

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUTURE CHOREOGRAPHER CREATIVE POTENTIAL AS A COMPONENT OF THE PRESENT-DAY SPECIALIST TRAINING**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The scientific literature review has revealed that there is no unity in defining the «creative potential» concept. Based on an integrated approach, we consider creative potential as an integral characteristic of a personality, which enables to create something new and original. The core of a person's creative potential is a capability for creativity. Analyzing the studies, we note that characteristics and a correlation of the elements in the structure of the personality creative potential depend on the approach that is used when considering the concept.

Having analyzed and summarized the experience of the researchers, who dealt with the issues of the creative potential development (L. K. Veretennikov, S. G. Glukhov, V. G. Ryndak, G. I. Sannikov and others), we came to the conclusion that the structure of the personality creative potential is represented by the following components: a motivational one (creative motivation, interest in creativity, creative activity); a knowledge component (the knowledge of creativity and the ways of creativeness); an operational one (creative skills – the skill and ability to feel a problem, to create something new and original, to communicate in the process of collective creativity, general learning skills, etc.); an emotional-volitional component (volitional self-regulation by behavior in various non-standard situations, manifestation of emotional stability in case of a conflict, manifestation of attitude towards oneself and to other people); an evaluative-reflexive one (competence and ability to realize, analyze, evaluate one's own behavior, creative abilities; reflection and self-appraisal).

The creative potential, thus defined, is a complex, integrated, multilevel, holistic formation. Its multilevel nature manifests itself when considering this phenomenon in time (past, present, future) as the unity

of the pre-actual and the post-actual; determining the development results quality in singling out of reproductive, productive and creative levels, which are regarded as the unity of natural and social, objective and subjective, irrational and rational. It is also possible to identify various levels by the nature of managing the creative potential development process (fully organized by a teacher, partially organized by a teacher and by a student, self-development and self-education of students' creative abilities). Other characteristics of creative potential are that it is systematic, social, dialogic.

The purpose of the creative potential development process is seen in establishing the preconditions for a person's creative self-realization and self-actualization.

The proposed article aims to consider in particular possibilities of the improvisation process for the development of future choreographers creative potential. The personality creative potential development today is one of the most urgent tasks of modern society.

The Ukrainian state formation process, current society democratization, dynamic transformation and a focus on European standards in education, the renewal of the entire socio-cultural situation determine an acute need for future educators' comprehensive development and intensify the need for proactive, creatively enterprising and actively thinking specialists, focused on universal human values. In this regard, the issues of scientific comprehension and mastering of the ideas and methods of choreography pedagogy acquire particular social significance. To address these issues, it is necessary to explore in depth psychological and pedagogical peculiarities of the choreographers professional training and the opportunities for creative potential development in institutes of higher education.

The modern education system of Ukraine today aims to gradually change the upbringing and training in higher educational institutions, focusing on the personality free development. Therefore, the formation of personality's basic culture, which, in our opinion, involves the fair actions of each person towards himself or herself and within own responsibility, becomes of primary importance. Moreover, it is important to ensure its active inclusion in modern socio-economic circumstances of social life, taking into account the rapid technological development.

Since technology shapes a society of users, it has certain implications for the psychological profile of a modern person. Besides, the reality today is that most people are moving to the level of living in their heads, and not with a holistic system called a «body» (a head is part of a body), which, in turn, significantly affects the state of personality creative potential. That is why, in our opinion, today there is a great need for young people to activate (develop) the connection with reality at the body level, activating the sensing of their center (the gravitational one) and conscious attitude towards life through the development of reflection and self-awareness.

Meeting the challenge of the creative personality formation largely depends on an educational institution, on how much the organization of an educational process contributes to the formation of the students' creative potential, since it is creative potential that triggers the self-development mechanism of the creative personality.

The issue of the creative potential formation, being complex, combines several aspects: personality and creativity; personality as an integral holistic system, the essence and significance of the personality creative potential in the process of its formation and development; creative potential developmental characteristics in a higher educational institution.

The analysis of the psycho-pedagogical literature on the problem of creativity showed that the creative potential of a person is a multidimensional complex phenomenon, based on cognitive and motivational factors of human activity.

Psycho-pedagogical science associates professional creativity with the professional abilities of a person, therefore, the theory of understanding abilities and their development can be attributed to theoretical approaches of its research.

At this stage, the issue of creative ability formation in psychological science develops in several directions: cultural-historical, polymodal and integrative ones. The cultural-historical concept of L. S. Vygotsky found its development in the works of L. A. Wenger, V. V. Davydov and others, who regard culture as a specific and peculiar phenomenon of reality, that acts as an object, an instrument and a product of human activity.

As a general trend in the study of creative abilities, a polymodal approach to understanding their nature should be noted, the interrelation of various aspects of a creative personality: intelligence, creativity, motivational sphere, etc. Creative abilities are considered as «the capability of generating ideas» in terms of the originality of manifestations of intelligence, motives, feelings, etc. (S. L. Rubinstein, O. N. Leontiev and others).

Ya. A. Ponomarev, a researcher in psychology of creativity, applied a systematic approach to the study of creative abilities, formulating an important principle for their development and implementation – the law of PLS (phases, levels, stages). He sees the essence of creativity in the combination of intellectual activity and sensitivity to the by-products of own activities.

Let us pay attention to the classification of abilities, in particular, their division into topical (realized in the given conditions and circumstances), potential (natural pre-conditions) and psychological formations, moulded as a result of activity, training, communication, but which are not always realized in specific conditions, if they are not included in the sphere of the personality active actions. This provision is reflected in the writings of such researchers as S. L. Bratchenko, I. S. Kon, A. Maslow, A. V. Mudrik, V. A. Petrovsky, K. Rogers and others.

For our work, it is important to turn to the study of V. D. Shadrikov, who marks out spiritual abilities in the hierarchy of abilities: the abilities of self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-experience, to correlate oneself with the world and with other people. These abilities ensure the spiritual works creation. According to V. D. Shadrikov, spiritual abilities are manifested in striving for spiritual, moral and mental progress, that is, he puts forward the idea of an integral development of all personality spheres<sup>1</sup>.

This thesis has become one of the fundamental principles in the development of professional creativity and the creative potential of future choreographers.

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<sup>1</sup> Psychology of activity and human abilities: Manual, 2nd ed., revised. and extended. M.; Publishing corporation «Logos», 1996. 320 p:

From a philosophical point of view, the concept of «potential» is considered as a source, an instrument, an opportunity, some stock, that can be used to address any task or achieve the objective<sup>2</sup>.

The pedagogical function of potential is realized through the directed role of a creative individual, who initiates the creative transformation of one's own life.

Modern Ukrainian psychologists are also actively exploring the problem of the creative personality formation and development, specifically, V. O. Molyako in his works presented his own concept, which, in particular, envisages the conditions for the creative potential realization. The scientist notes the integrative properties of the personality's creative potential, which conditions to the ability to perform creative activities, capability and readiness for creative self-realization, creative self-development. Creative potential is an extremely interesting formation, which is usually completely hidden from the attention of external observers; moreover, an individual sometimes knows very little or has no knowledge at all of his or her creative potential. The authenticity of each particular person's creative potentials can be assessed only through activities performed, original works obtained. Creative potential becomes real and foreseeable value only when it manifests itself in inventions, projects, books, paintings, films, etc. The scientist distinguishes the following components in the overall structure of creative potential:

- qualities and inclinations of a personality that manifest themselves in favoring a particular activity;
- interest, vector and frequency of occurrence;
- striving to create a new product, curiosity;
- quick absorption of new information;
- manifestation of general intelligence;
- diligence, perseverance, purposefulness;
- speed and quality when mastering skills, skillful performance of certain actions;

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<sup>2</sup> Ryndak, V. G. Creativity. Brief pedagogical dictionary / V. G. Ryndak. – Moscow: Pedagogical Bulletin, 2001. – 84 p.

– the ability to implement one’s own strategies, develop tactics for solving various tasks, search for a way out of challenging, non-typical, extreme situations<sup>3</sup>.

Analyzing the approaches of various scientists and researchers, it can be noted that at present there is no consensus in defining the «creative potential» concept. However, most of them agreed that «creative potential» is the activity, which helps to develop natural abilities, personal individual qualities and eventually helps the personality to become fully fulfilled both individually and socially. Besides, each person is able to creative work, which means that the modern education objective is to find such resources and opportunities, that will ensure the formation of each student’s creative potential in the course of his or her education.

Scientists, in particular T. N. Tretyak, include into the structure of the person’s creative potential such a crucial component as an instrumental one, which anticipates two substructures:

a) a creative “instrument” for addressing the tasks of a certain level, which includes techniques, methods and strategies of constructive thinking;

b) regulating «instrument», which is formed from parts of the emotional-volitional and motivational spheres of a personality, and helps to arrange the interaction of creative potential components<sup>4</sup>.

T. N. Tretyak notes that «the creative potential of a person to a great extent «rests» on the following three main «pillars»:

1) techniques, methods, the ways for the problem-solving, the so-called «instrument»;

2) a person’s self-confidence, motivation and will;

3) information, a person's notion about solving a pressing problem, certain building material for creation of the idea for solving the problem.

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<sup>3</sup> Molyako, V. O. Psychological theory of creativity / V. O. Molyako. // A gifted child (“Obdarovana dytyna”). – 2004. – №6. – p. 2–9.

<sup>4</sup> Tretyak, T. N. Psychological readiness of a personality to solve creative tasks / Tretyak T. N. // The ideas of O. K. Tikhomirov and A. V. Brushlinsky and the fundamental problems of psychology (on the occasion of the 80th birthday). The proceedings of the All-Russia scientific conference (with foreign participation). Moscow, May 30th – June 1st, 2013 – M.: Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov, 2013. – p. 351–353.

Each of these main components of creative potential is significant for a person, for the success of his or her creative activity. If the above-mentioned constituents and their components are put together in the form of a pyramid, then a base of the pyramid will be the readiness to solve problems, and at its top there will be a person's self-confidence.

The level of psychological readiness development to solve creative tasks can be determined in particular by the level of tasks' creative components, that are available for solving by a specific person:

1. Work on the task consists only in the implementation of the plan proposed by other participants of the process.

2. Independent working out of a plan for solving the task is carried out.

3. Independent formulation of the task's conditions and the development of the plan to solve it take place.

4. The problem is independently determined, the task's conditions are worked out and the ideas for its solution are formulated, etc.

It is important to understand that the development of psychological readiness for solving creative problems in its direction evolves from the materialization of the idea proposed by other people to the independent problem definition and statement.

Also, there is such a relevant criterion of the person's psychological readiness to solve creative problems as a novelty of the product of this person's activity.

The novelty levels are:

1. Subjective novelty (for example, in the process of creative collaboration with the outside world students discover the already known laws of its construction and development).

2. Objective novelty (for example, the scientific novelty of works as far as scientific communities and other creative associations are concerned, including at the level of copyright certificates).

3. Originality (a specific representation of personality in a product of its activity).

At that, the direction of psychological readiness development for solving problems is from subjective novelty and importance of the product of activity to the objective ones.

Successful human creative activity is also conditioned by the perfection of creative tools, including: a system of techniques, methods, tactics and strategies of creative search. It should also be noted that the level of systematic organization of a person's creative tools is important.

1. A person applies certain techniques and methods of creative activity in order to master them as the problem-solving tools.

2. A person masters the creative means, needed for creative tasks fulfillment.

3. A person demonstrates strategic thinking (systems of predetermined and personally determined actions) in combinatorial actions, in search for analogs and opposites at different stages of solving a creative problem: at the stage of its conditions exploring, at the stage of developing its solution, and at the stage of the idea materialization.

Thus, the vector of psychological readiness development for solving creative problems is directed from the situational implementation of certain means of constructive activity to the strategic organization of thinking<sup>5</sup>.

The development of a subject's creative potential in the educational process, including during training at a higher educational institution, has been considered by many scientists (G. M. Gladysheva, O. V. Golubov, M. V. Kolosova, M. V. Korepanova, V. V. Korobkova, P. F. Kravchuk, M. G. Merzlyakova, L. B. Meshcheryakova, T. A. Salamatova, O. G. Stepanova and others). They analyzed the role and capabilities of various components of the education system in the development process of the personality creative potential.

The scientists note that choreographic creativity may be called an effective means of personality comprehensive development. Its important component is dance, which is an ancient art form. The world is constantly changing, years pass, and people continue to dance, because it gives a sense of self-actualization, fulfillment, naturalness. Through the prism of dance a person explores the world around, tries to interact with

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<sup>5</sup> Tretyak, T. N. Psychological readiness of a personality to solve creative tasks / Tretyak T. N. // The ideas of O. K. Tikhomirov and A. V. Brushlinsky and the fundamental problems of psychology (on the occasion of the 80th birthday). The proceedings of the All-Russia scientific conference (with foreign participation). Moscow, May 30th – June 1st, 2013 – M.: Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov, 2013. – p. 351–353.



it. Choreography represents feelings, such as love, admiration, compassion, hatred. Dance heals the soul sometimes better than words.

Choreographic creativity is diverse: from classical, ballroom dance, folk dance to historico-everyday dance. The interest in modern dance forms and youth dance vocabulary has been mainstreamed.

The synthesizing nature of choreography stipulates for the harmonious personality development by means of modern choreography, combining rhythmic movements, music, sense. Dance art quite successfully contributes to the development of the world's perception through sensuality, an emotional component, visual and motional forms; helps to relieve mental stress and at the same time stimulates intellectual activity.

The art of choreography is able to combine physical and spiritual culture, contribute to a multifaceted personality development. Dance holds an important place among the variety of forms for the young generation successful development. Problems of raising a harmonious individual are more topical in modern society than ever, that is why choreography is especially relevant in the system of means for personality formation. Choreography classes teach students to see and create beauty, to develop creative imagination, imaginative thinking, fantasy. At the same time, choreographic activity contributes to the students' physical development and health preservation; forms movements plasticity and beauty of the body, positive behavior.

Therefore, we regard dance as body movements that are individual to each person. They characterize that person, emphasize individual features. Body movements connect the outside world of a person with the inner one and serve as a bridge between that person and his or her essence. They also contribute to awareness and building of connections with others. At the same time, dance is an art that stimulates vitality, restores energy, awakens creativity and improvisation capability. And any human activity is basically a ritual dance or a kind of improvisation. Instantaneous quality, responsiveness, interaction, process and research are the main characteristics of the improvisation concept.

Contemporary dance today, using dance improvisation and structured choreography, focuses on the conscious movement development, relieves muscle clamps, helps to more fully express and reveal our inner self, as

well as opens up limitless possibilities for self-discovery and the formation of a holistic and harmonious personality through one's own body.

Unlike classic dance styles, free dance improvisations aid a person in feeling his or her own body and one's own long-forgotten movements, preserved by muscular memory. An important constituent of improvisation is a psychomotor component, namely: muscular freedom, speed of reaction, harmony of movement (plasticity, coordination of various parts of the body, mastery in dealing with the center of gravity), self-awareness. Improvisation promotes the transfer of focus from thinking to the position of "acting on an equal footing" with the sensations of the body, understanding and following internal impulses, manifestations of creativity (activity, emotional excitability, impulsivity, dynamism).

If we consider human life as a dance, then it can be said that our whole existence is a kind of dance improvisation. However, as experience shows, far from always a person realizes what exactly he or she does and for what. Improvisation techniques can make a difference. When students begin to work with improvisational movements, building the body and interrelationships, they gradually acquire the skill of tracking and realizing what is happening right now "here and now", what movements are performed, what muscles and parts of the body are involved, what is the quality of breathing, which direction of action is taken, which tiers are chosen, what is a pace and rhythm of movements, who is nearby, with whom the distance is greater, who exactly do you choose to contact with, who and how reacts to the proposed actions... And a little later, it becomes possible to carry out the movement, commenting on what is happening, with the ability to constantly remember the breath, not holding it even when there is tension during performance. In addition, the development of feeling and understanding of one's own body contributes to much more accurate understanding of the body language of others.

There are many various questions: how to learn to understand the language of one's own body, how to get rid of self-doubt, how to learn to act from an internal impulse? It depends on many factors, but first of all, on a conscious volition to feel and cooperate with one's own body. And

this applies both to students-choreographers, and to all people involved in contemporary dance.

When nothing new happens in a person's life, the stage of stagnation begins. Development begins with a natural action, a specific reaction, an internal impulse. Due to the fact that during his or her development a person receives a bunch of rules and roles from society, which are to be followed, and the inner essence does not always accept these rules and conditions, the question arises, what choice should I make? How to act so that it is both correct and in accordance with one's own feelings? This has a very bright manifestation in working with students during the mastery of knowledge and practical implementation of tasks in such disciplines as "fundamentals of composition and improvisation", "the art of a choreographer". It is very important for students to understand by what criteria they will be evaluated. And it is very difficult to realize that, in addition to technical content, there should be execution with a focus on "honest with oneself", "clearness and clarity of intentions", taking into account (understanding) spatial interactions, quality of movements and conscious action from an internal impulse, recognizing the influence of attractors and understanding the circle of attention you are in. And all of these applies both to solo, duet, and group work, both in a small form and a large one.

There are different definitions of improvisation. First of all, improvisation is the process of creating a «here and now» composition. Spontaneous improvisation is a process of consistent and structured creation of a form at a specific, relevant moment, which eliminates the significance of the influence of external factors and directives [p. 41].<sup>6</sup>

Improvisation allows you to develop a body that feels, "thinks", and makes decisions based on its own wisdom.

That is why we use dance movement improvisation, which also relies on Laban movement analysis system and Bartenieff Fundamentals, as a universal system in the future choreographers training.

The training of highly qualified, competitive and creatively self-fulfilling specialists in modern choreography is the leading objective of

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<sup>6</sup> Contact quarterly: a vehicle for moving ideas. Biannual journal of dance and improvisation: winter/spring 2007 Vol. 32 NO. 1. p.40-46.

higher professional education and requires the creation of a number of psychological and pedagogical conditions for the creative potential development of a student's personality. Today, one of the most important components of choreographic training is working with improvisation techniques.

Thus, we can say that the improvisation technique is important for future specialists, since according to our data (hands-on experience over 20 years) it involves:

the possibility to allow oneself to be and feel;

the symbolic language of dance, which manifests the content of the personality inner world into the outer world;

the capacity to have sensitivity at the level of a body, movement, action; to have an interest in one's own choice and the creative potential development;

the potential to listen to and hear the universe, to follow the attractors, foreseeing co-creation with the body, taking into account the acquired life experience and impulses that arise as an internal need of «here and now».

Our own movement experience and many years of experience (over 20 years), allows to state that, for persons who practice improvisation, there are three characteristic development phases of their own dance:

1. Initial unconscious movement activity, characterized by high openness, spontaneity of feelings. The main component is the emotional one, and the movements are unpredictable, chaotic, often have no form, are not memorized. When the music is repeated, a motional response can be expressed in another motor variation.

2. The second stage is the creative processing of spontaneous movement material, some systematization. It can be said that an emotional-motional alphabet and the vocabulary of the movement expressive language are being formed. This takes place consciously, in accord with knowledge and personal experience gained regarding the sensation of one's own weight, quality of movements, spatial characteristics, attention, etc., due to differentiation and combination of the processes occurring in the personality inner and outer space.

3. The third phase is characterized by a high level of the movement processes awareness that arise from the internal impulse and have manifestation and development in the outer space<sup>7</sup>.

Human body movements always have various trajectories, reflecting both conscious and unconscious human reactions. Dance, like drawing, always makes it clear what a «habitual movement», «a familiar picture» is. Dance improvisation involves an experiment with movements of unusual and unconscious character. Its results are unplanned and unpredictable, which enables the release from rigid systems of values and habitual patterns of behavior. Being an expression of kinetic subjectivity, dance, on the one hand, disorganizes regularity, hyperstability, and, on the other hand, on the contrary, builds and structures some certain order. And therefore, the process of creating a dance allows students to establish new, conscious and more active relationships with themselves and the world around them, as well as to acquire the skill of conscious work while creating a dance composition structure.

Thus, improvisation allows you to develop the body that feels, and “thinks”, and gives you the opportunity to learn to see, perceive, realize and reflect upon the material from which reality is created, in our case, it is dance. Therefore, practical work involves the use of various improvisational tasks, relaxation techniques and body awareness to develop a subtler feeling of internal signals, movement impulses, a sense of partner, space and time as elements that give rise to interaction and create a composition.

The body is the most important aspect in the work of a dancer-choreographer and any person who lives consciously and efficiently. It is important to realize and understand one’s own bodily reactions and sensations, as well as to be able to act on the basis of internal necessity, taking into account what is happening around, staying in the resource and always having the opportunity to stop, change direction/strength/attention/flow.

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<sup>7</sup> Mova, L. V. Psychological aspects of ensuring personal self-realization of future psychologists in the process of professional training. Manuscript. Thesis of Candidate of Psychological Sciences (Ph.D.): 19.00.07. National Pedagogical Dragomanov University. – Kyiv, 2003. – 167 p.

Thus, an important conclusion can be formulated as follows: for us, the improvisation technique is an opportunity to unlock the personality's potential, to develop a feeling and "thinking" body, recognizing the equal importance of previous life experience and movement from internal necessity. Improvisation allows you to learn how to reflect upon the material from which reality is created, and serves as an integral component of the present-day dancer-choreographer training.

Despite the widespread idea that improvisation is something what 'just happens' and a person does what he or she wants, the art of improvisation requires a certain level of body awareness, physical condition and extended movement repertoire. Contemporary dance and its development in the last decade are able to provide such a solid ground for any dancer-choreographer.

At various times dance attracted the attention of many researchers as a complex, cultural and multifunctional phenomenon and an object of scientific researches. Art, as a mechanism of influence on a person, and the culture of physicality are topical from the period of ancient Greece and until now. In the process of professional training, future choreographers are mastering a large number of movements and exercises, which have diverse execution specifics and require various levels of physical strain. The majority of existing activities with students-choreographers are aimed at the practicing of technical dance material.

Our professional practical experience allows us to state that the following basic principles of body work and movement organization are distinguished in the contemporary dance techniques: breathing, breathing and movement connection; anatomically determined work of bones, joints and muscles; work with the center of gravity, body weight, gravity; work with time and space. But this dance is not only about technical movements of the body. It becomes possible only provided that such of its components are manifested: the mechanical motion on the one hand, and the conscious movement on the other. The usage of somatic and release techniques in contemporary dance allows students to integrate their consciousness and body through movement, while learning the skills of listening to and understanding their bodies, re-discovering their own feelings, sensations, emotions and their nature.

Somatic techniques work with the body and mind as with a single whole. This allows a student to display various aspects of capabilities of the body, which acquires the ability to perform the subtlest movements. However, this becomes possible only under the condition that both movements and personal feelings are the subject of close attention. Learning to be attentive to the body and to act with a minimal effort, a dancer finds out that the mind begins to cooperate with the body, taking its wisdom into account, and the body begins to function better.

If we are to describe briefly what the contemporary dance technique (post postmodern) is, in our understanding, then it is the technique based on the natural laws of the body functioning with regard to the organization of movement and breathing. Muscles' release from excessive tension and the activation of the faction level in movement organization, the natural anatomical work of joints and their strengthening, the structure of the body interrelations and understanding of the qualitative characteristics of movement – all of the abovementioned should precede the mastery of technical dance material (the study of parter techniques, the techniques of fall and counter balance, etc.) as a conscious physical training of a student for further mastering of professional disciplines.

Usually people do not associate stress and overload with the state of their own muscles, but this connection exists and manifests itself in a certain chaos in the muscular system: some muscles are involuntarily disconnected, others are involuntarily overstrained. Psychophysiological excessive tension in the muscle groups of the shoulder girdle is dangerous, but quite common. Excessive tension in these muscles disturbs the state of the circulatory system, which impedes the functioning of the heart, the lungs and the brain.

Given that stress is not the situation in which a person gets into, but the reaction to this situation, it should be noted that, when training a body in a certain way, a modern person has a chance to remain healthy, able to work, to create her own life, filling it with the desired quality. And contemporary dance is exactly that opportunity.

In our work, we take into account a large number of parameters that should manifest themselves in almost every class. The observation during constant conscious personal bodily practice for over 25 years, as

well as the experience of recovery after a rather complicated trauma (rupture of the anterior cruciate ligament of the right knee), allow us to make the following statement: on the one hand, everything that happens to us throughout life, all has an emotional coloring and psychological justification of some kind. On the other hand, all this happens at the same time at the level of the body, whether we are aware of it or not. As for the bodily traumatic experience, whatever the prerequisite for the occurrence of the injury, recovery should occur directly at the level of the body and the laws of its functioning. That is why a modern dancer should be knowledgeable about the body by the following parameters: how human movement is organized, structural peculiarities of the skeletal mobile zones (joints), the understanding what makes the body move in space, what is the center of the body gravity, how the movement of a person from the lower tier to the upper tier in space is organized, what is primary for understanding and training your body and why breathing is acknowledged as the number one item in teaching contemporary dance. And also, what fasciae are and why the experienced dancers-teachers talk so much about them during their classes, how the floor plays the role of a partner and allows you to feel the zones with excessive tension in the body during movement. What BF (Bartenieff Fundamentals) and LMA (Laban Movement Analysis) are, why and how active imagination can contribute to resources restoring and real physical renewal. And since all our personal stories have a manifestation or an imprint at the body level, or rather the muscular clamps and various kinds of excessive tension in the zones that provide our mobility, namely the joints, then exactly how the body-mind connection does occur. And also, how better the inner personal space can be manifested outwardly and influence the quality of the partner interaction. Why “look” and “see” are the verbs essentially different in meaning. How the focus of attention or the lack of it is maintained at the level of the body. What clearness and the clarity of intentions are, and why so much time in the classroom is devoted to the mastering of the “I-message” skill. And finally, where to get inspiration, resource and how to activate your own development of the creative potential. How to act or to create naturally, remaining in the understanding that there is no limit to perfection.



Thus, one should begin with the understanding of how body movement is organized and the formation of the connected breathing skill.

As the experience of a huge number of ordinary people shows, there is such a general tendency that, from an early childhood, movement, which is free and expedient from the very beginning, eventually becomes less expedient and free. There is a lot of unnecessary tension in organizing even simple everyday movements. That is why it is important to remain or return to the use of expedient movements, performed with the lowest possible tension, in order to obtain the maximum efficiency. Such a trend of modern dance as contemporary, is aimed precisely at this.

In other words, while mastering technical dance material, in the first place it is necessary and important to form students' understanding of their body as the integral conscious system that feels and rationally uses the resources of its own organism. What is needed first for this?

It is the formation of knowledge and practical skills, aimed at realizing that the movement process has certain patterns. The upbringing of the motional process on the basis of physiologically grounded controlled movements is the first link of this system. Natural movement protects muscle groups from the use of excessive physical strength. The formation of all motional actions on the basis of expedient movements is the basis for the creation of the phase of the highest physiological conductivity in the mobility zones of the muscular sphere. This phase has a justification in the work of N. Bernstein<sup>8</sup> and promotes the formation of a clear interaction of all muscular structures in the human body.

The joints are actually these zones of mobility. The special attention of choreographer students goes to hip, knee, shoulder, elbow joints and the state of the spine in the lumbar and cervical sections.

As is well known, the physiology of activity establishes the three-phase cycle of the movement process: action preparation, the particular action and a release after the action. If the sequence of the cycle is followed, there is an opportunity to learn quickly enough or consciously allow yourself to effectively manage your own motor process. In doing so, the degree of the physical force usage is significantly reduced, which

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<sup>8</sup> Bernstein, N.A. The Physiology of Movements and Activity / N.A. Bernstein. – M.: Nauka, 1990. – 392 p. (in Russian)

in turn allows consciously and clearly to regulate (to balance) the processes of tension and relaxation, which significantly reduces the possibility of involuntary overstrains in the muscle area.

The formation of self-regulation processes of muscle tension-relaxation is connected, first of all, with the identification of the exact boundaries in local muscle groups, within which these processes are counterbalanced. Local muscle groups around the joints act as such boundaries and, within the same boundaries, the tension is to be compensated.

Joints, as moveable bone connections, have various ranges of mobility. From large mobility in hip and shoulder areas to, in a certain way, limited one in a carpal joint and cervical spine. Also, the physical capabilities of muscle groups around joints vary a lot.

Hip joints have the strongest muscle groups around, that can withstand very big loading. They, together with the muscle groups of the pelvic part of the body, ensure the mobility of the upper part of the body and provide legs with the opportunity to move freely.

Knee joints have relatively strong muscle groups around. On the basis of knee joints flexion and extension, the power muscle level of the lower part of the body is formed.

Ankle joints have the ability to move in all directions, but they have a limited mobility amplitude and the muscle groups around are insufficiently strong and will require additional reinforcement with special exercises for dance performing.

Shoulder joints are the most mobile in the body, they have the greatest amplitude of mobility in all directions, the surrounding muscle groups are strong and they constantly interact with the muscle groups of shoulder-blades, which are the basis of the arm structure. Power muscle level of the upper part of the body is formed on the basis of shoulder joints' movements (in a circle).

Elbow joints have relatively strong muscle groups around, but active independent movement is contraindicated for them, and it should always be secondary.

Carpal joints are very mobile in all directions, but they have a significantly limited amplitude of mobility and relatively weak muscle

groups around. Like elbow joints, they should not have independent isolated active movements.

The main joints of fingers are quite mobile, especially when bending. The mobility amplitude of middle and nail phalanges is much smaller. The muscles around the main finger joints are strong, allowing lightweight fingers to carry out necessary independent autonomous movements.

The thumb is the most moveable in all directions, the thumb base muscle is the strongest in the hand area. It is a lever of the hand power zone and the supporting point of the whole arm on a surface. The use of the thumb base optimal opportunities helps to prevent the muscle groups of a carpal joint from spontaneous excessive tension.

The spine is a chain of small joints, most of which are arthrodial. The most mobile are five vertebrae of the lumbar region and especially mobile are seven cervical ones. Mobile spinal sections are surrounded by the weakest muscle groups.

Joints cannot move independently, without a volitional command. When organizing movements in the area of each of the joints, two factors should be taken into consideration: the structural form of the joint and the direction of natural movement in the area of its mobility.

A spherical or cylindrical form of a structure is typical for joints. That is why movements of the moving parts of the corpus in the area of any joint should be performed along circular or arcuate lines.

It is important to remember that muscle groups around each joint belong to the category of functioning differently. In most cases, they are flexors and extensors. Balanced harmonious development of each group is the key to an optimal functioning of the joint. Considering that physiological flexors are naturally more developed than extensors, in regular activities a person uses flexors more. And more attention should be paid to the extensor muscles in the process of comprehensive development of muscle groups around the joints. This is where the choice of exercises needs to be directed to and focus on when performing certain dance movements.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Mazel, V.Kh. Theory and Practice of Movement. Advice from a Musician and a Doctor. – SPb.: Composer St. Petersburg, 2010. – 200 p. (in Russian)

The skill of regulating “tension-relaxation” of necessary muscle groups during this or that movement is another basic point of contemporary dance. Mastering of this skill is boosted by understanding of the diversity of functions performed by a spine and muscles (the function of a spine is to resist gravity; muscles function is to perform movement) and the conscious regulation of «tension-relaxation» of the corresponding muscle groups during movement.

Conscious relaxation is also an important component for a variety of jumps. Since a jump is performed due to the work of leg muscles, it is important for its effectiveness to keep the muscles of the upper body free (relaxed). This is achieved when a dancer learns to consciously relax the necessary part of the body in a dormant state, remembering the sensations that arise at that moment.

Conscious relaxation and tension also play a significant role in performing movements on the floor (flying low technique), which are connected with keeping weight on the hands when the head moves from the upper level to the lower one or with turns when the body is “torn off” the floor. At the beginning of mastering these elements, as a rule, fear arises in students, which, in turn, creates a natural bodily reaction: excessive tension. Especially, this tension is apparent in forearm and shoulder muscles, that blocks the free action of elbow joints, as well as excessive tension in leg muscles affects the condition of knee joints and blocks them. Possessing the skill of conscious relaxation, a dancer can more quickly cope with the fear that arises, being aware of the body reactions and due to the ability to regulate them (to relax muscles, to engage joints)<sup>10</sup>.

Hence, breathing plays an important role in the process of creating and controlling movement. Therefore, breathing regulation is an important aspect in the formation of awareness. In the process of new movements mastering, it is necessary to be tuned to a calm state, a comfortable rhythm of breathing, which retains its three phases. This makes for effective work, and with the help of deep breathing it is

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<sup>10</sup> Gazarova, E.E. Body and Physicality: Psychological Analysis [Electronic resource] / Elena Eduardovna Gazarova // Telesnost.ru. – 30.04.2005. – Access mode: [http://telesnost.ru/veblog/nashi\\_avtory/gazarova\\_elena\\_eduardovna.htm](http://telesnost.ru/veblog/nashi_avtory/gazarova_elena_eduardovna.htm)

possible to consciously relax the parts of the body that are overstrained. Such practice helps to retain awareness and the focus of attention in the body, helps to perform exercises effectively. Fast, rhythmic or, on the contrary, slow movements, movements that involve hovering (jumps, supports) also require correct breathing and assist in the development of managing a breathing rhythm skill [p. 46-48]<sup>11</sup>. The attention paid to breathing leads to the fact that the awareness of the importance of its regulation arises in the process of training. There comes an understanding that breath-holding and tension are inseparably linked. Therefore, when releasing breathing, deepening it, the dancer helps the body to become freer and more conscious. In the psychological aspect, awareness, the identification and regulation of breathing patterns assist in raising the awareness, identification and regulation of one's own emotional states. This, in turn, contributes to effective vital activity and the support of physical and mental health.

Virpi Yuntti, a fairly well-known contemporary dance teacher from Finland, usually gives the following description of her classes: "I do not teach any particular technique, my class consists of many various techniques and dance skills, which I consider to be quite important, essential, plus the experience, received during my life.

I pay special attention to the "movement integrity", that is, to the advantage of the whole body movement, all joints and the spine. Trying to create the "integral movement", I cannot leave aside such issues as the origination of movement and the impulse that generates this movement.

The next issues of study will be: training the skill of integrating the movement into a single phrase and the correct use of breathing in this process, especially when strength and speed are needed.

I want to teach ergonomic, comfortable movement, but this does not mean that a technique or a composition is simplified.

The class begins with the warming up of all joints in the body, which facilitates the development of arms and legs coordination. Work on the

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<sup>11</sup> Girshon, A. Kinesphere: The Movement Space [Electronic resource] / A. Girshon // Alexander Girshon website. – Access mode: <http://old.girshon.ru/www.dancetrio/Articles/sphere.htm> (in Russian).

floor is aimed at reducing the stress level and physical and mental tension.

The dance compositions, that I propose, study various ways of connecting and combining movements, change of dynamics, that is, strength and breathing.

I can promise the enhanced work of arms and legs, joints movements that are free and logical, the focus on balance, work with the floor (ability to use the benefits of working on the floor).”

Alexandra Konnikova and Albert Albert (“PO.VSTANZE”, Moscow city) are the teachers of contemporary dance and improvisation techniques, who influenced my development as a choreographer and contemporary dance teacher. They usually offered to work during their classes with the technical dance material, consisting of a fusion of release technique, flying low, as well as other body and dance techniques, apprehended and transformed in the process of their regular dance and choreographic practice. During the classes, a lot of time and attention was paid to the development of skills of contact with the floor, the establishment and coordination of links between the body center and the limbs, the development of dynamics through relaxation and the use of natural principles of movement: breathing, weight inertia, spiral movement, etc. The idea of the economically lean, but effective use of the bodily structure evolved along with a self-awareness during movement.

As we can see from the classes description, without breathing it is impossible to function with due quality at the level of physical training (technical). It is important already at early stages to master the habit of breathing while doing improvisation and technical choreographic exercises. If you breathe freely and connectedly, it is possible to understand how to make as little effort as possible, performing even fast movements, and to get the maximum efficiency almost without getting tired. Thus, with the help of breathing it is possible to dose out and control physical workout load<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Lukyanova, E.A. Breathing in Choreography: Tutorial. – 4th ed., Sr. – SPb.: Publishing house «Lan’»; Publishing house «Planeta Muzyki», 2018. – 184 p. – (Books for institutions of higher education. Specialized literature) (in Russian)

It should be noted that during the first classes some students may feel dizzy, drowsy and be in a discomfort state due to the breathing restructuring, but these are logical and temporary phenomena.

Successful training of the breathing habit and mastering the connected breathing, the ability to dance, realizing that an inhale is followed by an exhale and not by breath-holding, and bringing this skill almost to automatism depend largely on the active, attentive and conscious attitude of students to the learning process and their understanding of the necessity for continuous personal development.

Thus, we can make the **conclusion** that the skill of «tension-relaxation» regulation of necessary muscle groups, when performing a particular movement, and mastering the connected breathing are important basic principles of contemporary dance and, at the same time, the components of high-quality physical training. The first technique is a transformation of purely muscle training into the training with conscious use of muscle relaxation and tension while performing exercises of various technical levels of complexity and dance combinations. The acquisition of this skill is facilitated with the awareness of the diversity of functions that the spine and muscles perform (the function of the spine is to oppose gravity; the muscles function is motion execution). It is also promoted with exercises, usually parter in nature, directed at practicing the «stress-relaxation» conscious regulation of the corresponding muscle groups during movement. Actually, along with this, there should be a process of connected breathing mastering by students. Consequently, the opportunity to dance, realizing that an inhale is necessarily followed by exhale, rather than breath-holding, and the efficiently working body allow students to successfully master technical dance material in future remaining in the resourceful state and without being traumatized. Understanding and being aware of one's own personal space, the space of dance, oneself in space and relationships with a partner are the following topics, which will require further consideration.

## **SUMMARY**

Improvisation is considered as an important and integral component of the future choreographer training, which contributes to the

development of the future choreographer personality and his or her creative potential.

Key words: improvisation, composition, creative potential, future choreographer, contemporary dance, dancer's body, breathing.

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