

For convenience I have placed the total number of counts required for each exercise at the beginning of each exercise along with the suggested tempo. All counts are in red and are placed directly above the line of description for each exercise (e.g. adagio, andante, moderate, moderately quick and allegro). This way you can choose music of any meter that suits you and still be able to count the exercise out in a logical fashion. For instance, even though all the exercises are counted in multiples of 4 or 8 measures, you can choose a 3/4 rhythm and count it as 1(2,3); 2(2,3); 3(2,3); 4(2,3) and so on.

** To insure that you make the most of your time it is highly recommended that you read through each lesson plan carefully before class and make thorough personal notations. Details such as music selection (tempo and meter), methods of counting, ages of your students and your own teaching style may modify certain factors. Also take specific notes as soon after class as possible in order to remember what needs to address more thoroughly next time.*

Lesson Plan Guide Lines

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY: It has become very clear to me that trying to write out my own lesson plans in a way that would be useable to a very diverse group of ballet instructors around the world is a daunting task! Terminology even within a particular “method” can vary and often people become adamant about their own usage of a term as being “absolute.” Since my whole purpose in writing this book is to make ballet technique accessible to as many people as possible, I have tried to explain things using terminology which, in some cases, may not be strictly Vaganova but in a way that would, hopefully, be clear to the majority dance instructors. In other words, my view is to be as inclusive as possible without compromising on technique or methodology.

The beginning syllabus is designed to introduce, instruct and instill the basics of movement technique so that verbal instruction, demonstration and slow repetition are essential. The “theme” is accuracy in developing neural pathways as well as intellectual understanding. On the other hand, the intermediate and advanced lessons are individually themed; some focusing on adagio movements, some on jumps and others on tours so that even though nothing is skipped in the progression of presentation, a definite goal is set. Since many more exercises are presented in each lesson plan than can be practiced during one class period and each lesson’s plan is designed to be used 2-3 times, you can always choose to create your own theme within the lesson structure.

If you plan to use the lessons provided merely as a guide to creating your own, I highly recommend that you consider keeping the eight beginning lessons as intact as possible as this is where the precise internal movement patterns are both introduced and ingrained into the body and mind. Later on, especially in advanced/continuing lessons, there will be plenty of opportunity for combining certain exercises to fit your particular focus as well as time limits. The following are a few suggestions:

- 1 Nothing in the progression of or number of repetitions in the beginning lessons should be left out; if needed, you can present an exercise not gotten to in the next session. It is extremely important that the skaters not merely intellectually understand the movement but that they can execute it accurately “from the inside out” so that it is applied correctly in their skating. (Please see p. 12 on “Food for Thought.”)