal to the “X” on the floor. Or, do the opposite: raise and lower your upper body with sudden and excited bursts of energy.

Take a moment to investigate the other Effort elements: Light Weight, Direct Space, Bound and Free Flow. What words and images come to mind as you play with these qualities? How does each Effort quality challenge your body connectivity in different ways? How does the mood of the movement shift as the Effort-life shifts?
Also experiment with the Effort qualities in combination. For example, embody:

- **Light Weight and Free Flow during Starfish Openings and Closings.** Fold all six limbs in toward the center of your body with an unconstrained and airy energy. Then, expand all six limbs away from your core center with delicate effervescence.

- **Sudden Time, Direct Space, and Strong Weight during level changes:** Immediately and powerfully channel your body’s energy into space as you change levels: from the “X” into a ball supported on your shins or from the arabesque penchée to the forward pelvic shift to the floor. Allow urgency, force, and pinpointed accuracy to drive your level changes.

A journey through Effort reveals numerous dynamic possibilities and “coordinates the entire being in a dynamic way.”

Next time you experience difficulty with your Bartenieff Fundamentals sequences, change your Effort-life and investigate how that affects your body connectivity. Maybe a particular Effort quality will help you coordinate your breath with your movement phrasing, or establish greater core support and lower body grounding, or release undesired tension in your body. There are many possibilities to explore. What new expressive and physical connections do you discover as you play with Effort?

---

1 I explore these ideas further in my forthcoming book on ballet pedagogy.
WHAT’S IN MY POCKET?

I recently experienced a first: teaching at a dance convention. This type of gig wasn’t on my bucket list, but when the opportunity presented itself, I thought sure, why not. Truth be told, I found the experience exhilarating. Teaching a 50 minute class in a hotel ballroom on a small elevated stage to as many as 75 “junior dancers” ranging in age from 5 to 15 is a unique, not to mention demanding experience. While there were fewer “senior dancers” (those over the age of 16) the challenge of keeping everyone in the room engaged was still present. During each class, I left the little stage to “work the room”—offer suggestions and words of encouragement; told a few jokes—Why did the ballerina stop dancing? (It was tutu hard!); pulled out a 24 inch piece of elastic, which seemed to capture almost everyone’s attention for a brief period, and explored inversions, spirals and the concept the movement rides on breath among others.

Looking back, I now realize that teaching in this type of environment—essentially a series of master classes—gave me an chance to brush up on my classroom management techniques but more importantly it provided me with an opportunity to consider some of my fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning and ponder how I might explore some of the underlying concepts of the Evans Method in such a context. One essential belief that informs my work is that teaching and learning are about being in relationship—relationships between me and the students and between and among the students. And while it’s challenging to build a relationship in 50 minutes with dancers whom I don’t know and will likely not work with again, I feel it’s important to try. Below are some of the ways I worked to build relationships with the dancers at the convention as well as strategies I use with my current students at The College at Brockport:

1. Remind myself that I don’t teach technique, I teach people (borrowed from William);
2. Remain fully present with who is in the room and craft a class based on their needs;
3. Use a circle formation to enable students to see and witness each other;
4. Look students in the eyes (and call them by name);
5. Create a serious yet relaxed atmosphere, one that includes high challenge, low threat and elements of humor;
6. Create opportunities for students to dialogue with a partner and/or me about what they are experiencing, noticing, discovering about themselves and/or their partner;
7. Create opportunities for reflection/personal meaning making;
8. Ask questions that invite students to investigate their process and consider what they are experiencing;
9. Invite students to set and refine goals throughout the class/semester;
10. Enable students to reveal their personal uniqueness through choice, problem solving and improvisational activities; and
11. Encourage student to engage the thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting aspects of themselves.

I recognize that it takes at least two to be in a relationship, so how I work to cultivate relationships looks different in different contexts and is based on a negotiation with the people in the room—their interests, desires, expectations—in combination with my interests, desires, exceptions. Over the years it has been easier to cultivate stronger relationships with some students more than others. Regardless of the amount of exertion required, I find it exceedingly important and potentially transformative. It was Carl Jung who said, “The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”

Even if you don’t aspire to work on the dance convention circuit any time soon, I invite you to take some time to reflect on what you value and believe about teaching dance and how those beliefs shape and guide your daily practice. Gaining clarity on what you value and believe will enable you to make those beliefs visible and operative for you and your students. ♦
Teacher Exploration: Embodying Strong and Light Weight

1. **Explore Light Weight Effort.** Allow your whole body to lift and float upward with Light buoyancy. Imagine your body is a helium balloon hovering above the ground. As your vertebrae, chest cavity, and organs fill with helium, your body transcends gravity’s pull. Feel this quality travel from your torso to your limbs as you embody the Light Weight words listed below:

   - Delicate
   - Gently
   - Buoyant
   - Airy
   - Sprinkle
   - Softly
   - Billowing
   - Misty
   - Tenderly
   - Tip-toe
   - Whisper
   - Wispy

   Next, perform a few movements from your dance technique combinations as you embody each of the words: a wispy gliding tendu, a billowing port de bras, a tiptoeing piqué, a sprinkling pas de bourrée, or a buoyant relevé, a wispy leg swing, for example.

2. **Explore Strong Weight Effort.** Allow your lower body to descend causing your hip, knee, and ankle joints to crease and flex slightly. As you do so, establish the connection between the ground and your feet; drive your legs into the ground like the roots of a tree and enliven your center of gravity with a powerful and firm intensity. Feel how this quality travels from your lower to upper body; adopt a commanding posture in the ribs and shoulder girdle and let this energy travel outward to your arms and head. Maintain these qualities in your whole body as you embody the Strong Weight words listed below:

   - Resolute
   - Powerful
   - Firm
   - Explode
   - Thunderous
   - Booming
   - Mighty
   - Roaring
   - Forceful
   - Herculean
   - Vigorously

   Next, perform a few movements from your dance technique combinations feeling the strength and power in your upper body as well as in your lower body: a vigorous leg swing, a resolute port de bras, a powerful turn, or a booming pas de bourrée, for example.

Now that you have had the opportunity to embody Weight Effort on your own, think about how you would use Strong and Light Weight in a combination from one of your dance technique classes.
1. **Recall a movement sequence you used in class recently.**

2. **Include Light and Strong Weighted qualities into the movement sequence as you rehearse it.** Any step can be performed with Light or Strong Weight; incorporate at least three moments of Lightness and three moments of Strength in the sequence.

3. **Think about how you would describe your Weight Effort choices to your students.** Use your own imagery and the words from the *Teacher Exploration* table. For example, expand the names of the movements/steps to include their dynamic quality: *a firm rond de jambe, thunderous leap, whispering pas de bourrée, or gentle spiral*. Also, consider how you use the intensity of your voice to emphasize the Weight Effort qualities needed in the movement sequence. For example, use a soft or faint voice when the steps you are describing should be performed with Light Weight, or use a firm or booming voice when they should be performed with Strong Weight.

4. **After your students have had the opportunity to perform the sequence, ask them to create their own Weight Effort words, images, and sounds.** Inviting the students to make evocative language and sounding choices encourages dynamic variation and personal ownership of the material.

5. **Notice how Light and Strong Weight enhance the technique of your students’ upper and lower bodies.**

   Imagining the upper body floating upward and outward like glistening mist, for example, may help your students achieve a lengthened and lifted posture with greater ease. Similarly, moving the upper body firmly with the resolute power of a lion may help them broaden their torsos and arms and achieve grounded upper body postures. *How did Light and Strong Weight enhance their upper body technique in your movement sequence?*

   Imagining the lower body as voluminous clouds propelled by delicate puffs of air, for example, will help your students achieve greater buoyancy during lower body weight shifts and gestures. This is useful when they need to convey the illusion of defying gravity or when moving lightly and quickly, a quality often required in fast footwork. Similarly, imagining the booming sounds of a timpani drum propelling the lower body through space will help them perform jumps, travelling phrases, and balances with greater power, a quality that often appears in across-the-floor sequences. *How did Light and Strong Weight enhance their lower body technique in your movement sequence?*
What have you learned in your bones and in your heart from dancing in William's company?

Developing a personal pedagogy philosophy has been a goal in William’s certification program. Over the past 10 years, working with William, Don, and everyone who has gone through the cert. program, I have developed a on going ever expanding teaching philosophy. Here are a few key points:

- That learning is an “inner education” and that dance is a philosophy.
- That I need to strengthen our students’ power of self-belief, feeling of self-efficacy, and the belief that they can accomplish what they set forth to do.
- That I need to encourage my students to rely on their inner resources, to use their intuition and the ability to extemporize and innovate in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- That I need to build deep trust and respect among us, and help us get beyond the devaluing prejudices that we all hold.
- That I need to put us in situations that will cause us to reach deeply into ourselves so that we will evoke our higher nature and have us experience that we are all connected.
- That I need to allow us to learn from the entire experience; how to be flexible and adapt quickly to change and new environments.
- That I need to recognize the possibilities in my students and to honor their individual talents.
- And that I need to honor process above all else.

I was inspired by his dances because of the depth and breadth of his work and this brought so much personal satisfaction. I learned that my artistic approach was valued and necessary to the success of the dance. He honored me and that made me work very hard to give his choreographic vision life. I also learned to love to dance with others (how could you not love dancing with William, Don, Linda, Rip, Shirley, and Deborah?). I learned to enjoy the “cleaning” process as much as the creative process. I learned to “see” and “feel” and “sense” the big picture and my place within it.

I also learned to be a better teacher, coach, and choreographer. I learned to see through the lens of an artist.

What does the Bill Evans pedagogical approach bring to your teaching?
I have also adopted this approach in my pedagogy classes. My students are asked to develop their own personal belief statements and from their statements they are then asked to develop their philosophy of dance education. Goals, objectives, and strategies are built from their philosophy. Many of these students confuse teaching with “giving a class.” All my students are amazed at what it means to use “best practices,” national dance standards, multiple intelligence theory, and Erickson’s stages of human developmental in planning their scope and sequence of their curriculum. Where once they thought they could enter a class, without a lesson plan, and teach someone to dance, they leave equipped with knowledge that will guide their journey to becoming a well-planned and inspiring teacher. They leave knowing that teaching is an art form and that teaching is a vocation. One of my students wept as she read her statement of belief. I asked her why it was so emotional for her. She replied, “No one has ever asked me what I believe.” So, as a member of the certification team, I have learned how to guide future dance educators to become more vested in the process of the art of teaching.

In addition, this approach has made me more self-reflective and I have changed my classroom to be a place of reflection. It has taken me over 10 years to develop ways to engage my students in meaningful reflection. In the beginning, they used reflection as a way to whine, complain, or blame others for their struggles and challenges. They rarely affirmed what they were accomplishing and most could not self-assess their growth. I changed the format in which they wrote by having them reflect online. All entries were public, giving everyone an opportunity to read and respond to the thought of others. I improved my “prompts” by asking them to share their insights on their growth that were broader than what was physically happening in the classroom. By having them comment on their peers’ writing, they began to become mentors for each other by encouraging and offering suggestions through difficult times. I also saw a change in the classroom in that they became more involved in each other’s learning.

**How has your long association with William changed you as a dancer/teacher/person?**

William saw more in me than I saw in myself. His trust in me has made me want to be the best dancer, teacher and person I can be. I want to be worthy of that trust. Don, plays a big role in this, too. Don’s positive approach to life has always lifted me up and has helped me see the best in others. They both have supported my growth and have given me the encouragement to share my journey with others.

When I was teaching in China, they were with me. After teaching a class at Shanghai Normal University, using the Evans’ teaching approach, I wrote the following reflection:

> What will I take away from this experience? That dance is a universal language and that when you move together barriers dissolve. That having an open heart opens hearts. That touch and laughter heals. That kindness fills me up. That I love teaching. That there is beauty and hope and honesty in people. That dance has been one of my greatest teachers. And that at age 59 I still have something to give.

**What recommendations do you have for certification students as they try to assimilate William’s concepts and approach into their own teaching style, so that they honor his pedagogy and continue to develop as individuals?**

I found it important to teach the material that resonated with me. I also recommend not trying to teach too much as you integrate this material into your teaching practice. Small chunks helps you practice the language and concepts in many areas of your class. I also suggest that you take a concept that you struggle with and tackle it in your class. You will embody it faster.
How do you make an egg roll? You push it!

What do you call a cheese that’s not yours?
Nacho cheese!

What do you call a cow with no legs?
Ground beef!

What time is it when 10 elephants are chasing you? 10 after 1:00!

What did one eye say to the other eye?
Between you and me, something smells!
Why I’m now offering more opportunities for improvisation

in dance technique classes

I am currently in Winnipeg for my annual residency at the School of Contemporary Dancers. Each morning, I’m teaching a somatics lab for the students in the Professional Program (BFA equivalent) followed by an advanced technique class for professional dancers from different companies and third and fourth year students in the Professional Program. At the end of yesterday’s class, I asked the dancers to begin modifying the across-the-floor pattern I had just shared with them, playing with the sequence, the rhythms and the effort life, as they danced from one corner to its opposite two at a time. I then asked them to interweave with my pattern anything else we had investigated in that class; the only restriction was that they must continue to move across the floor. I asked our musician to play whatever he liked.

I gave this process about 15 minutes to unfold, and was increasingly delighted by what I witnessed. Each student selected a wide variety of movements from throughout the class, ingeniously finding ways of making stationary patterns travel and enjoying surprising transitions (and continuity) from pattern to pattern. They became more and more vibrant, as they engaged individual creativity in this problem-solving process and found ways of bringing their unique movement signatures, preferences and skills into the experience.

This experience served as a form of assessment. I could see what they had retained, what interested them, how they interpreted what I had shared with them and how much variety I had included in the class. As we came to our closing circle, there was a sense of genuine exhilaration among the whole group—even the normally quiet musician was enlivened by the experience.

They were still learning “technique,” of course, because they were revisiting not only the patterns I had included in the class but also the underlying concepts I had emphasized and which they had embodied. They were also bringing themselves more into the process, including the decision-making function of the psyche as well as the sensing, feeling and thinking functions I had encouraged them to engage throughout the class. Those who were ready to jump emphasized airborne moments from the class; those wanting to explore their groundedness emphasized sliding, rolling propulsions at the low level. Some emphasized explorations of time and rhythm, others dynamics. Each revealed aspects of her/himself that may have not been brought out in this class otherwise.

Over the past few years, I have increasingly included improvisational explorations of movement concepts within my technique classes. I usually begin by introducing a formal exploration of these concepts, within a structured sequence with set phrasing. I then invite
students to modify my sequence, emphasizing what holds the most aliveness for them today and following their own breath rhythms. I sometimes invite them to select two portions of a pattern, one that felt one most satisfying and one that was the most challenging, and suggest they build their exploration around those two segments. Such an exploration is often followed with a chance to reflect upon, wrap words around and describe their experience with a peer or even with the whole class.

When teaching new students in a master class, such improvisations allow dancers to move vigorously and fully for portions of the class, rather than having to spend the whole class learning the counts and sequences of unfamiliar patterns. When teaching a semester-long course, I shift the improvisational explorations through different portions of the class throughout a three or four-week period. I sometimes open with an improvisational exploration of the B.F. concepts still resonating with them from our previous class. By witnessing their work, I can see what they have retained, what interested them and what still needs clarification. I find improvisation explorations particularly useful in the big “dancey” phrase that usually constitutes the heart of a class. Some students struggle with counts, others with remembering sequences, some with my dynamics. When they struggle exceedingly, part of them shuts down and frustration can overwhelm them. By asking them to do the dance as I structured it and then continue to explore my dance in their own rhythms, dynamics and sequences, those struggles diminish and they are able to draw on their personal strengths and gifts to investigate the concepts I initially emphasized in ways that I would not have imagined.

By separating underlying concepts, themes and principles from my particular choreographic forms and style, students are better able to transfer the knowledge they generate in my classes to the technique classes they take from other faculty in our department, and to their work in repertory, improvisation and composition courses and in their own choreography. The technique class improvisational process demands that students take personal responsibility for their level of engagement in my classes. When they realize that their personal choices are important and can help them dance in compelling ways, they feel more empowered and confident and understand that technique concepts, principles and themes transcend dance styles.

There are possible pitfalls, of course, especially the tendency of some students to use improvisation as a time to check out and fall back into comfortable personal clichés. I have created a strategy that helps with this problem: When I first introduce improvisation in a semester-long technique course, it is in “transition” dances—usually of eight measures—that happen as one group of dancers replaces another. Each dancer witnesses a partner as she/he investigates a movement pattern and then they replace other in space while investigating aspects of the pattern improvisationally. I request that each student keep dancing for the entire transition dance and that they stay engaged in investigation. If I see that they are just “wafting” around (falling back into personal clichés), I stop them and ask them to repeat the process. I encourage them to be interested in what they are doing and potentially interesting to anyone observing them. Sometimes, I have them repeat the transition dance process while their partner observes and then gives feedback. Some questions are, “Did you perceive that your partner was genuinely investigating something about this dance? If so, what? Was your partner engaged? Was she/he engaging?”

By emphasizing that learning is active and that improvisation can be an enjoyable
problem-solving experience and a chance for each student to bring her/his unique voice into the process, I find that most students understand pretty quickly how much they have to gain by fully engaging in these opportunities for exploration. Once I perceive that they have bought into the process, I begin to use improvisational technique explorations gradually throughout the whole class.

I sometimes allow the students to guide themselves in these improvisational technique explorations. Other times, I will offer verbal guidance, emphasizing the concepts we are prioritizing in that day’s class and/or guiding them toward more internal awareness or a greater range of dynamics—whatever my intuition tells me will help make these explorations more relevant to and useful for them.

If you haven’t yet tried including improvisation in technique classes, I encourage you to do so. Start in a small way and build on your successes. One unanticipated benefit for busy teachers is that you will need to prepare fewer movement phrases for your classes. It has become my goal in recent years to “never work harder than my students,” not because I’m lazy, but because it is through their engagement and problem-solving that they grow. If I can structure their engaged learning and then step back and give only the guidance I perceive they need, we all benefit.
International Conference:
Teaching Somatics-Based Dance Technique begins June 20th!

Join us at the College at Brockport for a three-day conference featuring renowned dance educators, performers, and somatic practitioners from across the United States, Canada, Europe and Mexico. On the schedule are over 25 presentations and workshops representing a variety of somatic modalities: Alexander Technique, Bartenieff Fundamentals, Body-Mind Centering, Brain Gym, East-West Somatics, Integrated Movement Studies, Laban Analysis and others; keynote addresses by Dr. Martha Eddy, William Evans and Don Halquist, and two dance concerts with soloists and ensemble performers from across the country. As a taste for what’s in store, here’s an excerpt from Martha Eddy’s article: “A Brief History of Somatic Practices and Dance: historical developments of the field of somatic education and its relationship to dance,” published in the Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices, Volume 1 Number 1 2009.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the historical emergence of each of these somatic movement disciplines is that they defined, and now share, a theme that there are many possibilities, no one truth, and always the option to make choices if one chooses to take responsibility for one’s body and living process. (19)

The somatic paradigm supports a hypothesis that awakening the body expands the mind and beckons somatic dance professionals to become strong both of body and mind. Within the contexts of the academy, more somatic research can be shaped with this fortitude... The marriage of dance education and somatic education has seen numerous benefits—tips for longevity and the honing of our living instrument, inroads to creative process...empowerment through self-authority...and increasing communication...When influenced by somatic inquiry, choreography and dance should well become of increasing interest to academic inquiry, especially as its impact on modern culture becomes more known. (23)

Dance and Somatic Education share the gauntlet: how to study, awaken, and even canonize the ‘elusive obvious,’ [Moshe Feldenkrais] and bring forth the depth of knowledge that emerges from each field, separately and together, out of the ranks of ‘fleeting moments’ and into the ranks of Csikszentmihalyi’s ‘Creative,’ with a capital ‘C.’ (23-24)

-- Martha Eddy
37th Annual Bill Evans Summer Institute of Dance
The College at Brockport
Brockport, New York
June 23 - 29, 2013
Session I: Teachers’ Intensive (for professional dance educators, dance graduate students and undergraduate students in dance education)
Faculty: William Evans, Don Halquist and Cadence Whittier
Courses: Bartenieff Fundamentals, Evans Laban-Based Modern Dance Technique, Laban-Based Improvisation and Composition, Laban-Based Ballet, Pedagogy Seminar

Saint Mary’s College
Moraga, CA
July 1-6, 2013
Session II: Teachers’ Intensive (for professional dance educators, dance graduate students and undergraduate students in dance education),
Faculty: William Evans, Don Halquist, Debra Knapp and Suzie Lundgren
Courses: Bartenieff Fundamentals, Evans Laban-Based Modern Dance Technique, Laban-Based Improvisation and Composition, Pedagogy Seminar, Special Evening Events.

William Returns as Fulbright Program Specialist
Guatemala City, Guatemala
July 8 - 20, 2013
Evans will conduct a follow-up workshop in Developing a Personal Pedagogy of Dance Technique for El Centro de Danza e Investigación del Movimiento-Center for Dance and Movement Research, Artes Landivar, Universidad Rafael Landivar in Guatemala City, Guatemala. During his time in Guatemala, Evans plans additional activities. For more information: agaravito@url.edu.gt

Bill Evans Dance Company performs at Jacob’s Pillow, Inside/Out Stage
Becket, Massachusetts
August 22, 2013, 6:15 - 7:00 p.m
For the second consecutive year, BEDCO will appear in the historic Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival. Choreography by Bill Evans will be: Impressions of Willow Bay, Los Ritmos Calientes, and Tres Tangos. Performers will be: Kathy Diehl, William Evans, Leah Fox, Don Halquist, Cheryl Johnson, Leanne Rinelli and Adrian Safar.

Transitions:
Congratulations to Falon Baltzel (MFA 2013) on her graduation, and for her new position at the Hathaway Brown School in Shaker Heights, Ohio
and to Courtney World on her new position at the University of the South in Swancee, Georgia. We’ll miss you in the Brockport area!