

Introduction how to teach a class, which tools to use and how.

The ways that people understand and absorb information is through the senses and in a yoga class through either mainly seeing, hearing or feeling.

Some people are more visual: processing information the easiest through seeing.

Others are more auditive: processing information the easiest by hearing.

Other are more kinesthetic: processing information the easiest by feeling.

In general we do use all these 3 senses yet one is more dominant. Check it out for yourself! In your teaching you want to address the 3 senses.

1. Verbally Cueing: Auditive

Indirect cueing: In the beginning of class: Inviting people to arrive in the here and now and bringing awareness to the body and breath.

The language is inviting, flowing and gives suggestions, directions, use often the "ing" form and words as may or might: arriving here, centering into yourself, deepening the breathing, start letting go of tensions, allowing the breath to deepen etc are good choices, you may change your position etc.

The teacher starts with creating a common ground.

This flowing, inviting language, you will pick up again, towards the end of the Yoga practice when guiding them into Shavasana.

Direct cueing: Being able to give precise instructions how to go in and out of a pose and how to transition to the next posture.

Give open verbal and general cues to assist a student to go deeper in a posture.

Start with the foundation and use in the teaching what you see in the students.

Often several students come across similar challenges.

Remember that the student are your inspiration.

Clear cues reduce the number of physical adjustments.

Speak in direct suggestions, "commands", (no "we" or "you"):

"Raise the arms"

Or combine with the -ing form: p.e. "Raising your arms up to the sky, elongate the spine, ground your feet firmly into the earth, and inhale deeply and exhale completely"

Give cues referring to the basic yogic understanding of Ahimsa, respecting the body, Satya, being truthful to your body/mind, uniqueness and non-comparison.

Give inviting cues to stimulate energy in case of low energy or inertia and/or cues focused on releasing tension in case of overdoing and forcing.

Use words as:

- draw, extend rather than push or press
- place or take hold of rather than grasp or grab
- in standing poses and backbends: Extend, lift, engage, expand
- in forward bends, reclined twists or in Shavasana use: surrender release, sink, relax, giving yourself permission, soften, melt
- awareness and breath: move inside, turn inwards, allow, notice, breath into, notice, watch, witness, observe, explore
- direction: ensure, guide, move to
- use proper metaphors: listening to the sound of your breath like waves in the ocean

Use language that supports listening to their body. Invite people to respect their bodies, give modifications and variations of a posture:

- ♥ How are you feeling today?
- ♥ How is the weather inside? (Use of metaphors)
- ♥ Noticing the breath, is it steady, irregular, deep or more superficial? Just notice.
- ♥ Different bodies will execute poses differently
- ♥ If you need a break, come in child's-pose
- ♥ Remember that today the pose is different than last week
- ♥ The neighbors pose will look different than yours: we are all unique.

Negations: Avoid saying what not to do, say what to do.

Say: "Bring your knee above the ankle"

instead of: "do not bring the knee further than the ankle"

Using silence as a cue to deepen the experience and to create silence inside

2. Observation: being the watcher

Using auditory, visual and intuitive skills to hold the space and guide the students into a safe, steady and joyful practice

- ♥ How is the alignment of the body? What is the postural habit, what is the expression of the body?
- ♥ What is their body language is telling you?
- ♥ How is the breath?
- ♥ How is the emotional/mental state of a student?
- ♥ How are the students before and after class?

The teacher also observes his/her own body, mental and emotional state, providing a safe environment for the students, guiding them into a safe and nourishing practice where they can deeply connect with themselves and their internal experience.

3. Demonstration: Visual

Show a pose/sequence or part of a pose.

Show how to use props, blocks, belts etc.

Demonstrate the more complicated postures first then guide them verbally into them and watch.

With beginning students: demonstrate while students in a comfortable position: "watch me for a moment".

More experienced students need less demonstration

Demonstrate the poses while people can easily watch you. or just guide them only verbally into the posture.

Salamba Sarvangasana, -Sirsasana, Chakrasana, Setu bandasana, Matsyasana...all examples of poses that either you show first and then verbally guide them in the posture.

Be aware that in balances they need to focus to a specific point (dristhi)....which is probably not you!

Give simple cues while demonstrating.

4. Assisting and adjusting: Kinesthetic

Use hands-on adjustments to ensure alignment, a safe practice and to deepen the students experience of a posture.

While adjusting a student and the whole class can benefit from the information, speak out loudly while giving the individual hands-on adjustment: p.e. aligning knee above ankle.

When the adjustment is specific for a student, use a personal verbal guidance, where you lower your voice

Help people with use of use yoga-props.

3 important principles:

- Start grounding the student into the foundation first. Encourage steadiness and stability in a pose
- Check the alignment principles
- Check the students breath

Hands-on adjustments are optional

- Ask permission to assist a student.
- Adjust with care, being present and clear. Use firmness and sensitivity both
- Offer deepening adjustments if there is space for the student to move into.

Do this gradually by moving with the breath. Stay connected with the students and your own body.

- Use open palms, no grabbing
- Avoid the more intimate areas of the body.
- Pull a shirt down to avoid bare skin touching

- Avoid bringing your body too close to a student (unless you are very familiar and agree with each other) so there is no sense of being violated

What if a student resists various cues, start doing its own practice, or disturbs the practice?

The first question is:

Is the student doing an unsafe practice or disturbing others?

If unsafe and/or disturbing to the other students, take care of other students first p.e. by bringing them in child's pose.

Then ask the student to come with you and deal with it outside the classroom.

If not disturbing others and not violating himself or others, you may leave it to the students responsibility.

If you wish to, you could address the issue to the student after class, to get more understanding for both you and the student.

Check what it brings up in you. Watch your own control issues.

Are you open and heart full as you approach the student?

Principle : We never can look inside a students body/mind, how a pose/practice feels to him/her, in which emotional or mental state he/she is.

We never can know before whether a student has a lot on his plate

He/she might be dealing with strong issues.

Be aware that when we go deep into the yoga practice, issues will be triggered.

The yoga practice is not all honeymoon!

It is a Sadhana, a spiritual practice, where blockages are released and unconscious gifts and patterns will be unveiled. We, as teachers, may have some ideas because of our experience and knowledge and these we share in the best way possible as aware as we can.

Always approach the student with respect, an open mind and heart.

- Stay present: explore his or her needs

Stay present with an open mind and heart.

Approach the student with respect (ahimsa)

Being a witness onto yourself.

Love,
Lahma