Continuing Ballet Technique

Down on lower campus, across of the baseball fields is a building that is known currently as the temporary dance building. Here, a course of continuing ballet technique takes place from 3:30 to 5:30 every Tuesday and Thursday. I was lucky to sit into this class for observation since I am a dance major and plan on going through the ballet courses. In the classroom, windows and fans due to the lack of air conditioning cool the room. Even with these two items the room remains humid. Before the class starts, students are already stretching, trying to get to their most flexible point so they do not pull a muscle during class. The room is almost completely silent, having few conversations going through the room. Some students review their exercises from previous classes, trying to make their technique natural. As the professor walks in, he greets everyone and checks on how they are doing. Right after, they begin what seems like a routine they have been doing for a while with the professor reviewing to those who still have not caught on. The professor continuously circulates the room as he announces the next technique, really trying to have his students stay with the music and fixing those who are doing the technique wrong. Many of the techniques are hard to understand for me but the rest the students seem to be able to catch on to what the professor says. It is almost as if he is merging two languages in one as to get the techniques but to also have a translation. The professor has a good sense of humor, able to keep smiles on the students’ faces in the unbearably hot room. He tries to also include some history of famous ballet dancers as well as accomplishments they have done and what got them to be renown. As
the class progresses the professor really tries to emphasize the importance of the music and staying on beat with it. Often he is snapping with the beats so the students can stay with each other during their techniques. Halfway through the class the professor gives a water break to the students so they do not dehydrate. Dancers really need to pay attention to their health because their performance is affected by it. Another observation is that when the students have a question they actually say question before asking. It seems like there has been a lot of discipline put into this class or a higher expectation since it is a continuing ballet course. As the class comes to its later half, the students begin to really dance, doing a phrase that was taught by the professor and doing some techniques together away from the bars (which were used in the previous techniques). As they continue on with their phrase the professor talks to them about the importance of walk ons and walk offs as well as body position and balance. Also, the professor includes holding a figure, which means to hold a technique for a little longer so that everyone can see it. Finally, as the class comes to a close, the professor makes any necessary announcements while the students stretch. Students are free to speak about concerns they have before they leave.