

Effort Elements

Historical Briefing

Rudolph Laban was an artist and scientist, architect, choreographer, philosopher, and movement educator, extraordinarily innovative and charismatic. Born, in Austria, he traveled widely and participated in the major European artistic activities of his time, especially in the development of modern dance. He was in Germany during the Bauhaus and Expressionist periods, initiating and developing theatrical and recreational dance programs, schools, and publications. In 1936, the Nazis forced him to stop, and he went to England, where he adapted his movement theories to wartime studies of factory workers, helped establish new schools for movement education, and continued to publish his works.

Laban observed movement process in all aspects of life: from the martial arts to spatial patterns in Sufi rug weaving, factory work tasks, rhythmic patterns in folk dances, crafts and the behavior of emotionally disturbed people. It was the process itself that compelled his attention, not just the end points or goals of the action, and he, with his colleagues, refined movement observations into an exquisitely precise method of experiencing, seeing, and recording them so that body movement functional and expressive implications become increasingly apparent.

It was from Laban's research and publications that the Laban Institute of Movement Studies was founded in 1978 in New York. His work is widely referred to as Effort/Shape or Laban Analysis.

Excerpts taken from Body Movement-Irmgard Bartenieff and Dori Lewis.

EXPLORATIONS IN SPACE

One Dimensional Space

Vertical: A continuum from Up to Down, Down to Up, Rising to Sinking, Sinking to Rising.

Vertical is connected to the Weight Effort:

Rising/Up - Light

Sinking/Down - Strong

Key words: Power, Bestowing, Begging, High Status, Low Status.

Horizontal/Lateral: A continuum from Enclosing to Spreading, Spreading to Enclosing, Narrowing to Widening, Widening to Narrowing, Crossing to Opening, Opening to Crossing.

Horizontal is connected to the Space Effort:

Crossing/Enclosing/Narrowing - Direct

Opening/Spreading/Widening - Indirect

Key Words: Friendship, Partnership, Possibility, Trapped, Caged.

Sagittal: Continuum from Forward to Backward, Backward to Forward, Advancing to Withdrawing, Withdrawing to Advancing.

Sagittal is connected to the Time Effort:

Forward/Advancing - Sudden

Backward/Withdrawing - Sustained

Key Words: Confrontation, Hostility, Attack, Retreat.

Two-Dimensional Space/Planes:

<u>Plane</u>	<u>Dimension Dominance</u>	<u>Effort Dominance</u>
Door	Vertical (horizontal secondary)	Weight (space secondary)
Table	Horizontal (sagittal secondary)	Space (time secondary)
Wheel	Sagittal (vertical secondary)	Time (weight secondary)

Three Dimensional Space:

"Each Diagonal has distinctive body/space/Effort tensions associated with the dimensions involved. The impact of the combined three tensions is diminished if any one is weakened; in the natural veering toward stability, the mover frequently allows this weakening to occur. Only in extraordinary circumstances does a mover come close to the peaks of kinetic power, but even attempts toward movement along a pure diagonal will have some of the dramatic power of its extremes of flight and fall."

P. 91 Body Movement - Irmgard Bartenieff with Dori Lewis

- CUBE – Three equal spatial pulls.
- Diagonals – Flying to Falling.
- Spirals
- Shape
 - Shape Flow – underlying support
 - Directional - Spokelike, arclike – bridge to environment
- Shaping - full on 3-dimensional connection/relating to environment

Laban's Effort Elements

Laban identified SPACE, WEIGHT, TIME, FLOW as motion factors toward which performers of movement can have different attitudes depending on temperament, situation, environment, and many other variables. The attitudes toward the motion factors he call antrieb, meaning on drive, representing the organism's urge to make itself known. Antrieb translated to English means EFFORT.

The Effort Elements of SPACE, WEIGHT, TIME, FLOW communicate quality of movement - how movement is performed.

Space Effort: How does the mover approach space?

Direct: Focused in space, deliberate, clearly focused from one point in space to the next. Zeroing in, pinpointing.

Indirect/Multi-focused/Global: Encompassing focus, flexible focus.

Time Effort: How does the mover exert him/herself in time? Driven by it or lingering in it?

Sudden/Quick: Urgent, hasty.

Sustained: Taking time, leisurely.

Weight Effort: What is the mover's attitude toward the use of his/her weight? What is the quality of the exertion of weight?

Strong: Impactful, vigorous, powerful.

Light: Using fine touch, airy, delicate.

Flow Effort: What is the mover's attitude toward the goingness, the quality of continuity of his/her movement?

Free: Easy going, streaming out, abandoned, ready to go.

Bound: Controlling the flow, streamlining inward, holding back, restraining, ready to stop.

The Eight Basic Effort Action Drives

- 1) To Float (floating)
Indirect, Sustained, Light
All indulging elements
- 2) To Thrust (thrusting)
Direct, Strong, Quick
All Fighting elements
- 3) To Glide (gliding)
Sustained, Light, Direct
- 4) To Slash (slashing)
Quick, Strong, Indirect
- 5) To Dab (dabbing)
Direct, Quick, Light
- 6) To Wring (wringing)
Indirect, Sustained, Strong
- 7) To Flick (flicking)
Indirect, Quick, Light
- 8) To Press (pressing)
Direct, Sustained, Strong

Indulging Effort Actions: Float, Flick, Dab, Glide

- Float: Light, Indirect, Sustained
- Flick: Light, Indirect, Quick
- Dab: Light, Direct, Quick
- Glide: Light, Direct, Sustained

Fighting Effort Actions: Slash, Punch, Wring, Press

- Slash: Strong, Indirect, Quick
- Punch: Strong, Direct, Quick
- Wring: Strong, Indirect, Sustained
- Press: Strong, Direct, Sustained

Laban Effort Graph

<u>Effort</u>	<u>Indulging</u>	<u>Fighting</u>
Flow	Free	Bound
Weight	Light	Strong
Space	Indirect/multi-focused	Direct
Time	Sustained	Sudden/Quick

Transformation Drives: Combinations of Three Efforts

Action Drive:	Weight, Time, Space	(No Flow)
Vision Drive:	Flow, Time, Space	(No Weight)
Spell Drive:	Flow, Weight, Space	(No Time)
Passion Drive:	Flow, Weight, Time	(No Space)

Laban Effort States

The Effort States are combinations of two efforts; they come in complementary pairs:

* Dream State/Awake State * Mobile State/Stable State * Remote State/Near State

Dream State: Flow & Weight

- 1) Free & Light
- 2) Free & Strong
- 3) Bound & Light
- 4) Bound & Strong

Awake State: Time & Space

- 1) Sustained & Indirect
- 2) Sustained & Direct
- 3) Quick & Indirect
- 4) Quick & Direct

Mobile State: Flow & Time

- 1) Free & Sustained
- 2) Free & Quick
- 3) Bound & Sustained
- 4) Bound & Quick

Stable State: Weight & Space

- 1) Light & Indirect
- 2) Light & Direct
- 3) Strong & Indirect
- 4) Strong & Direct

Near State: Time & Weight

- 1) Sustained & Light
- 2) Sustained & Strong
- 3) Quick & Light
- 4) Quick & Strong

Remote State: Flow & Space

- 1) Free & Indirect
- 2) Free & Direct
- 3) Bound & Indirect
- 4) Bound & Direct