

Shared experiences: interventions in schools

1. How can we intervene in schools? How can we connect with school teachers wishing to develop a dance project?

Today in France, the school interventions are mainly through networking and generally in connection with a show proposed by a company.

They are professional dancers (choreographers and performers) and not necessarily graduated teachers.

Teachers must have a school project approved and financed by a board. (Provided that the school knows the system of school-based interventions). Little information circulates about it in schools unless the school has a partnership with a structure that links the artist and the teachers. On this case; every thing is settled. Each French department works differently, they are mostly related to corporate finances or to each cultural policies.

2. Is dancing also a means of educating people?

-Yes ... dancing is a fun way of thinking in society and of respecting others: listening, watching, analyzing, acting and thinking at the same time.

-Dancing demands discipline and a requirement that makes the child grow up in groups, obeying orders, sharing.

3. What is the purpose (the goal) of these interventions?

The aim is to sensitize children to dance, making them aware of their own body, developing creativity and imagination.

-Opening doors to other arts (painting, music, theater)

4. Does it necessarily lead to the creation of a show with a specific topic?

Before-five years old, it is not necessary to create a show but it is interesting to offer an open class to everybody.

-For older children, having a show makes more sense to interventions. What's more it brings a closer attention and a deeper motivation.

Putting them on a stage, they make them discover a trade, a new place and make them play a part in the "magical world" of the show.

5. What funding for what sort of project? For what length?

Funding is based on the cultural policy of the city, the ranking (zup / zep) of the schools, the budget of the cooperative school. The funding comes from various sources. (drac, région, General Council, a community of commons etc.)

These funds will determine the number of interventions all year long/ for a certain period of time. But it is clear that a minimum number of hours is required if we want to achieve a real project with children and their teachers. Between 8 and 15 hours in a school year seems the most appropriate provided that the sessions are spaced out and that teachers make the

Shared experiences: interventions in schools

children work between each intervention.

6. What audience?

Children aged from 3 to high school (included)

7. Do we separate the mentally handicapped kids from the others in dance? Do we mix them with the other kids?

They have to be part of the group, each difference is an asset for others. The so-called "normal" can lead them. This diversity also creates strong bonds between children who will help each other, to stimulate, to encourage, to promote and generate a strong group cohesion and a real respect for difference.

8. Is dance also a good thing for the the mentally handicapped kids at school?

Absolutely, It is a very good work to help the handicap mental kids in their physique and also mental (confidence, relationships between him and others....)

I think the dance classes are very good for the the mentally handicapped kids because it develops their motility, often they are surprised at their ability, it develops them confidence .

It's a another way to communicate, a way of expression...

How can we help them dance?

A lot of encouragement, to be patience, take a time to explicate one thing and say him when there is a progress

We shouldn't help them too much but keep eye on them, give them as much as confidence. They will watch the others and copy the same things, they often listen to what happen even they seems not there with us.

Will the other kids reject the handicapped ones? How to react when they are rejected?

I think it's important to take a time to explicate the difference of each, the respect to having, to give responsibilities to the kids in saying you can help him....

At the beginning maybe they would but the teachers should explain before. Kids get used to them and understand the difference is part of the nature.

9. How do teachers think of children who have differences at school? What is their conception of dancing in class?

Teachers are often surprised at how dance can reveal some difficulties in children and

Shared experiences: interventions in schools

confuse others yet academically brightest. And that's when they make that determination that they are even more excited to continue this work with stakeholders.

The teachers are happy when they see their kids take pleasure in the dance...

10. How to bring them into the dance? Into the pleasure?

Children usually have fun dancing, learning new things and do not capture the difficulties in the same way as an adult. For more recalcitrant ones, we must know how to decipher their areas of interest and lead them in dance by entering through it.

Use of teaching methods to make attractive and dance out of reach of children

Use imagination to tie dance at the concrete images.

11. How the teacher is involved in the project? What role it plays?

They need to understand that it is their school project with kids, they need to take the preparation workshop before. It is also their responsibility to bring the kids into the project, and let them to participate the project. They become choreographer during the project.

12. The preparation workshop with the teachers before the classes, does is necessary?

It is often necessary to recall that the intervention of a dancer is linked to a school project, which is often at the request of the teachers that we work, but sometimes they tend to think that our role is to do for them. In this case, we strive to remind them that we bring this matter, and that with it they will themselves create their own choreography. We are aids, not their creators. Hence the need for a prior work with them, encourage them and be kind. The teacher has made in the manner of an apprentice chef, he has the ingredients, the recipe but it is he who puts his hand to the dough, working with his students.

13. How to handle discipline in the session and motivate children who are not?

The discipline operates with respect for things, places and people and motivated student. Each person works on his education, it is the same for the speaker. Each dancer has his "stuff" and knows through experience bouncing on sometimes challenging circumstances. Motivate students but does not always obvious. There are some who will always stay tight to dance so be aware and interested in what goes around the dance profession: the stagecraft, costumes etc. ... engage them in other ways the project.

14. What is the role to dancer?

The role of the dancer is to readjust the proposals of teachers, to feed with new proposals to reorganize sometimes. In no case is there to create instead of the teacher. It can also make connections between shows seen by students and fieldwork. Or make the connection

Shared experiences: interventions in schools

between school work and dance. It sometimes has a role as an educator, mediator, although this is not his place.

15. The role of parents? Does them need to follow the progression?

The open-minded parents is important to showcase art projects and allow children who wish to enrol in a school continues to explore the dance.

It is important that parents understand the impact of the practice of an art in child development

Parents should know what their kid practice at the school and follow it all way long but keep distance with. Watch their kid dance at the same time watch also the others kids' works.

16. Which approach to use with toddlers (3 years)?

I think it's the most difficult , It's have to stay in exploration with propositions very simple, to be listen, adapt to their reaction

17. Construct a session: Which media to use music?

The best is to have a musicien but you can use music like "Andrew Kaiser, Henri Torgue et Serge Houppin, René Aubry, Sébastien Libolt, Emir Kusturika..."

What images to use to enhance the quality / deposit required? What objects used to accentuate the quality / deposit required?

Objects: Scarves, handkerchiefs, ball, rope, hoop, play dough ...

What is your process of assistant?

First session is always more or less the same whatever is the type of public: space (be able to occupying it without being stuck), time (arrest, restart in music or without, together or alone), moved what leads necessarily a notion of management of one and the others, in connection with the others.

18. How to deal with proposals to adapt the children?

It is important to adapt itself to the children but you should not lose sight of this verse which we want that they reach

19. Is there a scenic production at the end of the project?

A real theatre which helps kids to know how it goes during a show and what kind of job it could be in an artist team.

Shared experiences: interventions in schools

20. Has the project necessarily a link with an artist's choreographic production?

I think, it's not necessary because often there is a link with the school project and anyway the artist nurtured its creation.

And often the children saw the artist's production.

Yes, they will need advices. Also, kids need someone who is not the same person at the school all the time to complete the project, they enjoy more.

21. Think you whether it's a means to make sensitive new public about contemporary dance?

The intervention will only work if the teacher is physically involved in the project

or: The procedure works only if the teacher is physically involved in the project