

The Movement Factory:
The Bridge Between
Dance, Martial Arts and Athletics
by
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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the three research projects that I performed between 2009-present: Slow Movement Training (SMT) lab, Self-education Through Embodied Movement (STEM), and the Athletic Movement Program (AMP). It first evaluates the major issues that spawned each research project, and then provides a framework for understanding the shift in the student-centered physical and mental movement practices that I developed in response to the need for reform. The content will address the personal and professional paradigmatic shift that I experienced through the lens of a practitioner and educator. It will focus heavily on the transitions between each of the projects and finally the emergence of the Athletic Movement Program. The focal point then becomes one of community needs, alternate resources and hybrid-online classroom support. The paper concludes with an overview and content comparison between the one-size-fits-all model used within public movement education and Athletic Movement Programs' strengths and challenges.

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to Sreepy; you always make me want to sreep.

This document is a piece of the larger picture that embodies my gift of The Movement Factory to my students, my teachers and my friends. My choices and relationships have made me who I am today and will guide me into tomorrow while being the best man, educator and friend that I can be.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Over thirty-seven percent of the nonsupervisory workers in the arts, entertainment, and recreation field have no formal education beyond high school (U.S. Department of Labor).” These workers are the physical education teachers, coaches, generalist teachers, volunteers, parents, recreational dancers and artists; delivering over 93% of movement education and instruction in the United States.

Surveys have also shown that there may be 6,000 K-12 schools in the United States (Outlook) with dance as a part of their curriculum and a much larger percentage with physical education programming. Only a minimal 0.003% of movement and dance educators are qualified experts and specialists. They exist within the 99,000 public schools and approximately 34,000 private schools (NDEO) in the nation, teaching over 75,227,000 students who attend K through college (Last).

The professional development and training of public movement educators and students within a hybrid-online environment is important for establishing strong roots to both their practice and comprehension of their content. This is especially true within the technologically driven classrooms of the future, where the relationship dynamic between the teacher and student will change dramatically. What is even more important than further training and interpersonal relationship dynamics is the creation of new and innovative strategies that will meet the students’ needs outside of the standardized confines of the classroom.

CHAPTER 2

SLOW MOVEMENT TRAINING (SMT) LAB

Original Project Orientation

The proposed goal of the Slow Movement Training (SMT) lab is to expose the most primal version of the human animal in its most androgynous form. The purpose of this phase of exploration is to create a bridge between the SMT lab and the deepening of personal proprioceptive and somatosensory knowledge. The lab was created as a tool and template to aid in the deconstruction of the movers' perceptions and sense of self, rooted in being a human, rather than a human animal. In this phase I am looking at the development of sensory and perception potentials through the use of animalistic and martial movement. My aim is to usher each lab participant through a process of tapping into their most primal selves in terms of bodily energies and movement capacities.

To accomplish this I used endurance and strength exercises/activities geared towards somatosensory enhancement or deprivation. These exercises included digging, submersion, voice work, and breathing techniques that were designed to push one's physical and mental limits beyond their perceived norms. Through these experiences, I encouraged the desensitized shell to be shed in order for the sensitivity and awareness of the human animal to emerge. This happened via the holistic methods of SMT practices that not only encouraged the mastery of the senses, but also allowed for the control of bodily energies.

Context

My goals for this program were based on the assumption that a metaphysical transformation was needed in order for the movers' physical and mental capacities to be realized. The research began with individual sessions working with trained movers, non-movers, and larger groups. I used painting, line drawings, and written forms of documentation. There was a heavily weighted qualitative aspect of the research defined by the value that I believed came from the movers' experiential foresight, hindsight, and motivation.

The bulk of the experimentation on the larger groups occurred while I was in the middle of my martial movement research in Bengaluru, India. In collaboration with a major contemporary dance company, I was able to fully implement a martial movement and conditioning program into the company curriculum. The groups consisted of the professional dance company which experienced the advanced curriculum, and their full diploma program that experienced the beginner-intermediate curriculum.

This was the turning point in which I decided to move from SMT to Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement and began to teach my program as such. The name change was the result of a series of questions that my students asked me while engaging with the program. These questions involved explanations varying from the form and style that they were learning to the methods I used to teach and reference the class and curriculum content.

CHAPTER 3

MOVING TO THE WEB

My decision to utilize the Internet as a movement resource came to me after my time spent in India conducting field research for the Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement project. After using Internet video, photography, talking and blogging tools, I realized that this in fact may be the most cost effective, timely and efficient method of reaching my audience. I began my research by first looking for any other projects with similar orientations, and later from the perspective of an educator looking for classroom resources.

Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement

Dance and curricular research done by several dance education theorists and practitioners including Blumenfeld-Jones, Rein and Fortin have had similar goal orientations to Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement. Their research examined the areas of online and distance learning, extension of a dancer's movement career, and the incorporation of somatic practices (Feldenkrais, Skinner Release Technique, Alexander Technique) within a movement education classroom.

Out of thousands of hits on Google while searching the words dance education, dance online, learn to dance online, and curriculum design resources for dance, these are the sites that I have found with any resemblance to a hybrid learning environment: expertvillage.com, drapercenter.com, vtaide.com, americanballetcompetition.com, teachersfirst.com, susankramer.com, onlinedancecompany.com, cdeadance.org, functionalmovement.com,

dtol.ndirect.co.uk, artslynx.org, artswork.asu.edu, danceducationweb.org, danceeducationcenter.com, dmanational.org, ndeo.org, youtube.com, pbs.org, teaching-dance.com, epnweb.org, learningonlineinfo.org, g-moves.com, danceart.com, danceteachersecrets.com, deadance.com, etc.usf.edu, kathidgc.com, togetherindance.org.

Of these 28 resources provided, the majority of the links are now obsolete or off-line. After completing extensive online research, I was not able to find a resource that possessed the level of support that the movement community needs in the way that Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement does. Although Cook and the Functional Movement System came close, he did not address self-education, dance or movement arts. His work is specifically geared towards the analysis of movement patterns and correction of the asymmetries of the body through standardized measures and protocols.

Expansion

After completing months of practical as well as theoretical research, I came to a few conclusions: the research I had done was valid, but no longer relevant if I wanted to instantiate change within the public dance and physical education communities; and the Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement lab needed to evolve in order to achieve scientific validity.

CHAPTER 4

SELF-EDUCATION THROUGH EMBODIED MOVEMENT

The choice to move from Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement to Self-education Through Embodied Movement was a logical shift, but a complex progression because of the artistic nature of the original SMT project. I came to realize that self-education was the missing ingredient within the Slow-Training Through Embodied Movement project. I spent far too much time directing and designing and not enough time allowing for the seeds that I was planting to grow. My direction shifted from one of sensory development to a focus on the needs of adolescence within the dance and physical education community. Through my field research project on Martial Movement in India, I came to understand this youthful period as one of rapid growth, experimentation and transformation.

STEM

As of 2010 only 6% of the teachers in the dance and movement community were qualified educators (NDEO). This has led to repetitive strain injuries (Solomon, and Russell), eating disorders such as bulimia (Maling), mental disorders such as anorexia (Dunning), and finally teacher inflicted abuse (Merchant Circle) rooted in physical and emotional degradation. This has occurred as a result of misinformation rooted in extremely outdated and unfounded teaching and movement practices.

Model for Change

In response to my growing concern about the field of public movement education, I created Self-education Through Embodied Movement (STEM).

STEM is a three-tier system: Thought, the logic and reasoning behind the system; Action, a curriculum that is built out of the STEM model; Bridge, an online learning toolbox and curricular resource.

The STEM project is designed for middle to late adolescent stages of growth by supporting both their mental and physical development. It not only strengthens joints, ligaments and muscles, it also strengthens the neuromuscular pathway between the body and the brain. The students are given the tools to learn how to self-educate using a student-centered developmental approach to learning and understanding. This is achieved through gross motor and some fine motor exercises based on experiential anatomy, strength, and dynamic alignment activities.

Transformation

I had to make a decision about whether or not I wanted this project to come into fruition. I decided to push forward even though I received no financial assistance on a project with a minimum \$6,000.00 price tag. I began with a 14-month working schedule that detailed the project entirely, including a content outline, timeline and the financial needs. The online component emerged after months of planning and grant applications for the production of the STEM online toolbox.

After months of planning and research, I was able to bring the project price tag down to just over \$300.00, but that meant that I would have to do all of the work myself. My personal contribution and project trajectory was now to: invent the project; categorize and organize the details of the logic it was based on;

shoot, set up, perform and edit over 400 videos; record, edit and perform over 400 audio narratives; develop, write, and transcribe over 400 lesson plans; combine, edit and revise all of the pieces; build the web application by learning how to code and program; create a business plan solely by using online resources; write a thesis document; and finally, design the first Athletic Movement Program (AMP) and the mode of implementation.

I first designed a four-month training program at the ASU gymnastics facility to prepare my body for the video and photo shoots. Next I began the process of learning computer coding and programming for the purposes of website building and design. I then created templates for every aspect of the project so that I could work off of one logical through line. Individual templates were designed for each of the narration, video, text, and written lesson components.

During the production phase of the project, many aspects of the design, implementation theories and overall purpose shifted. These shifts occurred as a direct result of the Athletic Movement Program design that was being developed simultaneously. The concurrent activities allowed for what could be viewed as a work-study or an implementation and development phase to occur in tangent with one another. During this transition, Movement-Factory.com emerged as the internet domain that would host all of the content that was being developed within the production phase.

CHAPTER 5

MOVEMENT-FACTORY.COM

I built Movement-Factory.com out of the STEM model for a web based learning toolbox and resource. The initial design was complex with many moving parts: blogs, forums, video lessons, consultation, program design etc. This specific design was in response to the significant need for new and challenging movement educational resources based on the series of movement fundamentals that I had established. These fundamentals included strength, balance, flexibility and self-care.

Through a research study that I had created based on my original Athletic Movement Program (AMP), I was able to test out the numerous parts of Movement-Factory.com. This allowed me to hone in on the most pertinent details relating to the students' mental and physical needs as well as the educators macro and micro challenges that the project could further support.

Design

Movement-Factory.com is an online movement reference library that provides direct classroom support to public movement educators teaching students of ages 14-21. This resource is meant to be used in collaboration with other valuable classroom resources and is designed so that both educators and their students have the option for advancement at their own developmental pace and skill level. By using the latest Internet platforms and technology, the resource is available across operating systems and devices. There is no hardware or software to buy or update, and no technical support needed.

The infrastructure is based on the world's leaders in community-based technology such as Google, Apple, Microsoft, etc (2). This allows the users to move from a one-size-fits-all model for public movement education to a technologically-enabled solution tailored to each student (Zane). The website membership enables instructors to add and update online resources to their classes. They may also create readings, original sources and/or specialized materials that are more easily accessible to their students, further encouraging out-of-class student reflection and interaction.

Purpose

The content of The Movement Factory is designed to guide students into a bright future and out of the extremely dated educational resources and representations that attempt to pass as current and innovative. The moving library content will support and encourage a reinvention of the interaction between educator/facilitator and student/practitioner. The resource aims to strengthen the user's knowledge of the fundamentals of movement within their specific style, not to teach them to be experts at the style itself.

Resources

The Movement Factory resources:

Moving Library: A reference library of over 400 high definition video and lesson plan pages geared towards the support and extension of classroom learning.

Fundamentals Training Program (FTP): This professional development workshop series is based on The Movement Factory's Fundamentals of Balance, Strength, Flexibility and Self-Care with alternate workshops in Athletic or Martial

Movement. The FTP program is designed to train educators and students who want in depth knowledge of the website content.

Curricular Design Services: This resource will play an essential role in the development of cutting edge movement curriculums based on my program designs in the areas of The Movement Factory's Fundamentals or Athletic and Martial Movement. These are highly individualized single classroom curriculums.

Re-evaluation

Movement-Factory.com had the student/practitioner, educator/facilitator, and institutional interest in mind, but was still lacking simplicity. After the beginning stages of the final research project, the Athletic Movement Program (AMP), and a series of private and public project presentations/demonstrations, massive revisions began to occur.

The knowledge and structure used to build Movement-Factory.com was in direct relation to the knowledge that was gained during the research and implementation phase of the Athletic Movement Program. The entire project up until this point had allowed me to investigate my theories, but the pilot program allowed for a full-scale trial. The pilot program encouraged multiple working and learning perspectives to emerge which informed and later enhanced my understanding of the content and design of the first Athletic Movement Program (AMP).

CHAPTER 6

THE MOVEMENT FACTORY

The creation of The Movement Factory is the result of over 25 years of personal movement practices and the study of nearly 75 movement forms and disciplines from around the world. The Movement Factory is designed to bridge the gap between dance, martial arts and athletics and the most current information about the fundamentals of public movement education and the knowledge and resources available.

Mission

The mission of The Movement Factory is: to challenge each and every participant to reinvent and re-imagine the movement curriculum of the future in which a hybrid-online program may be used; to encourage the practice of movement generation, problem solving and critical thinking through our exercises and activities; to provide a learning platform for every educator/facilitator or student/practitioner by tailoring The Movement Factory content to his/her personal needs; to enhance creativity, reflection, expressive skills, and movement mastery through lesson design and implementation; to engage each participant in a practice lead and student centered mind-body approach to learning where the lesson pace is set by the students' needs; to create educational and testing strategies that promote the creative use of content, encourage exploration rather conformity , and prepare students with similar challenges to the demands of their future careers.

Structure

The Movement Factory's theoretical infrastructure is built upon the most essential elements within public movement education. These elements include positive student engagement, student-centered curriculum, professional training and development. The curriculums use both a developmental and an experiential approach which allows the student to see the content from multiple perspectives, along with the relevancy that the information holds within their school and personal lives.

Development

The common factors that lie between a classic one-room setting and the further extension of educator and student knowledge are where my specialized program design and content draws strength. To encourage student engagement, I focus heavily on play, exploration, creativity, imagination and personalization of our exercises and activities. I place the student needs ahead of the standardized institutional needs by shaping each curriculum to meet the needs of the classroom with which it will be paired. By doing so, the curriculum can act as a reference point from which to build and extend new knowledge. I anticipate that courses will be supplemented with online materials which has lead me to emphasize the use of multiple forms of media and technology that students are accustomed to.

Whether they are headed towards professional careers in medicine, military, movement or law, the student's academic as well as physical pursuits are enhanced by the neuromuscular growth and life skill acquisition experienced through their engagement with the curriculum. Student confidence is built and

reinforced through accomplishments and success; emotional/social intelligence is formed through interactions relating to the heightening of ones sensitivity and awareness of his/her surroundings; intelligence quotient is increased through not just the memorizing of content, but the mental and physical exchange that occurs during active use of the content in real life scenarios; and interpersonal and physical intelligence is gained through interactions between self and other, other being the physical/psychological environment or simply another person.

Synthesis

This experience has allowed for me to not just extend, but also create new knowledge rooted in my strategies towards self-education. Being placed in the role of student, educator and evaluator in conjunction with the environment that was created for the implementation has created a depth of understanding that can only be described as contemplative practice embodied. As an educator/practitioner I have given myself the opportunity to view my own work from a first, second and third person perspective, simultaneously. I also understand it as being similar to teaching and learning in four dimensions or experiencing the states of inspiration, generation, and transformation in cannon.

CHAPTER 7

NEED FOR REFORM

General Approach

Rather than an emphasis on practical and conceptual knowledge, age appropriate gross motor training, and the practice of critical thinking and moving, a more general approach to public movement education is used by educators. This standard approach seems to entail: an overlapping of personal course design strategies; a referencing of institutional program objectives or policy; and possibly a short insert based on students perceived needs without their actual input. This approach is one part due to the influence of standardized institutional practices, one part due to outdated resources, and two parts to a general misunderstanding of the connection between the mind and body.

Simply using anatomical names such as sacrum, coccyx, bicep, or respiration, in conjunction with a movement activity does not warrant the label of movement education. Educators have a much larger responsibility to their students that is being overlooked. This responsibility is rooted in their own professional development outside of their form or style, and more specifically within their own ability to maintain a personal movement practice. This practice is compulsory if a healthy relationship is to be had between educator, student and content.

Although many students' receive general movement education, they will still eventually be able to articulate their bodies on a professional level. But, these students will be unable to think critically about why they are moving. Others will

have the ability to reach the extreme depths of their minds, but have no physical understanding of movement mastery. These extremes are based on the general methods currently in use that depend on chance, luck and whims to support public educators' curriculum choices.

Too much is dictated by the limits of the educators understanding of their profession rather than the capabilities of the student. A vast majority of public movement educators are not familiar with what the training should look like for 14-21 year olds. Movement mastery cannot be achieved by skipping developmental stages and milestones. Too much emphasis is placed on the unintentional training of fine motor movement skills over gross motor movement skills, and experiences that enhance a student's awareness of his/her body and sensitivity towards themselves and others.

Specificity

What I have created is a curriculum model that not only addresses this need through the self-care fundamental, but also completely embraces it through the open-ended invitation to participate, interact and explore. I view all institutions and all of their students as individuals, but I am not suggesting that each lesson should be tailored to every student who might engage with the content. Rather that the lessons are created with the student's needs in mind and are physically and conceptually open enough to meet all learning styles and objectives that students may have. The major focus is on a trajectory over time and not the attainment of one version of a standardized skill set.

The student-centered curriculums that I design allow for the creation of educator-student contracts that the student helps to design so that evaluations can be based on realistic results rather than the standardized expectation of the institution. The students' goals, interests and opinions are heavily weighted, along with participation, peer support, creativity and their ability to transfer their knowledge across instances and scenarios that the curriculum provides for them.

I look at the student's developmental age, movement capabilities, and learning objectives. I create curriculums that students' want based on their interests. I do this because students should choose their directions and educators should chime in on the details and guidance of the journey. This does not mean that all of the responsibility is in the students' hands, rather that they are given a very well thought out sampling of possible choices. Over the course of the program, they are able to make informed choices based on their individual interest rooted in an extremely in-depth understanding of the content. The curriculum is meant to act as platform that is built to inspire and support the student, the engagement with that inspiration and knowledge are their responsibility.

CHAPTER 8

ATHLETIC MOVEMENT PROGRAM (AMP)

Pilot

A series of market tests were performed in the spring, summer and fall of 2010. The first Athletic Movement Program (AMP) began in the summer of 2011, with a 2012 end date. The program is presently being implemented in a high school for one full school year for teen boys ages 14-18. The students had the choice of dance, weight lifting, or the Athletic Movement Program. The program is constantly increasing in popularity and an average of one student per week has attempted to join the already full program throughout the first 14 weeks. The students, educators and administrators are satisfied well beyond their expectations. The teacher training, program design, and consultation will be continuing for the 2012-2013 school year.

The petition to create a full-scale Athletic Movement Program (AMP) is in place and will be voted on by February 2012. If the program is given official course status, it will be the first official Athletic Movement Program of its kind and will become a permanent part of the high school curriculum. Further teacher training, full-scale program design and consultation will be a part of the package to be implemented. If the program is approved, a district wide implementation could follow depending on the popularity and success of the program.

Opportunity

The success of the Athletic Movement Program would have been impossible without this implementation phase. With no sample, cohort, group or

participants, the Athletic Movement Program would not have been propelled this far, this rapidly. From the student input to the backing of the school administrators, the program has been a success because of the combined interests and efforts of those involved.

This process has allowed me to discover that my real strengths lie within the practical implementation of my theories rather than philosophical or strictly theoretical applications. While performing the action of implementation of my work, a metaform emerged. This metaform took the shape of a bridge, a bridge between ideas, communities, and philosophies regarding public movement education and practices. This metaform is the hybrid-online component of the Athletic Movement Program.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Convergence

The three research projects, including the Slow Movement Training Lab, Self-education Through Embodied Movement, and the Athletic Movement Program all played an equally essential role in the development of what is now the moving library and the soon to be hybrid-online public movement program. This project is a part of a larger system of educational tools and resources that support hybrid-online learning. The Athletic Movement Program is my original contribution to the field and more importantly, it is my attempt to further strengthen my very own community.

Revisiting

From the conception of SMT to The Movement Factory, my project has risen to the occasion of meeting the needs of my community. Public movement education has not kept pace with some of the major educational giants in the areas of business, engineering, law, sustainability, sciences, etc. This fact alone enhances the validity of the data collected during the course of my three research projects that will provide valuable insight into the implementation of hybrid-online movement education resources. The data is not shown within this paper, it is practically based and shows itself within the major success that all three projects have achieved. The next stage of development will be in the area of the hybrid-online program details.

Although there has been much success up until this point, there is a major body of work still to be completed in a number of areas. First, further curriculum design and implementation studies must be completed in order for a broader understanding of this programs implications and efficacy to emerge. Second, the further conception of student-centered qualitative testing and analysis strategies must be devised in order to meet the needs of such a dynamic curriculum. Finally, the hybrid-online program has yet to be built. The program is still very much in the initial stages of development and the search has begun for: school programs to collaborate with; guidance from industry professionals in the areas of educational technology, pedagogy, curriculum implementation; resources such as mentors, programs with similar orientations and research studies with one or more of this programs goals and objectives as their topic (s) of interest.

An important aspect of this paper is that in order for the students within our public movement education classrooms to be able to meet the challenges ahead of them, they must be freed from standardization. They must be met with educational opportunities, chances to succeed, grow and extend their knowledge base. Our students must learn to use their skills in unison. Their overall ability must not just be the sum of its parts, ideally it will be a part of what is now the communal and collaborative knowledge we hold within the field of movement education. This knowledge is intrinsically linked to both the practice and the theory behind the experiential journey of self and educator in leading the future of public movement education.

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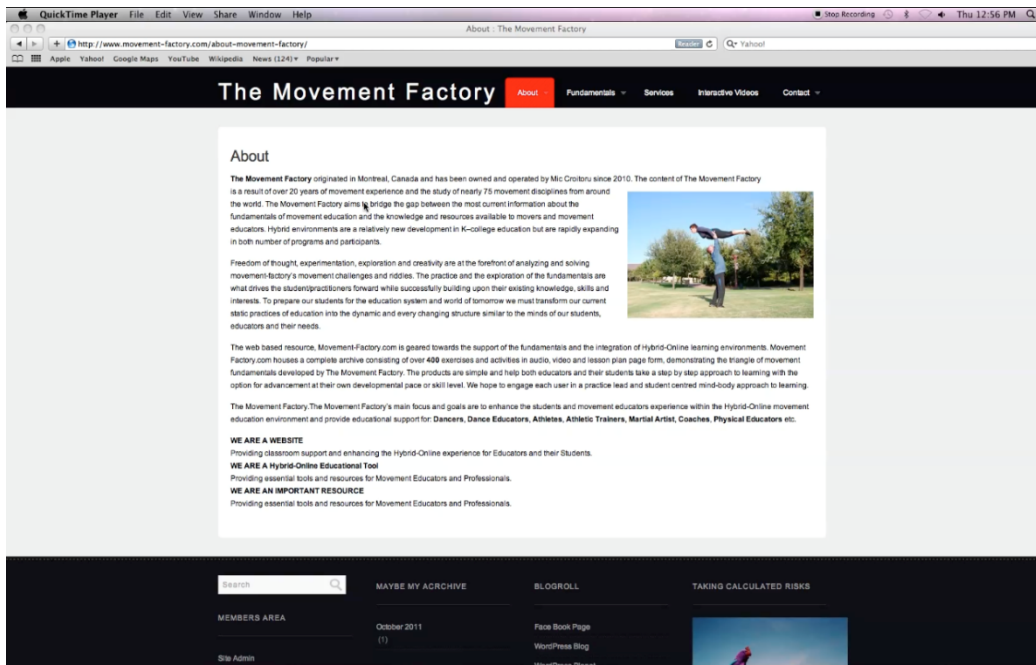
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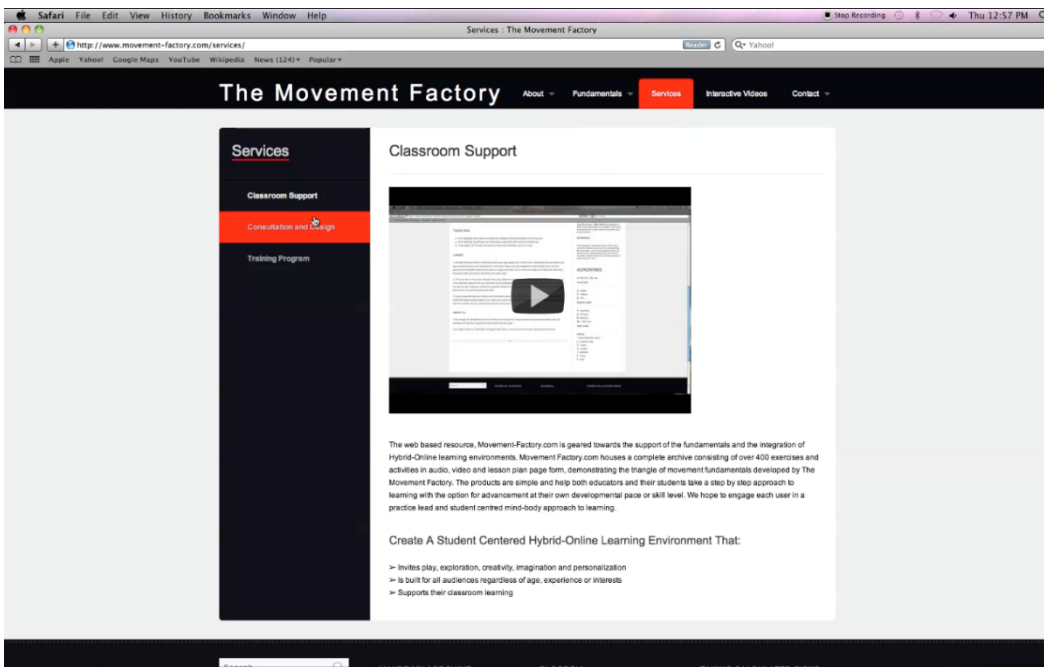
APPENDIX A
PHOTOGRAPHS

1.



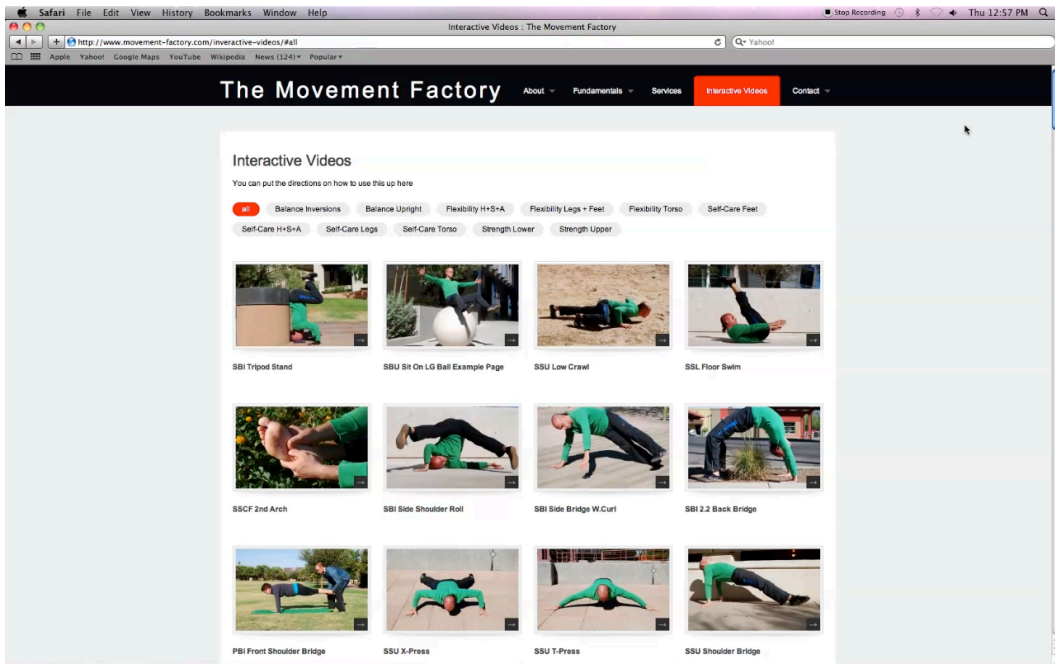
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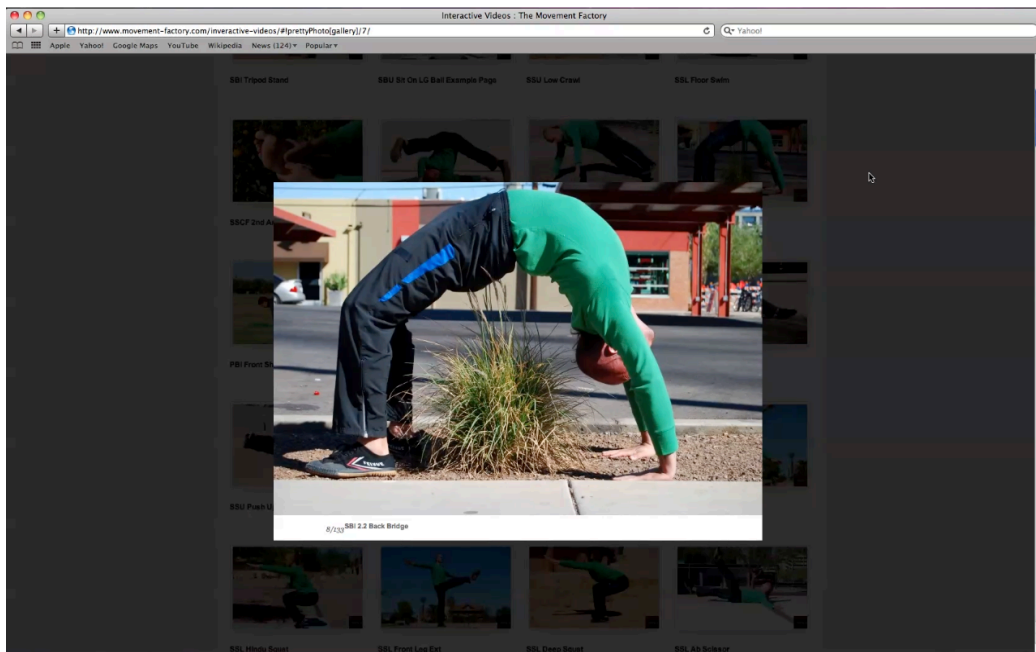
(Resources)

3.



(Moving Reference Library)

4.



(Picture)

5.

SBI 2.2 Back Bridge

October 10th, 2011 | 0 Comments

Check List

Name: Back Bridge
Frequency: 3x6 ft breaths
Environment: Wood Floor, Grass
Materials: None
Concept: Actively increasing flexibility
Key Words: Lengthen, Support, Press, Align

Tactile Aids

- Place one hand on the pelvis and one hand on the sacrum and guide the mover straight up.
- Have the mover press their pelvis and chest into your hands.
- Trace the underside of the mover as they reach and extend upwards.

Lesson

- From a laying position, press your legs together and bend both of your knees and place your feet flat on the ground as close to your tailbone as possible. Take both of your palms with your fingers facing your shoulders and place them beside your ears as if you were trying to hold up the roof of a house with your elbows next to your ears
- With equal pressure, press both of the hands and feet into the ground, going from a completely bent knee and

Signs, Symbols And Definitions

NAME:

This is my way of classifying the fundamentals. Feel free to change the names to meet your individual needs.

FREQUENCY:

This covers the **MAXIMUM** number of times the exercise or activity should be repeated, or your goal to be reached.

PLACE:

According to my understanding of the exercises, I have chosen a place for the exercises to occur, or have left it completely up to you. Choose wisely, especially for beginners, **SAFETY FIRST**.

MATERIALS:

These are my recommended materials. You can substitute them with just about anything you have available. As long as the substitute is **SAFE** and able to take the movers **WEIGHT**

CONCEPT:

This is the example I use based on how I understand the exercise to work in this specific situation: **MULTIPLE** approaches to each of the exercises are possible. The focus, emphasis and overall lesson orientation are in your hands.

KEYWORDS:

The keywords represent some of the most common reference points for understanding the exercises. Just as language evolves, so will the use of these keywords. Feel free to translate, interpret and try out these words or even add your own.

ACRONYMS

(Interactive Lesson)