

BCDA MA Summary 2017-2018

I felt blessed to be admitted to the BCDA MA Teaching Program, a milestone in my development as a professional ballet teacher. As I developed my career as a professional dancer over the course of approximately 20 years, my desire to develop further the academic or theoretical side of dance grew as well. At the early stage, my attention was primarily on the physical dance movements. "Why the theoretical study? It does not help me become a better dancer." While as I became mature in the dance profession and personally, I realized more and more the need to express myself or explain certain topics in a clear and concise way, and this need became stronger as I became a teacher of dance. During my own training to become a professional dancer, the theoretical side of the education was conveyed mostly in dance studios, embedded in the repeated moves and accumulated in a subconscious manner. I was able to make use of that for my dance rehearsal and performance, while now it is time to organize it in a conscious manner and pass on to the next generation. My goal is to reflect and document my own experiences to share and benefit myself and peers, and eventually the students. I have done the sharing of my emotions through dance movements on stage, and shared and learned from my MA peers through the writing and discussion of those experiences during the past year.

Personal development:

1. Change in roles, among dancer, dance teacher to MA student (researcher) in dance education.

I had held multiple professional roles: dancer, dance teacher and MA student, or researcher, in dance teaching. As a dancer, I presented in front of an audience of hundreds; as a teacher, the "audience" was in tens, while the research discussion under the MA program is mostly with just a few. While the audience became smaller, the amount of information and impact made were not reduced. During this time, I had interactions and discussions with other MA students of various backgrounds in dance, discussed on various topics including many that were new, and gained new perspective, knowledge and insights. An important change to the role as a student, I had more freedom in exploring and communicating of new areas and ideas, without the requirement of being perfect on stage or correct as a teacher, nor the concern of being judged by others. This was exciting and rewarding.

2. Capability in writing and logically presenting the ideas

Instead of theoretical study, the past year focused primarily on reflection, research and writing. I think this is a sensible approach to bring out the knowledge and experiences that were gained subconsciously to conscious, organized and theocratized knowledge that can be shared. During this time, I wrote more than 10 essays and experienced two major challenges. The first is language and culture related, particularly language, as I had to translate my thoughts and ideas from Chinese, my native language, to English. The second challenge was to analyse and make logical presentation of the ideas, which was the bigger challenge between the two. I would like to continue developing this side, as one focus of the next year, to draw on concrete examples of experiences and present myself logically.

Feedback to the approach of the MA program:

1. Language

The sharing and discussion with fellow MA students were a valuable part of the study. While the presentation was done in English, some wrote their essays in Hungarian. While I appreciate the value of writing in native language, being the most authentic, it will be highly beneficial if all essays can have their title in English, or even better a brief summary in English. This will help prepare before the class, and make the discussion more productive.

2. Supervisor

During a few initial discussions, a subject matter expert was present as supervisor and gave valuable comments, suggestions and judgements. I find this very beneficial, and suggest continuing this practice. In addition and along the same thinking, it will be beneficial to engage and bring to discussion other professionals of relevant backgrounds.

Above summaries my development with and feedback to the MA program during the first year. I am looking forward to the new studies and challenges in the coming year.