



### CONNECT 2021-2024

Connecting universities-industry through smart entrepreneurial cooperation and competitive intelligence of students in Moldova, Georgia and Armenia

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## TRAINING MODULE ON ART SKILLS / MOVEMENT





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The module: A training Module on Art/Movement education, for trainers, early stage and incorporated startups and teachers to use in non-formal education settings.

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## Movement Module: „Corporality in Motion”

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### Introduction

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, communication is ”a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.” Communication process involves sharing, understanding and meaning, but, for this process to happen, we need to create the context. The context is optimal for communication when it is established on these three essential factors: COMMUNICATOR - INFORMATION - RECEIVER.

This system becomes coherent and functional if we create the ideal situation: a skillful communicator - a clear and meaningful information - a receiver involved in the process.

A skillful communicator is a person who is able to master the tools that are necessary in the process of communication. A person that knows and controls the effective means for productive/successful communication. A person able to create magic and display a high quality performance.

A clear and meaningful information creates a channel, between the communicator and the receiver, that enables communication to travel both ways. The information must be unequivocal to be understood.

A receiver involved in the process, is an audience that participates, understands, is willing to assimilate knowledge and provides immediate response / real-time feedback.

That would be a very brief description of a highly complex process that I do not



want to deepen for not diverting the focus from the main topics of this module, but, at the same time, I found it necessary to establish a common ground of discussion, especially for those who are not familiar with the subject.

Purpose and relevance of the movement module: "Corporality in Motion"

Corporality is a complex and very important tool in the process of communication that develops in a tight connection with movement, awareness, non-verbal means. Is a tool that needs a longer time to perfect but once mastered it becomes a valuable asset to work to your advantage. If we take a minute to think about it, it is quite weird that our bodies, this "material" that we carry every second of our life, still have so many mysteries to unveil, so many resources to reveal. What is also weird is how little we manage to consciously control our bodies and how dependable of our physiology we are. But, what we can control and transform is our body language, what we present outside our body. The way we move through space, the gestures that accompany our speech, the connection established through the visual sense, these are all potential skills existent in our body and mind that can be trained to become tools for a flawless communication.

The purpose of this module is to help you discover the potential of the body/the corporal potential in communication for everyday life and, mostly, for those special situations when you have to "perform" in front of an audience.

I am using the verb to perform because any action that you have to sustain in a public or semi-public context, when you have to deliver a speech, to talk to someone in the street, to present an event, to lecture in front of the students or other type of audience, means that you are in a situation when you have to perform. You are in the situation of conducting a performative action.

Performing implies:



- Creating a concept before the performative action happens;
- Delivering a message in the best way or the most interesting/original way
- Creating a personal way of exposing the concept: the use of spoken language and imagery has to be relevant and raise an emotional response in the "audience".
- Rehearsing for improving the communicational tools. It means that you have to prepare and enhance the means that you are going to use to deliver the message to the "audience" or to have them ready to use when needed.

This module will focus on developing a better understanding of the extra-verbal communication tools along with the necessity of preserving your body in a good physical condition.

Note: The term extra-verbal communication appears in this context to replace the term non-verbal communication. Extra-verbal communication is a term that I implemented in my doctoral theses and I prefer to use it for two reasons:

1. Is more inclusive for other means of communication, other than verbal.
2. Gives a positive connotation to that part of communicational tools that actually express our true self.

When we talk about extra-verbal communication we talk about all the topics that appear in this module. Posture, Breathing, Relaxation, Physical and Mental State, Body Language, Movement. All these are means, already existent in our bodies, that we have to acknowledge, perfect and use efficiently.

Body language is a very important communicator. An expressive body that performs purposeful movements is a medium that draws attention. Body language has to be as interesting and nuanced as the verbal language, but never



to contradict one another.

Body language can create the image we want. You have to find your own body language and adjust it according to the situation. You have to discover your personal corporal signature. Discover your natural movement, how your body reacts naturally to a situation and then start to build the language that you want to show to the public. To make your corporal discourse believable you have to combine and balance your natural (gestural) response with the new language that you create. You have to believe in what you present to the public and to display confidence in your performative actions.

Be aware that you're under permanent scrutiny and always be prepared.

- Course 1 - Introductory course.

This movement module: "Corporality in motion" is dedicated to those who are not necessarily involved in artistic enterprises but are interested in the potential of the body as a tool for communication. Our outer body is the connection to the world, a body that expresses emotions, a body that reflects our inner state. Body-mind gearing has to function together on the same trail and generate actions that allow us to integrate.

Each course will drive you through important actions that we do on a daily basis, actions that are frequently transformed into habits that are harming the body. The purpose is to learn how to avoid bad habits that imprint the body and to become aware about the importance of leading a healthy life. During this module we will focus on detecting and improving corporal skills, on using extra-verbal communicators efficiently and on developing a healthy relationship with our bodies.

If we consider that our body is a smaller scale universe we will realize





that this universe is in a continuous motion, following precisely the pattern that governs the universe outside our bodies. The idea of the body being a living system in a permanent motion and movement became a natural beginning for this module. In the contemporary dance field Movement and Motion are two notions that give different perspectives in understanding and "reading" a body that moves. This is, also, a valid observation to apply in everyday life.

Movement is a physical motion/an exterior act of traveling between points in space that always has a purpose while Motion is a state of progression from one stage to another that doesn't always imply a purpose, but becomes a quality: the quality of not being still. Motion is continuous and, most of the time, unconscious.

Why is it important to understand this thin boundary? Because that will help us dive deeper in this complex mechanism that is the human body. It will be the starting point in better understanding the way our body functions, to accurately translate the "language" that other bodies use to communicate or receive information, and, most importantly, it will improve the skills that we need to establish an unequivocal connection with the receiver of our message.

Why is the human body such an exquisite piece of art and a perfectly functional system, at the same time?

Among many other things, the human body is an "instrument" that has the potential to be expressive, to communicate a meaningful message, to move in a meaningful way. Our body sustains physiology but also enables communication in many circumstances, providing tools that we must discover, improve and learn how to master for using them to our advantage. Our body is designed for communication. All we need to do is to help those tools emerge to the surface and use them in a skillful way. That brings us to the vast territory called Body Language.





Body language is a range of extra-verbal signals that are used to communicate, partnering with the spoken language or developing independently. The range of extra-verbal signals includes facial expressions, gestures, posture and, when used accurately, become powerful communication tools. In our daily interactions with others we are continuously giving and receiving extra-verbal signals. Extra-verbal communication expresses inner feelings and thoughts more realistically being harder to control. Cues of extra-verbal language are controlled and activated by the limbic system, this being the part of the brain that reacts instantaneously, automatically and in real time. How can you control that instantaneous, automatic reaction? By training the body to work efficiently and imprint a healthy physical behavior path.

A body has a natural ability (aptitude) to do something but this aptitude has to become a skill. Efficiency is a skill and the body has the ability to work efficiently. The first and most important step is to train your body to consume less energy/resources when performing simple or complex movements. Training involves repetition and changing the bad habits that the body acquires in time into an efficient pattern of moving according to the anatomical, physiological, biomechanical, developmental relation to human movement. To reach a healthy and efficient corporal movement just observe how animals or infants move and try to apply those principles to your body.

Home assignment:

- Start keeping a course diary to monitor the practical tasks.

The diary will be submitted at the end of the module

- Film yourself in front of the camera, in a large frame that allows me to see your face and upper body (shoulders, hands, torso), while you talk about yourself (a personal presentation).

Please, do not rehearse, just deliver the rough material, first hand.



The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submit the assignment according to schedule.

My feedback will be in writing.

- Course 2 - Posture.

Posture is the position in which you hold or carry your body while standing, sitting or lying down and describes how your spine is aligned with your head, shoulders and hips. Standing, sitting, walking or lying down are basic actions that we perform all the time.

But, are we performing them correctly?

If we analyze how the body behaves while executing basic corporal actions, we will discover that most of the time our body does it wrong. All it takes is several repetitions and the conditioned reflex is created and imprinted into the body. It is relatively easy to transform a good corporal habit into a bad one if we are not actively aware of our corporal behavior and check it permanently. That is the reason why we have to address this issue of having a bad posture or a good posture.

Good posture refers to having a neutral spine, where your muscle groups, joints, and ligaments are aligned in a way that reduces stress on them, keeps your body flexible, reduces fatigue, and helps maintain your balance. Physically, proper spinal alignment means that your muscles and bones are in balance, protecting your body against injury or stresses that might cause degeneration of muscles or joints. It helps your body work more efficiently in keeping you upright against the force of gravity. Good posture involves training the body to stand, walk, sit and lie down so as to place the least strain on muscles and ligaments while you are moving or performing weight-bearing activities. Good posture opens the path toward efficient and aware corporal



actions, actions that will not harm your body and will not exhaust your energetic resources. When the corporal actions are executed correctly (not involving more muscles than is necessary for a specific action/movement) the energy is recycling/renewing and the body can function for a longer period of time without experiencing the fatigue sensation, which leads to a better control over the body and to a better coordination and resistance in time.

Bad posture or poor posture is common and it means that your posture is out of the anatomic alignment. That can affect your appearance, self-confidence and general well-being while some of the effects of poor posture could be:

- muscle or joint strain
- neck, head, or back pain
- possible injuries during exercise, work, or other activities.

Here are examples of the most common posture problems given by everyday actions. (Some of them are illustrated in the video material)

Kyphosis - refers to an exaggerated curvature of your upper back (the thoracic spine) where the shoulders are rounded forward. It's also called hunchback. Kyphosis is a more extreme form of forward head posture. The degree to which you're hunched over determines the amount of pain and dysfunction you'll experience from this misalignment.

A new type of spine deforming posture is Forward Head Posture - when your head is positioned with your ears in front of the vertical midline of your body. If your body is in alignment, your ears and shoulders will be lined up with your vertical midline. Frequently called "text neck" is a telephone or desk posture that often comes from hunching over a cell phone, computer, desk or your steering wheel if you drive a lot. Text neck tightens muscles and their supporting ligaments and tendons in the front of your neck, and at the same time lengthens the muscle structure at the back of your neck. The more you lean forward, the more head weight and strain you exert on your spine.



Practical task: Face the mirror and check if the back of your hands (knuckles) are facing forward and your shoulders are rolling forward. It means that you have weak upper spine muscles and a bad posture.

Lordosis or swayback - refers to that posture when your hips and pelvis tilt forward, in front of your body's midline. In this position, your lower back has an exaggerated inward curve. You look like you're leaning back when you're standing up, with your stomach and your rear sticking out. Sitting for prolonged periods can cause lordosis by weakening your abdominal and gluteal muscles. The core muscles that stabilize your back become weak. When your spine is in the swayback position, it may cause back pain that affects your ability to move, also increases the risk of developing back and hip injuries and other musculoskeletal injuries, such as disc degeneration.

Flat-back - is a condition where the normal curve of your lower spine loses some of its curvature. Your lower back looks straight and you stoop forward.

Flat-back syndrome may make it hard to stand up without pain in thighs and pelvic area. Pain and fatigue can increase the longer you keep standing. Walking may also be difficult, giving leg pain and a feeling of weakness.

Practical task: Check yourself in the mirror and if you recognize in your body one of the bad postures described above just try to reposition your posture and analyze what is happening in your body.

Slouching and slumping - can cause muscle tension, as well as back pain, joint pain, and reduced circulation. Now it's easier than ever to find yourself slouched over a phone or slumped over a laptop for hours at a time. Being locked on a screen for long periods of time, especially when you're not



positioned correctly, can have unwanted consequences over your body. When your body gets used to being hunched over for hours, it can be easy to continue that same posture, even when you're not in front of a screen. When your habit is to slouch on a chair, the tendency is to relax the body before it reaches the chair, meaning that the weight is released toward the chair without controlling it and, as sitting on a chair is an action that we repeat many times a day, that could permanently damage the spine and joints by the unnecessary pressure applied to the body. Slouching and slumping seem to be comfortable positions but, on a long term, these positions will interfere with the corporal integrity.

Leaning on one leg - may feel comfortable but is placing excessive pressure on one side of the lower back and hip, and buttocks and core muscles are not working properly to keep you upright. When that position becomes a "default" position, instead of placing your body weight on two legs with all the segments aligned correctly, your body will be at risk.

Walking - is an action that we perform every day. Most of the time we walk rushing towards something and forget to pay attention to how we walk or if we walk correctly. Not walking correctly could be damaging to our body generating health issues like: weak joints, loose balance, energy waste.

Holding one position for a long time, whether sitting or standing, can cause muscle tension, discomfort, and fatigue. The effects may be even more severe if you're in a slouched position.

Practical task: become aware of everyday habits that may be affecting how you stand, sit, walk or lie down. In other words, pay attention and be mindful of what you are doing in your daily activities.

What to do to improve your body's actions and increase efficiency?  
Become aware of your body actions and how you perform these actions.



Corporal awareness is an internal consciousness about the relation between body, space and movement efficiency.

To be aware of how your body moves efficiently in relation to space you have to pay attention to your actions.

- Stand straight and tall with your shoulders relaxed and pulled back slightly. Think of an invisible piece of string gently pulling the top of the head toward the ceiling.

- Stand with your feet approximately hips-width apart, with your weight evenly spread on your feet.

- Keep your knees bent slightly.

- Tuck in your stomach.

- Keep your head level, not bent forward, with your ears over your shoulders.

- Shift your weight from your toes to your heels, or from one foot to the other if you have to stand in one place for a long time.

- Sit up straight with your shoulders relaxed, but not hunched or rounded.

- Choose a chair height that allows you to keep your feet firmly planted on the floor.
- Avoid crossing your legs.
- Keep your knees level or slightly higher than your hips.
- Pay attention to your head position. Don't let your head and chin sit forward of your shoulders.
- Keep your computer screen at eye level to prevent your neck from bending forward or backward.
- To prevent muscle pain and fatigue, get up from the desk, stretch and walk around for at least a few minutes every hour.
- Do different tasks that require the use of different muscles, other than the ones you're using while seated or standing.



- Change the configuration of your workstation to fit your corporal needs.
- Change your chair and the way you sit.
- Change the position in which you look at your cell phone.
- Practice walking properly. The walk should be initiated from the center of the body, instead of other parts, and should be powered by the rolling of the feet on the ground.

Home assignment:

Complete the practical tasks and analyze the changes produced in your body, if any. Realize a video recording of you talking about this experience, showing what you've discovered and how you think you can improve your corporal habits.

The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submit the assignment according to schedule.

My feedback will be in writing.

- Course 3 - Breathing.

We all know what breathing is and that is an essential action for maintaining life, an action that our body performs several times per minute for as long as we live.

Is it possible that you are not doing it correctly?

Yes, it is.

The way you breathe can impact your whole body, helping to regulate important functions such as heart rate and blood pressure. It can also reinforce proper body mechanics that put less stress on your body as you move.





The proper way of breathing is:

Breathe in through the nose, send the air to the lower lobes of the lungs, breathe out through the mouth. This breathing technique is called diaphragmatic breathing and it means that you are performing this action by breathing from the region around your diaphragm, rather than from your chest. This technique helps to strengthen your diaphragm, slow your breathing, and decrease your body's oxygen needs.

Diaphragm functions as a primary muscle of breathing but, also, is active in maintaining posture and core stability. Is also important for the emission of speech and sounds. Practicing breathing is more efficient when associated with good posture, singing and physical exercise. (Some of them are illustrated in the video material)

Practical task: Practice diaphragmatic breathing. Lie on your back (on the floor or other horizontal surface) or sit up straight in a chair. Relax your body. Place one hand flat on your upper chest and the other hand on your stomach. Breathe in slowly through your nose (for 5 seconds). The hand on your stomach should move while the one on your chest remains still. Keep the air in (for 5 seconds). Breathe out slowly through your lips (for 5 seconds). Keep practicing this technique until you're able to breathe in and out without your chest moving. Keep exercising diaphragmatic breathing for 10 to 15 minutes, every day during this module. For the first time you may experience dizziness and the urge to yawn. It is perfectly normal, just yawn and resume the exercise and the dizziness will disappear.

There are many situations when you have to move and talk at the same time or you have to talk right after effort. Being in a situation when you feel out of breath implies tremendous pressure over your body, both physical and psychological. A moment like that should be defining for understanding the



importance of training your body to function under pressure and to have the ability to control the situation. Breathing and moving are two constant components of life, that is why being in a situation when you have to perform both actions at the same time is quite common. How to control a situation like that?

- Don't rush your speech, gestures or movement when you are out of breath.
- Do not precipitate.
- Take time to gain control over your breathing.
- Do not hold your breath during sustained effort.
- Breathe in and out and try to relax your body.
- Prepare for situations like that before it happens by exercising and maintaining your body in a good shape.

Proper breathing increases brain activities like mental focus and clarity, stress reduction, better control over body reaction. Proper breathing improves performance, enhances posture, reduces pain, and balances pressure. Proper breathing improves both movement efficiency and energy efficiency.

Practical task: Practice move and talk and analyze your body reaction. When do you start to feel out of breath? How much time do you need to recover? Can you control your voice and gestures while moving?

Home assignment:

Complete the practical tasks and analyze the changes produced in your body, if any. Realize a video recording of you talking about this experience, showing what you've discovered and how you think you can improve your corporal habits.

The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submit the assignment according to schedule.

My feedback will be in writing.



- Course 4 - Relaxation.

Relaxation is a process that decreases the effects of stress on your mind and body and involves refocusing your attention on something calming and increasing awareness of your body. Yet, relaxation is so hard to achieve!

Why do we think that our bodies can work forever, without a break, without even slowing down from time to time? How can we imagine that our body can perform properly if we don't handle this "machinery" with care?

The world we live in moves faster and faster every day, the information travels faster and faster, the rhythm of life is fast and noisy, as noisy as the city we live in. The noise devours everything. A permanent noise that makes it impossible to listen to your thoughts, to hear your body and its needs, to stop and just be.

This course will sound a bit intimate because relaxation is an intimate topic. There are so many questions that I ask myself all the time. How do I separate professional from personal when work is following me everywhere. Everywhere is a laptop, a pad, a phone that makes me available to distraction. How do I stop or, at least, take a break? Am I consuming my life trying to juggle with checking the boxes on my TO DO list? What about a TO BE list? For me, relaxation is the encounter between me and myself, is the moment when I can embrace myself, is a process that establishes a connection between me and myself. It is my choice and I master my decisions.

The human body is a beautifully designed, good functioning machinery, when it is well preserved. Prolonged physical and mental effort leads to exhaustion. That is why we have to sometimes unplug from everyday tasks, we have to separate professional life from personal life, we have to take a break once in a while. Doesn't matter how much we love our profession, we have to



love ourselves more. Love and respect for our own bodies and minds has to be a stronger drive than anything else.

Relaxation is a process that has to be practiced and improved. You have to train your body and mind to create a path that you can access anytime you need.

There are many techniques that can help the body to achieve relaxation, techniques like Deep Breathing, Visualization, Meditation, Yoga, and so on. But you can practice relaxation by finding your own/personal way. You don't have to meditate or do yoga if you don't feel like but find your own relaxing activity. You have to allow yourself to breathe, to disconnect from work, to do activities that you actually enjoy and increase the state of well-being. Listen to music, write, draw, drink herbal tea, take a walk, do whatever you think is working. The purpose is to become a well-balanced individual, in control of your means of communication.

Practical task: Find an activity that is relaxing for you. Practice it every day during the module and see how it works.

Home assignment:

Complete the practical task and analyze the changes produced in your body, if any. Realize a video recording of you talking about this experience.

The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submit the assignment according to schedule.

My feedback will be in writing.

- Course 5 - Physical and mental state.

Every time you're about to perform an action you have to be prepared,



you have to be in the right state of mind and in good physical shape.

Being in the situation of presenting yourself publicly or semi-publicly implies a performative action that has to be delivered at the highest quality possible. As you might know by now, you must prepare, you must train to be performant.

1. Lifelong training implies cultivating/educating your body, both physically and mentally for as long as you live.

Since we become adults, the body passes through major changes every decade. The changes, either physical, mental or environmental, force our bodies to adjust permanently. Assuming that everyone's purpose is to lead a long and healthy life, adjusting accordingly has to become a priority. We have to acknowledge the changes that our body goes through and optimize the means according to our age. We have to accumulate, as much as we can, before we reach the peak and preserve, for as long as we can, as we start to age. Preserving involves acknowledging that we are going to reach a descending curve, after a certain age, and train ourselves to remain flexible. While aging, flexibility, both physical and mental, is the first quality that we lose.

Physical training is easier to pin-point. We know that we have to train the body to remain in good physical shape for as long as we can. But, what about our brain? When it comes to the brain, the great "deceiver", the information becomes available after the damage is done. Even though we have a natural tendency to ignore the changes and pretend that everything works just fine, we can counteract some effects.

The most common effect is lack of concentration which can appear for various reasons. The most common are: sleep deprivation, demanding schedule, health issues, too much TV or other electronic devices use, and lots of other external and internal factors. Acting on improving can start anytime.

Improve concentration and attention span:



- Play memory games or other games that stimulate concentration.
- Take time to read a book of your choice (more than 10 minutes) and write about what you read.
- Spend less time watching TV or surfing social media.
- Improve sleeping quality.
- Listen to music and remember the lyrics.
- Take a break, as often as needed.

## 2. Training for a specific action.

When you are in the situation of performing a public or semi-public action, such as delivering a speech or a lecture, having an important meeting or an interview, attending social functions, always prepare in advance. Rehearse your corporal actions, put your speech ideas in order, choose the right clothes to wear, breathe, relax and create the proper mental state suitable to the action that you're about to perform. Keep the focus on what you have to perform, speech or other type of actions, ignore parasitic thoughts and detach from any external stress.

The external factors tend to be stressful and to apply a lot of pressure on everyday life. That makes the environment a very important factor in preserving your well-being and safety. Home space and work space have to be designed to make you feel safe, comfortable and creative. Set your environment to respond to your needs but don't hesitate to transform it into a potential playground. Surround yourself with objects that can stimulate your creative potential or give up to objects and other things that could block your creativity. Just find out who you are and how you can function properly.

Practical tasks: Adjust your surrounding space to make you feel comfortable. Create something artistic with what you have around you.



Home assignment:

Complete the practical task and analyze the changes produced in your body, if any. Realize a video recording of you talking about this experience and present your creation.

The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submit the assignment according to schedule.

My feedback will be in writing.

- Course 6 - Extra-verbal communication

Refers to that part of the communication process that transmits messages or signals through an extra-verbal platform such as body language: posture, facial expressions and gestures. Extra-verbal information circulates between communicator and receiver passing through two very important processes: encoding and decoding.

Encoding is the act of generating information such as facial expressions, gestures, postures, and the ability to express emotions in a way that can be accurately interpreted by the receiver. Encoding information utilizes signals that are universally recognizable.

Decoding is the interpretation of information from received sensations given by the encoder/communicator, and it is defined as the ability to take the encoded information and interpret its meanings accurately to what the communicator intended. Decoding information utilizes the knowledge one may have on certain received sensations. In some cases a person may be able to properly assess some nonverbal cues and understand their meaning, while others might not be able to do so as effectively. These skills can vary from person to person, with some people being better than others. Apparently, women are





prone to be better decoders than men since they are more observant of extra-verbal cues, as well as more likely to use them.

Understanding body language is important, but it is also essential to pay attention to other cues such as context and the signals should be read as a group rather than focusing on a single action.

What is body language?

Is an ensemble of communicational tools, that are used sometimes in partnership with the spoken language or as an independent language, meant to facilitate the transmission of a message from the communicator to the receiver.

Facial expressions - Human face is extremely expressive and able to deliver countless emotions without saying a word. And unlike some other forms of nonverbal communication, facial expressions are universal. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, disgust, desire are the same across cultures. The eyes and mouth arias are the first to display an emotional response. As you probably know by now, Dr. Paul Ekman is the one who researched micro expressions and applied this revolutionary theory in the field of law-enforcement, but to perceive these micro expressions and to be able to see and interpret them, that needs a lot of training combined with natural abilities.

Posture and body movement - The way you move and carry yourself communicates a mass of information to the receiver. Consider how your perception about the people you watch is affected by the way they sit, walk, stand, or hold their head. This kind of unconscious observation is happening all the time between the communicator and the receiver. Your posture bearing, stance, and the subtle movements you make are permanently exposing the most intimate thoughts and emotions existing in your brain. Body movement can be either an asset or a liability.

Moving your body in a controlled, purposeful manner during a speech, is always an advantage. Body movement can support and reinforce what you say



and motion will always attract an audience's attention. Always move with a purpose and be aware of what you do with your body. Moving too much can become distracting to an audience. The key to effective movement lies in making those movements easy, natural, and smooth. Another valid reason for body movement is to enhance understanding of your message.

Gestures - are a specific bodily movement that reinforces a verbal message or conveys a particular thought or emotion. Although gestures may be made with the head, shoulders, or even the legs and feet, most are made with the hands and arms.

Your hands can be marvelous tools of communication when you speak, but many inexperienced speakers are unsure what to do with their hands. Some try to get them out of the way by putting them in their pockets or behind their backs. Others unconsciously relieve nervous tension by performing awkward, distracting movements. A few speakers over-gesture out of nervousness, waving their arms and hands wildly. A speaker's gestures can suggest very precise meaning to an audience. The use of gestures in communication varies from one culture to another. In some cultures, such as those of Southern Europe and the Middle East, people use their hands freely and expressively when they speak. In other cultures, people use gestures less frequently and in a more subdued way. The specific gesture we make and the meanings we attach to them are products of our cultural training. Just as cultures differ, so do the perceived meanings of gestures. To be effective, a speaker's gestures must be purposeful even if they're performed unconsciously. They must be visible to the audience. They must mean the same thing to the audience that they mean to the speaker. And they must reflect what's being said, as well as the total personality behind the message. No other kind of physical action can enhance your speeches in as many ways as gestures. They clarify and support your words, strengthen the audience's understanding of your verbal message, dramatize your ideas, enhance audience attentiveness and retention. To become an effective speaker,



you must understand how your body speaks. You can't stop sending your audience nonverbal messages, but you can learn to manage and control them.

**Eye contact** - Since the visual sense is dominant for most people, eye contact is an especially important type of nonverbal communication. The way you look at someone can communicate many things, including interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. Eye contact is also important in maintaining the flow of conversation and for measuring the other person's interest and response. No matter how large an audience may be, each listener wants to feel important, to sense a personal connection with the speaker and to feel that the speaker is communicating directly with him or her. In most cultures, the act of looking someone directly in the eyes is a symbol of sincerity. Failure to meet another person's gaze when speaking implies disinterest, lack of confidence, insincerity. Only by looking at your listeners as individuals can you convince them that you are sincere, that you are interested in them and that you care whether or not they accept your message. When you speak, your eyes also function as a control device. Simply by looking at them, you have an influence on your listeners' attentiveness and concentration. On the other hand, if you don't look at them, they won't look at you, and attentiveness to your message will suffer. When you see that the audience is interested in your message, you will gain confidence and become more comfortable. Effective eye contact is a feedback device that makes the speaking situation a two-way communication process. By watching the audience's reactions, you can make immediate adjustments to your presentation.

**Space** - Have you ever felt uncomfortable during a conversation because the other person was standing too close and invading your space? We all have a need for physical space, although that need differs depending on the culture, the situation, and the closeness of the relationship. You can use physical space to communicate many different nonverbal messages, including signals of intimacy



and affection, aggression or dominance.

Arriving to the point where you can control all these means of extra-verbal communication implies some work to improve your skills, observation of human behavior and gaining self-awareness. When in front of an audience you need to constantly check the response of the public. You must actively listen and watch in order to adjust your performance to the needs of the public. You have to "wear" your body skillfully. You have to be in control. All of these become possible if you find and acknowledge your natural corporal response. You have to discover how your body reacts to emotions. How much you are able to control your reactions and contain your emotions. That would be the starting point for constructing your own body language that expresses confidence, makes you believable, and delivers a clear message.

Extra-verbal communication has to be clear and precise, the abundance of gestures or facial reactions, or overlapping these means could generate confusion and interfere with the clarity of the message.

Practical tasks: Rehearse a speech looking in the mirror. Check how your body and face reacts. Discover your abilities and practice them until you feel confident, at ease and coherent.

Home assignment:

Complete the practical task. Realize a video recording of you delivering a speech, on a subject of your choice, using all the tools described above.

The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submit the assignment according to schedule.

My feedback will be in writing.



- Course 7 - Movement and dance.

Dance is the transformation of ordinary functional movement into extraordinary movement for extraordinary purposes. Even a common movement such as walking is performed in dance in a special way, sometimes in circles or to a special rhythm, but always in a special context. To transform a functional movement into a dance sequence, you have to think about connections, continuity and fluidity of the movements. Dancing is an urge that you feel inside and you have to express it and share it with the others. Dancing helps you to relax and get rid of all your strains and fears. Dance functions as therapy for yourself and for the people who watch. Dance is happiness in motion, magic waiting to happen, is the smile that never leaves your face. Dancing is the best way to relax and train your breathing abilities.

You don't need to know steps or to move in a certain style. You just have to move and enjoy it.

The purpose of this course is to make you smile, to release stress, give you the courage to express yourself even if you feel ridiculous or don't know how to dance. Dancing, especially when you don't know how to do it, is the best way to get out of your comfort zone, to extend your boundaries and to explore new territories.

Practical tasks: Discover your personal motion and what to do with it.

Home assignment:

Complete the practical task. Realize a video recording of you dancing.

The duration of the video material should be around 45 - 60 seconds.

Submission of the assignment is optional, but I would love to see you dance.



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