

ESSENTIALS

For Dance Education

The Hip Hop teacher's school year handbook



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WELCOME

TO MY CLASS

I'm here to be your personal guide to all things hip hop, and all things education. Whether you're a teacher new to hip hop, a dancer new to teaching, or simply need fresh ideas, I have answers for you. I first developed a curriculum to serve as a quick reference for teachers that needed an alternative view on class. After offering my curriculum to thousands of teachers around the globe, I began to realize that what many teachers out there really need is a handbook. A place to reference for more than just a subject, but the details that follow. This is the place to go for details.

As you dig through this book, you're going to find an encyclopedia of information. This isn't "Dance Education" plus "Hip Hop". That doesn't give you a hip hop class. Copying and pasting traditional class guidelines does something to hip hop that we want to avoid. So here we are, getting ready to structure our classes, making sure we don't dilute hip hop along the way.

A Little About Me

So who am I

to tell you how to teach anyway?

Am I the guru of hip hop?

Am I a master teacher?

Am I a pioneer of street dance?

No. I am forever a student of hip hop, street dance & everything in between. I do not claim ownership over street dance. I don't even claim to be the one who knows the most about these styles. However, I can promise you I have an extensive background in 4 areas of dance:

Hip Hop

Breakin

Locking

Popping

That still isn't enough. What you need is someone who values and studies hip hop, who has training in education. That's who I am. I actually started my dance training in a performing arts high school, and continued into college. I had a massive interest in hip hop, but I took the dance I could get my hands on at that time. That meant my college and high school years were spent with an immense focus on ballet and modern dance. This is where I learned about music, elements of composition, human anatomy, class structure, dance education by age group & much more. It was this experience I had in a school environment that stuck with me when I finally did get the chance to learn my hip hop.

Taking this endless information on street styles, I sat down and structured my classes. I thought about everything I learned about childhood education. I considered what a structured dance class felt like. Then, I asked myself the same questions every single time i developed a method for educating.

My 4 Most Important Questions

- Would a student at this age understand this?
- What are the essential ingredients of this dance style?
- Did this approach take anything away from what makes the movement Hip Hop(or popping, or breakdancing, etc..)?
- Does this help a dancer grow long term?

Once these ideas are worked out, I'm ready to apply my new method to dancers. I try and look at the bigger picture when teaching. I recognize that a (way too) high percentage of hip hop classes are a *choreography only*. This approach is frequently debated and defended. I'm here to tell you that a "latest trend" choreography based dance class is limiting to a dancer's potential. Think about your other dance styles for a moment for comparison.

Ballet

Hundreds of years old. Classical music and barre - *Foundation*

Hip Hop

Developed in the 70's. Funk music, Breakbeats, early hip hop - *"Old School"*

The truth is, hip hop has foundation too. When I teach a workshop and I ask the students what they learn they respond with, "Stuff", "Choreography", "Dances" . Occasionally I'll get the "Popping" answer, to which I follow up with "Awesome. What is popping?"

****Shoulder Shrug****

This is due in part to the reliance on the term "old school" to separate foundation from hip hop class. Kids are frequently educated in a "We do the new stuff" way. Imagine hearing a kid say that about ballet!

So I'm here to tell you that **FOUNDATION MATTERS**

It's old school the way Martha Graham is old school(Told you I trained in Modern!) . It's old, yet very relevant. I think the problem is that there is a serious lack of sources for real street dance information. Many people pick up from favorite choreographers and favorite music. They forget that yes, there are rules here too. Let's also not forget that our young dancers shouldn't be picking up where their favorite choreographers left off. They should be learning what THEY learned , not just the end result (choreography) . That's how we preserve an art form. Stress the foundation. Teach them how to be unique and creative with that, and THEN we make something fresh out of it. You know, like the other genres get to do.



Ok. Enough background. Let's get started. On the following page you'll see a table of contents. You can skip around all you need to. There will be sections dedicated to games, exercises, descriptions, ideas. The bulk of this book gets taken up by my month-to-month guide. This is going to be the most important part. A full year of guidance just for you!