

Barbara Angeline – NDEO Webinar May 18, 2020

Pedagogy and Mechanics for Online Physical Dance Practice - FAQs

Hi all,

There were several great questions in the Q&A tab in Zoom and in the Chat. Some were answered after the question was typed in. Some also have answers in the PowerPoint slides, so please check there and contact me if you still have questions. I spotted a few that I have answers for now.

Thank you for joining me!

Barbara Angeline

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From NS: When you use Zoom, does it accurately show the side you're demonstrating i.e. if you're doing the right side facing away from screen so students can learn as if they're behind you during class? When I tried using Facebook live, it mirrored everything--I was doing the right side but it flipped it to the left side. So, I couldn't use it. YouTube pre-recording videos worked.

Barbara Angeline: Zoom gives you both options. In Video settings, I choose "Mirroring" because it messes with my brain to look at myself in the computer, lift up an arm and see it appear on the other side of my body. Choosing this setting puts your body orientation the same as that in the studio. If you face students and lift up your left arm, you need to say "right arm up" (or don't say anything at all). If you face away, it's like facing away from them in the studio.

From TC: yes, I agree! The [digital lag] delay is difficult

From AB: Yes, the lag of the dancers watching is difficult. The counts get wonky.

From AH: Do you find then that the students are behind the music then too?

Barbara Angeline: Yes! This is the absolute trickiest, yet unsolved, issue for me! Students are on the music! Super funky! My strategies so far:

- Watch students with the music – never with counts. I use Amazing Slowdowner to do a slower version of dance phrases if needed. (Favorite app of all time – Thank you, Carolyn Dorfman!).
- I know two things from checking in with students: 1) My movement and music are in synchrony for them, so they see when they are supposed to do their steps/dynamics/etc. 2) They are all together!
- There are YouTube videos for solutions that people have come up with. In the middle of this craziness, they hurt my brain, but I intend to go back and try again.

From SW: Floor work in general seems problematic. Thanks for the modification with hinges.

Barbara Angeline: I have a 5-minute floor combo that we do in our work up every class. The first remote day, we went move by move, with each person rechoreographing the work to include skootches over before flipping from stomach to back, glances preceding each change of direct, etc. Each person came up with the transitions that made it work for them so that the "meat" of the combo stayed.

From RM: Do you use a different approach for different levels of dance technique - from beginning through advanced?

Barbara Angeline: Yes! Much more talking, imagery, and pre-considering of potential frustrations. More space management advice, etc. But this is what we do in studio, too, right? Beginners are much more likely to feel that they are lacking. Advanced students will hang in through frustration or something that feels uncomfortable.

From SM: Could you give an example of when you might ask a student to give a close proximity view? we saw the same view of each dancer

Barbara Angeline: Zoom Webinar does not have the same view features as a regular meeting. I “spotlight video”—or “pin video” and ask students to pin the video—for one student in the same situations in which I would walk over to a student and ask others to watch while the student demonstrates and I give feedback.

From KB: I'd like to know how you correct a student on a movement...an alignment/placement issue? I'm guessing technique classes would need to move to a more somatic approach over outside-in/movement mimicking...?

Barbara Angeline: An inner sense of where the movement comes from is central to my jazz teaching, and yes, students not having a mirror, ensures that this sense is heightened. That said, I think students watching me and watching other students is still possible and valuable. They are able to see me and their classmates.

From NGC: From your experience, what's the time frame for dance class in Zoom? Attention span, screen exhaustion?

Barbara Angeline: Our jazz class is 1 hour 20 minutes (5-minute break after work up to get water) Students are used to dancing that long and are away from “close screen” discussion, watching partners, etc., most of the time. What I've been doing is monitoring myself and time and my body closely to see when my muscles seize up, my brain scrambles and my eyes can't take it anymore.

From BP: Are there any zoom features for a dance & music presentation so attendees can hear both simultaneously & clearly? My students either can't hear me or the music. Or is another conference website more conducive to dance classes?

Barbara Angeline: Check the PowerPoint slide for screenshots (and the YouTube link) for sound settings. The default set up is for background noise to cut out when you speak, so that your voice is prioritized over birds outside your window, etc.

From CMD: I am curious why you used external sound rather than screen sharing the sound for class.

Barbara Angeline: My goal was to bring as much of our class content, training and community to our remote learning as immediately as possible. I used only whatever technology worked in the moment, and I—and my students—quickly improvised when needed. On the fly in our jazz dance classes, each class brought “who knew that was a possibility” moments. (See photo on opening slide of PowerPoint. That day was a doozy!) My old boombox worked the most consistently for all students. I will likely up my game for Fall (if needed), and my department has been great about checking possibilities.

From AD: Do you use the chat feature only for feedback, or do you also give corrections and feedback in front of everyone? I find trying to leave individual chats completely distracts me from the rest of the class. It takes me so much time.

Barbara Angeline: I try to use different ideas as they come to me. I use chat to give feedback sometimes, however, I don't really read chat during class. I ask students to speak in class as much as possible. If they have troubles while we are moving, they use the "body block" signal, not chat.

From DR: Can students record in zoom when you are not gathered as a group, and then the teacher can share with the group?

Barbara Angeline: Anyone with a Zoom account can record, however, I'm not sure it's the easiest way to record a video. With Zoom, the recording is created after you leave the meeting.