

“ARE YOU A SPAGHETTI OR A BOILED SPAGHETTI?”

BEST PRACTICES, TIPS&TRICK TO TEACH TECHNIQUES

ON TECHNIQUE & TEACHING

ROLLS – TECHNIQUES

- Problem with the roll: usually the position of the body is not correct. Normally the problem is with the position of the head (looking up) and the back is open. The solution could be put some tissue or sock on the neck, and make the chin hang it.
- Another solution could be put a “tail” in the back part of the pants. The children should catch it, opening the legs and that makes them roll.
- To teach backward roll: in stead of soft structured slide use the soft structured stairs. These make it is easier to place the hands and then to push on them to have the backward roll.
- Uses a small imaginary piupiu bird that kids can metaphorically put on their head before doing a forward roll without touching the floor with their head. When the bird is crushed anyway, they have to reanimate it by blowing in it. The idea is that they will have this bird on their head for the rest of their lives.

HANDSTAND AND CARTWHEEL

- Visualization of the handstand: the most important part of the handstand is the position of the spinal column and how the entire body is “closing” to make it stronger. For help the students to visualize the position, we will take a normal paper and give it to the kids. We will ask them to make the paper stand by itself. Normally this is not possible unless you bend the paper just from the middle. In this case, the paper creates an angle, and it can stand by itself. That bend is the position of the spinal column.
- How to teach the cart wheel. Using a circle on the floor to get into the rhythm and order of foot – hand – hand – foot. Mirroring in circle or in line in front of each other.
And using a peer.
Working in duo is really effective. Not only the technical part but also motivation and feedback.

SPINNING

- To learn how to spin: the pupils hang with their full body weight in just one gymnastics ring. From that haning position (extension of the body) they can go and try to spin as fast as they can.

ON TEACHING IN GENERAL

RESET

Do a reset every now and then: open windows – literally and figuratively speaking:

- Sometimes it is good to bring a new coach to “visit” or help. If the kids hear the same technical advice but in a new way or by a new person it sometimes helps them to understand it better.
- Sometimes it is nice to bring refreshments to the class. It can be anything. For example to bring cherries to the class and start with it. It changes the class atmosphere and gives the kids a happy mood, which makes the class more effective.
- It can be very nice to use different tempos in the class. Either by doing circle trainings with everyone is far apart, or bringing everyone together and make a small group.
- Playing with sound will also bring a new dynamic in the group: do an exercise with screaming (for instance in a tack game with a monster and a princess), or in total silence.

PICTURES TELL A THOUSANDS WORDS

- It is refreshing to use imagination for teaching different technics – your's and your pupils'- and try and find appropriate mental images!
For example, if someone keeps landing after a cartwheel too heavily on the floor you can use the mental image of being a ninja and having to be really quiet.
For instance, to visualize the handstand: the most important part of the handstand is the position of the spine and how the entire body is “closing” to make it stronger. It will help the pupils to visualize the position by giving them a piece of paper and have the paper stand by itself.
This is not possible unless you bend the paper in the middle. Then the paper creates an angle, and it can stand by itself. That bend is the position of the spine.

TEACHING OR COACHING

- Some youth circusses work in an open space, where the pupils develop their own learning goals and there is not a fixed program. The teacher coaches the pupils in the techniques they are motivated to work on.
- **BLIND SPOTS**
Sometimes you realize that you have not ‘seen’ some of the pupils kids in your class. You tend to remember the very skilled, or the very loud ones etcetera, but some kids are able to ‘disappear’ from the radar.
In order to make sure every child feels 'seen' and is personally addressed, you can for instance have a group round in beginning and at the end of the session during which every name is pronounced and every child can share something and is seen by the group.

- Another tool is to try to pronounce each name in the group at least three times during a session.
- And yet another tool is to include games where every child is addressed personally by some peers.

EXAGERATE

- There are some tips that never land. For example, in the handstand the position of the arms should be straight and in complete extension. However, pupils tend to bend their elbows. When you exaggerate the mistake by telling them: 'Bend your elbows!' they will feel and thus realize that is better to extend their elbows.

SAFE SAFER TOO SAFE

- Sometimes pupils get used to be spotted too much, so they stop being careful themselves: they assume that a coach or a big mat will catch them. And this actually might cause accidents.
Sometimes it is better to give them safe but challenging environment. For example if there is soft mat to fall on, kids might start using it as playground to fall on purpose in a way that would be dangerous if there was no mat.

AN OPEN MIND

- Always be aware that there are different approaches to teaching and learning, for instance the cart wheel, and be willing to put your ideas and habits aside and encourage diversity.