



Working Through a Student Problem

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Situation:

A new student is having trouble with tight right hand turns in difficult places.

1. Explain to the student what is going wrong:
 - After landing from the previous fence or line, the horse is too strong and wants to fall in before the turn
 - Therefore the horse is unbalanced and crooked
 - Because the horse is likely counter bent, it doesn't see the fence coming out of the tight right turn
2. Explain the exercise you want the student to do to correct the problem.
3. Work on each component:
 - Opening and closing the horse's stride, focusing on the straightness of the horse
 - Use of half halts, halts, and rein backs until the horse responds well to the aids
 - Adding a 10m circle after closing the stride and before the corner, focusing on the accuracy of the student's aids and the submission of the horse to those aids. The inside leg (holding leg) at the girth, the outside leg (displacing leg) just softly behind the girth, the hand centred with a light squeezing of the inside rein asking for the bend and a steady outside (dominant) rein receiving the feel of the mouth from the inside (dominant) leg.
 - Then adding shoulder fore or shoulder in along the track after the 10m circle to emphasize the horse staying around the inside leg. I prefer shoulder in on 3 tracks instead of 4 for hunters and jumpers, with the outside leg softly behind the girth to keep the haunches from falling out. This control of the haunches is important in avoiding "swapping off" behind through turns in the canter and in corners when jumping. (A good tip here is that if the hands shift to the left in the right shoulder in, then the horse is not around the right leg. The inside rein should not touch the neck).
 - Now add poles or low crossrails to the exercise. Then use a jump into the line and a pole or low crossrail out of the line before the right hand turn. When this is satisfactorily accomplished, put the jumps back in and do the whole exercise as it was originally built.

The teaching process:

- The student learns how to identify the components of the problem.
- The student learns how the flatwork exercises fit into solving the jumping problems, and how to use them in a sequence that works.
- The keyword here is "sequence" – teach one thing at a time.



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