8 Tools to Remember Accurate Choreography
By Connie Warasila

Have you ever played the "Telephone Game"? A group of people arrange themselves in a line. The first person whispers a sentence to the second person. Then, the second person whispers the sentence they heard to the third person. The sentence is passed from player to player, down the line, until it reaches the last person. The last person in line repeats the whispered sentence out loud for the whole group to hear. The "fun" of the game is to discover just how different the sentence is after having gone into and out of all the players.

Actually, the "Telephone Game" speaks to many phenomena that contribute to inaccurate communication, defined for our purposes as the sharing of information. The farther away the sentence traveled from the original source, the more distorted it became. This same thing happens to humans when we try to learn new information, encode or interpret that information, store that information in our memory, and when we retrieve that information for use.

Upon review of many assessment, launch, and champion application videos, the deviations away from the original choreography of WATERinMOTION are apparent. You may be thinking, "What deviations?" or "I know I present the choreography just like the video." Unfortunately, the choreography does sometimes get presented differently than originally intended choreography. This inaccurate sharing of choreography happens for many reasons. Some instructors modify some moves for special populations, and then, it just "sticks". Sometimes, instructors may be physically limited in their ability to deliver the choreography one day as originally designed, so they might change it to suit their own physical needs that day, and then, it just "sticks". Some instructors are nervous to present the choreography as originally designed because of their assumptions that their students cannot, or will not, follow their instructions. So, they change the choreography to avoid rejection, and then it just "sticks". After further research into human brain tendencies, the morphing of the original choreography can happen unconsciously, due to our human brains' perceiving, processing, and recalling the choreography differently than demonstrated on the release video and documented in the release notes.

The first step in rectifying the morphing of choreography is to acknowledge that it happens! It happens to all of us. We all perceive the world, and teach and learn choreography, through the filter of our previous life experiences. That's called Confirmation Bias. We, also, learn through channels of verbal and non-verbal communication, which can also be affected by personal biases. This results in selective perception – we choose what we perceive as the important part of messages and screen out the rest resulting in a distorted perception. Poor listening skills contribute to inaccurate perception of the original choreography. Focusing on the spoken words, as well as non-verbal communication, on the release video could improve perception accuracy of the moves. Your attitude and climate at the time of learning choreography can also help or hurt accurate perception. Negative emotions (anger, hostility, distrust), preoccupation with other matters, impatience, unimportance,

inattention, and attitude towards the message can all be barriers to accurate perception of the choreography. The struggle is REAL!

Here are some tools to assist in the learning process, specifically for WATERinMOTION choreography, but applicable in all areas of life. There are three main stages in learning and remembering: encoding (processing information into memory), storage (sensory, short-term, and long-term), and retrieval (getting information out of memory). Make it a personal goal to get WATERinMOTION choreography into your long-term memory. It will be more easily retrieved with increased familiarity, relevance and connection to other information.

1. CONTEXT - Practice your choreography where you will be teaching your choreography. Remembering information is easier when you place yourself in the same context you were in when you learned it.
2. MEANING - Give meaning to the choreography. Review the purpose of each track and the types of moves that accomplish that purpose. For example, the warm-up track will always use short lever moves, work in each plane of motion, and gradually prepare the body for cardio-vascular exercise. Knowing that gives meaning to the moves of Track 1. Each track has a specific purpose and moves to accomplish that purpose.
3. DEEPER PROCESSING - Process the information on the video and notes at a deeper level to avoid ineffective encoding. Really watch for details, review the purpose of the whole program, read the names of each move. Spend the time to learn the choreography deeply.
4. TIMING - Review the choreography often, in a timely manner, prior to teaching. The longer you are away from the original release information the more memory decay can occur. Form a habit of reviewing your video or notes just prior to teaching. Go back to the original source.
5. CLEAN SLATE - Reinforce accurate choreography memory by keeping an open mind when learning the new release. Interference theory states that people forget information because of interference from other previously learned information. Avoid letting your previously learned choreography from tainting your perception of the new choreography. Start with a clean slate!
6. OVERLEARNING - Continue to practice newly learned choreography even after you think you've learn it. This is called overlearning. Avoid the pitfall of being overconfident, even if you've been teaching for a long time.
7. CHUNKING - Distributed practice, or learning material in short sessions over a long period, encourages creating accurate long-term memories. This is the opposite of "cramming." Learning in "chunks" can also promote encoding the memory in long-term memory. For example, learn all the cardio tracks (1-6) together.
8. ONE AT A TIME - Minimize memory interference by designating time to learn only WATERinMOTION choreography. If you teach multiple pre-choreographed programs, this might be a challenge. Try learning just one program at a time until it is learned, then move on to the next program.

Now that you know that we all learn, retain, and recall information differently and based on our own past experiences, you can begin building habits to combat choreography morphing. In addition, we can now have a new level of compassion for our clients who will also learn, retain,

and recall the information we share with them differently and based on their own past experiences. The best test that you have learned WATERinMOTION choreography accurately is to work with your instructor team and compare how each of you perceived the video and notes. Then, go back to the source, review details and sharpen your skills of perception.

SPLASH ON!

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