On Technique:
A Semester-Long Journal for Undergraduate and Graduate Level Dance Students

Created by Jill Homan Randall

January 2016
This book is dedicated to my technique teachers, past and present. Thank you for your inspiration and training that has lasted a lifetime.

Growing up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania:
• Judy Williams Henry
• Jonathan Kane
• Barbara Barden
• Stephanie Farenwald
• Pat Thomas (former faculty member at the University of the Arts)

College years at the University of Utah:
• Abby Fiat
• Ford Evans
• Donna White

Classes during the past 18 years in Berkeley, California:
• Randee Paufve
• Nina Haft
• Sandra Chinn
• Wendy Diamond
• Marlena Oden
• Mo Miner
• Dana Lawton
I am a lifelong student of dance. It has always been one of my main loves in life and ways of knowing the world. I grew up dancing, I majored in Modern Dance at the University of Utah, and I have made my livelihood for the past 18 years as a dancer (performer, teaching artist, arts administrator, writer, and blogger). I am passionate about the form and the future of the form.

The technique class is at the heart of our work. We spend our lives in class - practicing, exploring, building, maintaining, and clarifying. Sometimes it is about “more,” and sometimes it is about “less.”
This journal is for students in undergraduate or graduate level technique courses, to go deeper into the work. I strongly believe in the power and purpose of dancers regularly writing about their work. Even in a technique course, we all can be articulating and reflecting on what we are learning and exploring.
How To Use This Journal

Students can print out the journal and write in it each week. Your semester might be 12 weeks long or 15 weeks long. There are 27 questions here. Professors can use whichever questions are interesting. I highly encourage students to use a pen and actually WRITE in the journal, versus typing each week. The physical act of writing is a beautiful and kinesthetic thing.

My hope is that the journal can inspire dialogue within a course, or between a student and his/her professor or advisor.
Thank you to...

Every project of mine happens because of wonderful friends and colleagues who listen, offer suggestions, and edit writing. I would like to thank:

• Abby Fiat
• Mo Miner
• Dana Lawton
• Damon Rago
• John Beasant
• Shaunna Vella

Thank you for your time, ideas, and support!

Jill Randall
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class (Examples - “take the space,” efficiency, elongate)

WEEK ONE
Date       Word/phrase       Notes

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK ONE
1. What are your goals for the semester? Create 2–4 areas of focus.
2. What did you focus on last semester?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - open, “the release and the weight”)

WEEK TWO
Date   Word/phrase   Notes

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK TWO
3. How do you learn in a dance class? What strategies do you use? (Do you focus on the counts or the key words a teacher says, such as reach, bend, melt? Do you need to watch the whole phrase and then learn it?)
4. What are you learning from your classmates? Who inspires you?
**Dancing words:**
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - pour, line between tension and release)

**WEEK THREE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

**WEEK THREE**
5. How can you focus on yourself in class but still be present and see others in the room?
6. Pick one of these words and write for 5 minutes about it in relation to taking class these days.

ALIGNMENT   STRENGTH
EFFICIENCY   NOTICING
7. How are you connecting your work in technique classes with your current choreographic projects, either as a dancer or choreographer?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - backspace, brace/collapse/yield)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

WEEK FOUR
8. What is your favorite part of class right now and why? What is your deepest challenge in class and why?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - pendulum, suspend versus balance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

WEEK FIVE
9. Checking in on your goals, are you working towards what you set out at the start of the semester? What strategies are you using?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - redirect, deeper, outward focus)

WEEK SIX
Date   Word/phrase        Notes

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK SIX
10. Food. Considering the timing of your technique classes, have you found the right time to eat (before or after) so that you feel your best within class?
11. Pick one of these words/phrases and write for 5 minutes about it in relation to taking class these days.

AWARENESS    EXPLORING    PRACTICING
CLARIFYING    RIGOR
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - see others, “belief in...”)

WEEK SEVEN
Date    Word/phrase    Notes

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK SEVEN
12. Do you speak up with questions? Too much, too little?
13. How is technique class an opportunity to practice performing? What aspects of the piece(s) you are currently performing in could be explored during your technique class?
14. Celebrating your areas of growth as a mover:
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - “full length of limbs,” crystallize)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK EIGHT</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK EIGHT
15. Connections between your technique course - content or structure - and each of your other courses right now:
16. Pick one of these phrases and write for 5 minutes about it in relation to taking class these days.

- TAKING SPACE
- SPATIALLY AWARE
- IN THE SPACE TOGETHER
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - shape/reshape space, polish)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK NINE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

WEEK NINE
17. Outline out the class - the order and timing of each section (center work, across the floor, combination, etc). Does one thing build on the previous exercise or are they separate activities? How do they build? What is the thread?
**Dancing words:**

Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - graciousness, stability/mobility)

**WEEK 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

**WEEK 10**
19. If you had to write a description of the technique class in 2-4 sentences, what would you write to capture the content, structure, pace, and energy in the room? What are the strengths of the teacher?
20. How do you find moments of humor and play during technique class? How could you make your least favorite part of class more challenging/playful? What are some ways to find lightness and fun during class?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - “up + over,” transference of skills)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK 11
21. How can dancing in a technique class build your skills as an ensemble-minded dancer?
22. Describe your speed/pace of learning material.
**Dancing words:**
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class (Examples - push off, swing, diagonal)

**WEEK 12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

**WEEK 12**
23. What is your pre-class routine or way to transition into the technique class?
24. How does being in a technique class together build community? How are you a part of that community building?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - follow your..., pivot/swivel)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 13</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week

WEEK 13
25. If you taught a technique class right now, whose class would you model it after? Sketch out the outline of it...
26. Pick one of these words/phrases and write for 5 minutes about it in relation to taking class these days.

FLUIDITY
DYNAMIC CHANGES
VARIETY
EASE
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - spiral of the legs, oppositional movement)

WEEK 14
Date    Word/phrase    Notes

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK 14
27. Goals - what did you achieve? What do you want to continue exploring in the coming months?
28. Feedback! Please take a few minutes and write author Jill Randall at randalldanceprojects@gmail.com. Was this journal useful? Why or why not?
Dancing words:
Write down a key word or phrase from each technique class
(Examples - two arms moving, momentum, pathways)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 15</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Word/phrase</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Feedback and corrections from the week
WEEK 15
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jill Randall is a dancer in the San Francisco Bay Area. Jill received her BFA in Modern Dance at the University of Utah and will receive her MFA in Creative Practice from Saint Mary’s College of California in June 2016.

Jill is a performer, choreographer, teaching artist, administrator, and writer. Follow her blog, Life as a Modern Dancer, at:

www.dancingwords.typepad.com/life_as_a_modern_dancer