Sequencing & Teaching
All Levels Classes

Presented by:
Amanda Correa, E-RYT 500
Agenda

• Define All Levels classes and why you’d want to teach/offer them
• Discuss how to find a pose’s foundation and the means to build upon it
• Examine techniques for sequencing so that both beginners and advanced students are challenged
• Understand how to instruct all levels to keep everyone safe, included and uplifted
• Analyze ways to stay calm and present in a class of variations happening simultaneously
About Amanda

• Amanda has taught 2,500 hours of classes over the last six and a half years.
• She has completed 1,000 hours of yoga education courses, including Hatha, Kundalini, and Prenatal teacher trainings.
• Amanda has contributed to workshops, continuing education courses and yoga teacher trainings.
• In 2014, she founded Spira Yoga & Wellness, RYS 200.
What Are All Levels?

• Levels are simply a concept.
• Levels may be defined differently by regions, studios and even individuals.
• Each yoga student is unique in their abilities and limitations.
• All classes are all levels because no two students are alike and a student’s practice changes daily.
• Most importantly, all students want to grow in their yoga practice.
Why Teach All Levels?

• Attract more students!
  o Ideal for a smaller studio
  o Single room studio
  o New class time
  o New teacher

• Most All Levels classes teach to only one level and expect the other levels to modify as needed
  o Intermediate to advanced students can deepen their practice to an extent
  o Beginners need assistance with modifications and your support
The Challenges

1. Understanding the foundation of the asanas and how to build upon them
2. Meeting the advanced student and the beginner student where they are simultaneously
3. Clarifying who should enter into which asana variation
4. Keeping the students’ self-esteem high
5. Maintaining the integrity of your sequence
6. Retaining your sanity as a teacher
Building Blocks

• Recognize the foundational elements of the asana
  o What is the action in the legs, hips, spine, shoulders, etc?
  o What are the motions of the joints?
  o Which muscles are contracting vs. stretching?

• Once the building blocks of a pose are identified, we can modify the pose for any ability.

• We can also find other poses with similar foundations.
  o What other poses repeat the same actions, have similar joint motions, and similar contractions and stretches?
Phases of Progression

Low Lunge
Anjaneyasana
Phases of Progression
Low Lunge Pose

Hands in anjali mudra, heart lifts

Hips deepen, arms wide apart, gaze lifted

Palms together, backbend, gaze at the thumbs

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Phases of Progression

Side Angle Pose

Utthita Parsvakonasana
Phases of Progression
Side Angle Pose

Elbow on the knee, opposite hand on hip

Palm to a block, opposite arm reaching straight up

Wider stance, hand to mat, opposite arm in 180° flexion beside the ear

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Phases of Progression
Arm Balances & Inversions
Phases of Progression

Arm Balances & Inversions

Chaturanga Dandasana

Bakasana

Mukha Hasta Sirsasana

Tripod

↓ Bakasana

↓ Chaturanga Dandasana
The Challenges

1. Understanding how to build upon asanas
2. Meeting the advanced student and the beginner student where they are on their mat today
3. Clarifying who should enter into which asana variation
4. Keeping the students’ self-esteem high
5. Maintaining the integrity of your sequence
6. Retaining your sanity as a teacher
Sequencing

- When creating your sequence, work from your level of experience towards basic
- Write your sequence on a notecard – create your own short hand
- When writing your sequence, work from basic to advanced
- Follow general arc for sequencing a yoga class

Sample sequence:
- W2 → XTD Side Angle
- Bind
- HL → W3 → HL → Side Stretch
- LL → Liz L → Koundi/1/2 Han → Hanuman
Sequencing: Low Lunge Pose

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Anjaneyasana

Lizard Lunge

Koundinyasana II

Prep with shoulder under knee

Lizard Lunge with blocks

Ardha Hanuman-asana

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Sequencing: Side Angle Pose

1. Virabhadrasana II
2. Utthita Parsvakonasana (with modifications)
3. Utthita Parsvakonasana
4. Visvamitrasana
5. Baddha Utthita Parsvakonasana

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Sequencing: Arm Balances & Inversions

- Bakasana Prep
- Bakasana
- Float One Knee
- Flying Crow
- Handstand
The Challenges

1. Understanding how to build upon asanas
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5. Maintaining the integrity of your sequence
6. Retaining your sanity as a teacher
• Observation is critical when teaching all levels.
• Observe your students’ poses during the warm up to know what to look for later in class.
  o But don’t make assumptions! Keep your eyes open the whole class.
  o And don’t change your written sequence! Know your modifications.
• View the planned advancements of your sequence as phases of a progression
Teaching

• Keep your students safe by:
  o Studying the foundations of the poses
  o Learning their modifications
  o Planning progressions in your sequence
  o Observing your students in class
  o Teaching appropriate variations of the poses
  o Cueing the phases of each progression clearly and effectively
Language

• All Levels appropriate cueing is key for keeping the students safe and the class organized.

• Qualify why a student would move from the first phase into a second or third and clarify what a student would do if they do not qualify.
  
  o “If you have an inversion practice in the center of the room, try lowering your head and lifting into tripod headstand from crow, otherwise continue challenging your balance in crow pose.”

  o To keep beginners safe, verbally cue the progression of poses beyond the first phase – this will prevent them from copying you, plus you can observe.
Language

• Eliminate names for the phases/levels
  o Do not use terms to differentiate a beginner, intermediate, or advanced phase
  o This may negatively impact a student's experience
  o Everyone wants to be advanced; someone may try an advanced phase when they are not ready

• Refine beginners’ postures with individual adjustments

• Refine intermediate to advanced students’ postures with verbal cueing (or assists when comfortable)
The Challenges

1. Understanding how to build upon asanas
2. Meeting the advanced student and the beginner student where they are on their mat today
3. Clarifying who should enter into which asana variation
4. Keeping the students’ self-esteem high
5. Maintaining the integrity of your sequence
6. Retaining your sanity as a teacher
Timing & Pacing

• The integrity of your sequence is maintained by your pacing and class timing

• Pacing is determined by style of yoga, intent of the sequence, and preserving the balance between effort and ease (or alertness and relaxation)

• Once you’ve determined the class’s pacing, set timing markers in your sequence

• Identify which poses you can add/eliminate from your sequence if needed
Keep Calm

- Breathe intentionally to keep calm as you multitask
- Speak slowly and use concise language
- Move with purpose around the yoga room
- Use your notecards so you don’t have to remember where you are going next
- Don’t apologize or panic if you make a mistake
- Have fun and enjoy the journey!
Q & A

AmandaCatherine.com
Amanda@AmandaCatherine.com
Thank you!

Amanda Correa
AmandaCatherine.com    Amanda@AmandaCatherine.com

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