

Taiwan New Leaders Intensive Training/ w Gui Prada - Part 1

Premise

In practically every Brazilian Zouk community around the world we observe two as old as time elements:

- 1 - more followers than leaders in socials; and
- 2 - followers developing faster than leaders.

Even at events that sell even number of tickets for leaders and followers, we still have more followers on the dance floor.

What explains that?

You can bet that several teachers, students, studio owners, event organizers and community leaders have spent hours discussing the reasons. It has been the topic of interviews, podcasts, and Q&As in our dance world since the dawn of time, and I bet you might have thought about it too.

The reasons are far and wide with explanations coming from a complex web of cause and effect. For the purposes of this training, we'll focus on two - one for each of the above elements:

- 1 - The perceptions of what is required to be a "good leader", and of "what is cool" or "desirable"

Most leaders in Brazilian Zouk are learning how to dance as adults; most times with zero dance background. Therefore, a great deal of the learning journey is spent figuring out how to move their bodies while having to: lead another person, being on the beat, being clear, comfortable, and aware of the space, to name a few. Then! Leaders look to the side and see these other leaders doing all these cool-looking things and the big smiles on followers' faces and are sometimes hit with a sense of hopelessness.

The comparisons and consequent idea of what is necessary to be or to become a good leader, combined with the slower embodiment of movements and patterns can reduce confidence and patience.

The subconscious fear of not looking good, boring the follower to death with their 4 moves, and getting rejections to their invitations to dance, push Brazilian Zouk leaders out of the regular classes and into desperate measures and shortcuts that they think will bring them more dances like learning toalha, tornados, and other examples of cool/complex head movements.

- 2 - The Leaders' slower learning curve (in the beginning)

Due to the nature of the dance and how it works, followers experience a much wider variety of movement and patterns earlier on. The follower's silent learning through listening and responding is in the nature of the role. Plus - a beginner follower is more likely to dance with a more experienced leader than the other way around. In general, this allows followers to feel the flow of the dance at an earlier stage, which can bring more enjoyment and confidence.

Leaders find themselves often stuck with what they know, which they often judge as 'not enough'. This then leads them to boredom or to the thinking that they are boring the followers, which further contributes to the lack of confidence, as mentioned before.

Enters the Leaders Training

In my formative years, I went through it all.

For the reasons mentioned above, I did not know if what I was doing was pleasant or not. If my dance was giving space, or constricting, or if the fact that I was doing Viradinha over and over again was indeed boring the follower.

Luckily, I had the help of many followers who would give me their input on how I felt. **That helped me realize that we don't need much to have a great experience and enjoy dancing with someone.**

There is an essential social dance skillset to be developed: ADAPTATION.

Adaptation is not one thing only. It's an umbrella term that manifests a quality that is acquired after several places are mastered and in place. They can all be trained and this training is all about them.

The Leaders Training has been done 11 times in the US, once in Canada, Australia and Poland. It has changed the perception of both leaders and followers of what is important and served as inspiration for dancers in all their learning stages.

The idea is to contribute and provide leaders with an opportunity to grow faster and consistently, by receiving immediate feedback about what is important for social dancing and experiencing different styles and levels of following.

For Taiwan, we're presenting SPECIAL NEW VERSION OF THE TRAINING, designed to be more effective and more focused on what's truly essential.

Who is this training for?

This training is for those who REALLY want and are ready to work on their social dancing skills. Who really want and are ready to discover what is required to be a comfortable, attentive leader.

Although it's common to hear from people that they want to be comfortable dancers, few truly have the patience to work on it.

Therefore, this training is for those who have the desire to work on subtle and yet important skills, develop their sensitivity and their sense of playfulness.

This training is for those who want to finally understand, how they can do more with less.

Prerequisites

This is not a training designed for newcomers.

In order to take full advantage of our time together, it's necessary to know the following Brazilian Zouk fundamentals:

- Basics (on the Spot, and Linear)
- Viradinha
- Lateral
- Send-Away
- Vira-Lateral (Viradinha into Lateral)

The Training

The Leaders Intensive is a training based on the idea of **horizontal learning**. That means that on top of the instructions given by me, the feedback received from the other leaders and the followers will be your most important source of learning.

For that reason, this training is built around multiple partner rotations, therefore this is not a training to do with only one partner.

We are going to go together for 16 hours (10 hours of instruction, 4 hours of break, and 2 hours of practice) total on Saturday and Sunday, February 1 and 2, 2025, in accordance with the schedule and curriculum below:

Saturday (JUST LEADERS) - Fundamentals Review:

Our first day will be with just the leaders.

Expect to talk the talk, lead each other during the first day, and truly start developing patience and adaptation.

11 - 1pm - First workshop - The Weight Transfers and Walking Foundations, and review of the basic kit of Fundamentals:

- Basics (In Place and Linear)
- Viradinha
- Send Away
- Abre-Lateral
- Lateral
- Walk Around

The first workshop will start with the most important tool for comfort and smoothness - the stepping or walking. We will go over walking with control, balance, and awareness of the rest of your body.

Then we will go over all the fundamentals that do not include head movement bootcamp style. During this part we will focus not only on the review itself, but also making sure you can execute them clearly.

1 - 2 pm - Lunch Break and Q&A - 1 hour - During this hour we'll have a chance to talk the talk. I'll share with you some important aspects of being a Brazilian Zouk leader, and answer whatever questions we might have.

2 - 3:30pm - Second Workshop - Continuing the review and smoothing things out

The second workshop will continue our review and change the focus to smooth them out. We are going to go over the techniques to make your fundamentals feel good and we will count on each other's feedback to let us know if we are making progress.

Snack Break - 30 minutes

4 - 5:30pm - Third Workshop - Musicality Essentials

The secret to extracting more from less in Brazilian Zouk is musicality.

The third workshop will work on the basics of using the music to create comfort, play, variety and versatility. The rhythm will be our starting point, and we'll get to exercise leading and following dynamic changes while we dance.

Especially for this workshop, the pace in which we progress will be determined by the group, since there is a lot we can cover about musicality, but only so much we can cover in 90 minutes.

5:30 - Homework Assignment - by the end of the training Saturday, we'll receive some homework to get us ready for Sunday.

5:30 - 6:30 - Practice

Sunday (THE FOLLOWERS JOIN)

On Sunday the followers join the training.

With their participation, we'll focus on further smoothing things out and fine-tuning our adaptation skills. Their feedback will be our most essential learning tool, therefore, we'll have multiple rotations with multiple rounds of feedback.

11 - 1pm - Fourth workshop - Review and Understanding the Tracks

Here we are going to:

- Do everything we did on day one, but now with the followers, focusing on tuning in to their bodies and movements; and
- Get a better hold of Brazilian Zouk's basic floorcraft principle of the tracks and using it to create a lot with very little.

1 - 2 pm - Lunch Break and Q&A

2 - 3:30pm - Fifth Workshop - Touch, Physical Connection, and Body Movements

Here we are going to:

- focus on the details of touch. We are going to talk about hands, arms, forearms, fingers, shoulders, chest, and all the other parts of our bodies that we tend to tense up or not pay much attention to; then
- laser focus on making our body movements calm and continuous. We will be studying undulations and isolations, leading them from our bodies with the help of the music and applying what we saw above.

4 - 5:30pm - Last Workshop - Support and Energy management

We are going to finish talking about creating support for the followers, consistent points of connection, and noticing our ability to keep the energy we apply consistent

5:30 - 6:30 - Practice - Putting everything together

Our last hour will be a guided practica, where we'll apply everything we worked on during the weekend.

Training like this has never been done before. It will be new for you and for me. Our entire focus will be developing our skills for a pleasant social dancing experience and we will count on the constant and truthful feedback of the followers to help us get there.

What do followers get from the training?

The Leaders Intensive Training has been many times called a 'Followers Training disguised as leaders training'.

Although we direct the focus on giving the leaders feedback, the process of discovering what works for the followers and what doesn't has been of incredible value. During this training, followers get in touch with their movements and preferences in ways they haven't before.

They also get to work on their essential footwork and discover new possibilities within the framework of permission that is given during this training. Here, the leaders are working to fit their movement into the followers' and not the other way around.

Location

Flow Taipei
3F, #215 Fuxing S Rd Sec 1
Taipei 106

Maximum number of participants

24 couples (24 leaders and 24 followers)