



Meet [Marjolein Wagter](#), Dutch acrobat and (youth) circus teacher. She is the designer and coordinator of the PEYC Masterclasses.

In this document you will find her findings and solutions she has come up with when organizing them.

Please read what she has to tell you, and if you have any questions contact Marjolein at peyc.masterclasses@gmail.com.

1st PEYC MASTERCLASS – MANAGING FEAR AND SAFETY THROUGH AERIAL ACROBATICS –

There are many topics to address in managing fear and safety. In this masterclass we focused on:

1. PHYSICAL SAFETY:

- preparing your body for the work you are going to do (warming-up) and also to take care of it afterwards (cooling-down, good food, drink enough water, etc.).
- spotting: how to provide physical safety (material like mats and longe, catching, support).
- rigging and material safety: make sure you check your material regularly and know what is the right rigging equipment for each aerial activity.

2. EMOTIONAL SAFETY:

- how to feel safe in a group
- how to provide a group with safety
- how to create a safe group
- do dangerous stuff in a safe environment
- provide youth with adrenaline kicks, let them search for boundaries and take risks where you can still see and support them

NOTE by Marjolein: 'I searched for teachers/facilitators who have something to offer to advanced teachers, and at the same time create a space in which exchange is possible. In order to realize this goal, at first the actual program sheet was empty, except for specific workshops connected to the theme. And one day was preserved for the masterclass participants to teach young circus trainers from close by.

For each masterclass we asked trainers to apply and they were asked to describe what kind of workshops they would like to give/share with the group, and what they wanted to learn. I also asked to write down questions or problems they came across while teaching.'

PROGRAM:

Naturally, we started off with introducing ourselves to get to know each other. Therefore, the first session, on the day of arrival, is focussed on making combinations of what people have to offer and their wishes and needs. This way you will find out really quickly if they could be fulfilled from within the group.

We divided tasks for warming-up, cooling-down and created a number of workshops based on what the trainers had to offer.

The main masterclass teacher was Victoria Amedune (check her out at People). She prepared four workshops during the aerial masterclass about safety in aerial acrobatics.

Topics were:

- Spotting
- Rigging

- Prepare your body – anatomy for Aerials
- Anatomy for kids

Steven Desanghere (check him out at People) gave a session about the theory of teaching:

- What do we need to be able to learn?
- Mainstream or Margins, where do you position yourself?
- European Values: European values which were written down right after WorldWarII are still the values of the European Union. Most of them are the values we teach by informal learning in the circus.

The experience of talking in the group of participants about the workshops we wanted to give and have, and preparing and organizing them was wonderful: most people are used to teaching alone and cannot compare notes.

By preparing a workshop in pairs all participants were stimulated to give input.

Originally, the workshop for young teachers (see day 4) this was not part of the program. However, adding it to the program was a great asset to both the masterclass and the workshop participants.

We also found time to exchange games and work on a project of one of the participants, who wanted to share her research about working on impulse (find out more at Games!). Sharing a day with workshops and exchange with each other was a great experience, we felt that we wanted to follow all workshops, which was of course technically impossible.

We deliberately moved the rigging workshop to the evening to alternate physical action with input without exercise.

EVALUATION

The last day was spent on evaluations, writing down each day's information that would be useful for repeating in the masterclass program by other parties. We also drew up a bibliography, which you can find in the menu of each masterclass.

During the masterclass program we tried to go back to the questions each participants brought to the masterclass. For some we found answers, for some we did not.

We also did a general evaluation of the project on hosting (accommodation, food, etc.).

One of the outcomes was that we all wished we had more time to share – which is a good sign.

It is wise to make an inventory of what people have to offer before you start the masterclass. Be aware that some people need more time to show themselves than other.

TIPS AND FAILING FORWARD

If you want to organize a similar masterclass, here are some tips based on our Failures & Successes and some suggestions on how to prepare:

- Don't make the program too tight and don't make it too loose: try to find a balance and don't be afraid to change your planning during the project.
- Put free exchange time in the evening: doing aerials is of course quite physical, participants were too tired to work also in the evening, so put in more theory there.
- Exchange time with external participants is best done on Day 3, so if agendas and logistics allow it, do it like this.
- In order to evaluate you are likely to spend most of the last day morning checking the notes made during the masterclass and try to fix it into a readable outcome. It may be better to do this at the end of every day with a small group, or invite an external person to do this.
- In the program you will find how to build up a lesson sequence for aerials, but the

outcome was very general.

- Make sure you got all the info you want from the participants before they leave, most of them will have other priorities after the project.

Some outcomes from participants

In order to deal with supporting different levels of pupils and different learners, and what we can teach through circus disciplines, besides technical skills we had the following program:

- Lesson by Lynn: teaching families with children with autism.
- Lesson by Joe: how to get from 1 figure to another using Joe's cards (find these in Techniques).
- Lesson by Kriz: create a group, warming-up through mat games together (find these in Techniques and in Games).
- Lesson by Isabel: Eazy Trapezzy board game for challenging youth to work together (find these in Games).
- Lesson by Vicky: spotting, teaching responsibility for each other (find information in Teaching and in Bibliography).