

Community Dance Leader Seminar

Presented by CALLERLAB Committee for Community & Traditional Dance

Primary School Programs

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Years ago, square dancing was often included in schools' programs. Teachers worked from kits or other educational materials to teach the basics included in the dance materials. The teachers taught the calls included in the pattern of a dance. Typically these patterns included Circles, Stars, Arm Turns/Allemande Left, and Promenades. Many calls were not included because of the limited experience/knowledge of the teachers and the time set aside for the square dance unit.

For many years we have heard from old friends and prospective dancers that they last danced in school. Typically, they are thinking of the dancing that they did in their primary/elementary school years. We encounter teachers, PTA leaders and administrators who have worked hard to include team-oriented dancing into their Pre-K through junior high school years.

Experience has us understand that humans enjoy the movement and rhythm of dancing to familiar music at any age. Experience also provides guidance that when teaching dance the developmental age of the dancer must be considered when choosing dance material to be included. A student must understand where they are, i.e., which way they are facing, and where they are relative to others they are dancing with. For example, a Pre-K or Kindergartener has difficulty making a circle with others while an adult will attempt and succeed through cooperation with others to make a circle. The formations that we use in the square dance activity are not difficult to understand if we can understand the geometric relationships between the individual dancers, i.e., are we in a line, a square, a circle, etc.

In addition to the awareness of formation, we must understand the actions that can be performed between human beings, i.e., can the dancers accomplish a two-hand circle, a single hand turn, or any other movement around or by someone else.

Further, as the students get older, they notice the differences between boys and girls and for a while object to dancing with mixed gender partners. We encourage the kids to "get over it" and enjoy the socially acceptable human interaction. We recommend that the instructor include material that minimizes the physical contact and/or the perception that they are more than just friends.

School programs fall into two categories. Some want to include dancing, music, teamwork, and etiquette in their educational curriculum, while others want to provide their students, staff and parents with a fun, entertaining evening together.

Curriculum Units

Many schools want to include dancing, music, teamwork, and etiquette in an experiential education way to their students in the planned curriculum. When requested to provide this kind of education the instructor needs to have or develop a teaching unit that includes several sessions each with an educational goal while still providing fun, excitement, as an engaging experience for the students. The lesson plans will need to be developed for the specific class/age group with the gender mix and developmental maturity for each group in

mind. The instructor must organize music and dance material suited to the lesson. Note that the material for 1st grade students would be significantly different than that included for junior high students. Each unit should include learning objectives and material that achieves the desired outcomes while being enjoyable for the students.

For each class the following should be included in “PLANNING”

- The space for the class should have the following:
 - PA system for music with a microphone if the space and/or the group is large, so everyone can hear the calls.
 - Approximately 18 square feet per student. For example: for 16 students the room should be a room of about 300sf.
 - Room should be set up prior to the start of the class period.
- Decisions on how to organize the boys and girls of the class to establish partners:
 - (1) are the students going to dance with the same partner each week, or will there be a rotation. If possible best buddies should be organized into separate squares and partners should be those that will at least tolerate each other.
 - (2) a solution for how gender imbalance will be resolved, i.e., identify left/right hand dancers, invite parents and/or teachers to fill in,
 - (3) a solution for student absences - how will the squares be filled in. Again, are parents or teachers available.
- A mapping of educational standards to be achieved should be understood. For example, movement to the beat of the music, teamwork associated with dance movements through the patterns, audio response to directions.

Pre-K, Kindergarten/First Grade Unit

Included here is a unit focused on Pre-K, Kindergarten and/or First grade students. Let’s assume a two-week period has been set aside for the square dance unit. Due to the maturity and attention span of this age group, it is recommended that each session be scheduled as a 20-30 minute period twice in each of a two-week unit.

Maturity: Pre-K, Kindergartens and First Graders are very aware of themselves and will enjoy working individually or with a buddy. Solo dances or those that use a buddy are appropriate. Any dance that uses music with a strong beat and has a good tune will work.

Formation Setup: Organizing the students to prepare them for a specific dance can be challenging. For solo dances a blob or loose crowd is ok. For dances using a circle formation the center circle of a gym can be used to create a circle of students, the lines of a gym can be used to create lines. If not using a gymnasium, start some march music and start a snake by taking the left hand of one of the kids and asking the other kids to join the train. Move the train clockwise around the periphery of the available space until all the kids have joined. This can be turned into a spiral dance or just used to create the circle. Most dances for this age group are done in circle or blob formations.

Planning specific to this age group:

- Refine the general planning to fit the details of the specific class.
- Identify the dance material you as the instructor will use to achieve the unit objectives.

- The Lloyd Shaw Foundation has published the “Let’s Dance Kit” with dance prompts, descriptions, and recorded music for age-appropriate dances. Childrens Polka, Chimes of Dunkirk, 7 Jumps, Dance of the Little Birds (Chicken Dance) Danish Dance of Greeting and the Hokey Pokey are included. Other dances we find appropriate include a no partner dance done to Cry Of the Celts, and Tooty Ta both available from the internet.

Session 1: Introduction

The goal of this session is to help the students begin to hear and move through simple patterns to the beat of the good music.

- Learning Objective ... get the kids to physically move to the music, clapping hands, stomping of feet, etc.
- Learning Objective ... get the kids working together, i.e., circling left, right, moving forward and back.
- Learning Objective ... get the kids to participate in a pattern that everyone is doing. For example, the dance actions of “Children’s Polka”.

Session 2:

- Learning Objective ... refresh the concepts of physically moving to the beat of the music.
- Learning Objective ... utilize more complicated patterns like those found in Dance of the Little Birds (Chicken Dance).

Second and Third Grade Unit

Included here is a unit focused on 2nd and 3rd grade students. Let’s assume a two-week period has been set aside for this dance unit. The unit is recommended as a 30 minute to one (1) hour class held weekly. This unit can be very similar to the Pre-K through First Grade unit as developmental maturity does not provide for multiple people interactions. Partner material should be included to begin to develop the two-person interactions.

Maturity: 2nd and 3rd grade students are 7-8 years old. They have a good understanding of their abilities and typically enjoy playing with their peers. Care should be taken to ensure that they exhibit respect for each other through careful interaction without roughhousing.

Formation Setup: these students will have a slightly better understanding of formations than their younger counterparts. They usually understand the making of circles and lines.

Planning specific to this age group:

- Refine the general planning to fit the details of the specific class.
- Identify the dance material you as the instructor will use to achieve the unit objectives.
- The Lloyd Shaw Foundation has published the “Let’s Dance Kit” with dance prompts, descriptions, and recorded music for age-appropriate dances. Childrens Polka, Chimes of Dunkirk, Danish Dance of Greeting, La Raspa, and Virginia No Reel. Other dances we find appropriate include a no partner dance done to Cry Of the Celts available from the internet.
- See References section below for dance materials.

Session 1: Introduction

Begin to develop the understanding of the dance structure, i.e., partners, small circles, and lines. Very simple circle dances, partner dances and proper contra lines can be used with partners.

- Learning objective ... listening, moving to the beat of the music, understanding the formations of the circle, and facing lines.
- Learning objectives ... learning to work with a partner, i.e., executing call actions that can be performed between two people. They can successfully execute two hand or larger circles with or without partners, DoSaDo, Star one way and the other way with a partner or small group.

Session 2:

- Repeat and review session 1 material and have FUN!
- Learning objectives ... beginning to understand the execution timing of each call. Work to get them to move to the beat of the music.
- Learning objectives ... adding more partner interactions, two-hand circles & stars, DoSaDo (Back-to-back), clap sequences

Fourth and Fifth Grade Unit

Included here is a unit focused on the 4th and 5th students. Let's assume a four-week period has been set aside for this square dance unit. The session is recommended to be no more than one (1) hour held once or twice weekly.

Maturity: 4th and 5th grade students are 9-10 years old. They have a good understanding of their abilities and typically enjoy playing with their peers. Care should be taken to ensure that they exhibit respect for each other through careful interaction without roughhousing.

Formation Setup: these students will have a better understanding of formations than their younger counterparts. They understand the making of circles and lines. They will fairly easily turn a circle of 8 into a square and understand its structure, i.e., heads, sides, numbered pairs, etc.

Planning specific to this age group:

- Refine the general planning to fit the details of the specific class.
- Identify the dance material you as the instructor will use to achieve the unit objectives.
- See References section below for dance materials.

Session 1: Introduction

- Organization and structure of the square, square numbering, identification of heads/sides, home, partner, corner, opposite.
- Learning objective ... listening, moving to the beat of the music, understanding the formations of square and circle. Introduce some general history of square dancing, i.e., where, when, and how did it evolve to what it is today.
- Learning objective ... learning some actions by their call names, understand and perform actions for Circles, Stars, Arm turns, DoSaDo, Pass Thru, U-turn back/Back track from single file promenade.

- Learning objective ... working as a team. The dancers should be working as a unit, individual movement should be within the framework of the formation, i.e., circle or square.
- Complete the session with a fun dance pattern that flows well, such as, Heads Circle left, Circle Right, Star Right to Corner, Turn Corner Left, DoSaDo, Circle Left full around to home. Repeat for Sides

Session 2: Pattern Choreography

- Review of session 1 material.
- Learning objectives ... understanding the execution timing of each call, the importance of dancer hand to hand contact to establish where a dancer is in the formation.
- Learning objectives ... adding call actions for Wheel Around, Ladies Chain figures.

Session 3: Goal Posting

- Review session 1 & 2 material
- Learning objectives ... Reinforce call execution timing.
- Learning objectives ... adding call actions for separate round the ring to home, separate around 1 into the middle, pass through, split 2, separate around 1
- Complete session using a flowing dance pattern:
 - #1 Couple *{stand back to back}* Separate around the ring all the way to home, Turn Partner Right to Corner, All Allemande Left, DoSaDo [Home]. Repeat for couple #2, #3, #4. Repeat for couple #1 & #3 at the same time, Repeat for couple #2 & #4 at the same time, then repeat for all four couples. Apply the right shoulder passing rule in all situations.
 - Heads/Sides Circle Left Half, Pass Thru, Separate around 1 into the middle, centers Pass Thru to Corner, Allemande Left, DoSaDo [Home]
 - Heads/Sides Pass Thru, Separate around 1 into the middle, centers Pass Thru, Split 2 {the sides} Separate around 1 to their partner and move into the center, Pass Thru, Separate around 1 come into the middle, centers Pass Thru, Turn Corner Left [Home]

Session 4: Dancing

- Review session 1, 2 & 3 material.
- Learning objectives ... Reinforce moving to the beat of the music and call execution timing. Real dancing is now possible, and the experience should show how much fun it is to work with your team to the beat of good music.

Junior High (6th, 7th & 8th Grade) Unit

Included here is a unit focused on 7th and/or 8th grade students. Let's assume a four-week period has been set aside for this square dance unit. The session is recommended to be no more than one (1) hour held once or twice weekly.

Maturity: 6th, 7th and 8th grade students are 11-13 years old. They have a good understanding of their abilities and typically enjoy playing with their peers. Care should be taken to ensure that they exhibit respect for each other through careful interaction without roughhousing. They work well within groups of 8 dancers in a square.

Formation Setup: these students will have a good understanding of formations. They can clearly work in circles of any size, squares, mini-squares, proper contra lines and Sicilian Circles.

Planning specific to this age group:

- Refine the general planning to fit the details of the specific class.
- Identify the dance material you as the instructor will use to achieve the unit objectives.
- See References section below for dance materials.

Session 1. Introduction

- Organization and structure of the square, square numbering, identification of heads/sides, home, partner, corner, opposite.
- Learning objective ... listening, moving to the beat of the music, understanding square formations and arrangements. Introduce some general history of square dancing, i.e., where, when, how did it evolve to what it is today.
- Learning objective ... learning the call names, actions for Circles, Stars, Arm turns, DoSaDo, Pass Thru, U-turn back/Back track, Promenades (single and couple).
- Learning objective ... working as a team. The dancers should be working as a unit, individual movement should be within the framework of the initial formations, i.e., circles or squares.
- Complete the session with a fun dance pattern that flows well.

Session 2. Pattern Choreography

- Review of session 1.
- Learning objectives ... understanding the execution timing of each call, the importance of dancer hand to hand contact to establish the formations.
- Learning objectives ... adding call actions for Wheel Around, Ladies Chain figures, Lead to the Right, Veer Left, Bend the Line, Face Partner.

Session 3. Review/Refresh and Grand Square

- Review of sessions 1 & 2.
- Learning objectives ... adding call actions for Grand Square.
- Complete the session with Sicilian Circle that uses calls taught so far.

Session 4. Dance

- Review of sessions 1, 2, & 3.
- Learning objectives ... adding calls Separate & split two to enable goal posting.
- Dance patten and singing calls that use what the students learned during the four weeks.
- Breaks
 - Grand Square
 - Circle
- Singing Call Figures
 - H/S Ladies Chain, S/H Ladies Chain, Circle Left, Ladies Center/Men Sashay, Allemande Left, Right & Left Grand, Promenade
 - Four Ladies Chain $\frac{3}{4}$, Circle Left, Allemande Left, Right & Left Grand, Promenade
 - All Promenade Half, 4 Ladies Chain $\frac{3}{4}$, Circle Left, Allemande Left, Right & Left Grand, DoSaDo, Promenade Home

School Events

Some schools organize one day/evening events for the kids and parents. Some are labeled mother/son, father/daughter, or family dances. This kind of program assumes that the kids and parents have limited knowledge of square dance vocabulary and thus instruction must be integrated with the entertainment of the event. As in most one-time events a progressive learning approach is recommended. Selected dance material should ensure that all participants have an entertaining experience that will allow them to respond to the question "did you enjoy the event" with "Yes, it was fun, I don't have any idea what we learned, but it was a blast."

All this implies that when selecting dances to use for an event we must be aware of all these considerations relative to the capabilities of those that are dancing.

Our events are usually segmented into times for each maturity/age group.

So, let's speak to the general capabilities/limitations of each age group.

- PreK, Kindergarteners and 1st Graders
 - This group of kids has a strong understanding of themselves and can work with a partner/buddy.
 - This group can clap their own hand and the hands of a buddy.
 - This group can, with a demonstration, two-hand circle with the buddy.
 - This group generally cannot work with more than one other person.
 - This group cannot understand the changing of partners/buddies.
- 2nd – 3rd Graders
 - This group of kids can work with a partner/buddy, but struggles with more than one other person, like a corner.
- 4th – 6th Graders
 - This group of kids will work with a partner and a corner and in small groups.
 - This group of kids may be very rough with each other. The boys and some of the girls may push and pull causing much confusion in the dance.
 - This group can be easily confused by too many people moving simultaneously.
 - Dances should be chosen to allow participants to dance with same gender partners or opposite gender partners, it should not matter who they choose to dance with.

So, let's look at a sample of dances that could be used for each of these age groups.

- PreK, Kindergarteners and 1st Graders
 - Bunny Hop
 - Children's Polka (Age 6-8), Let's Dance Pg. 53
 - Chimes Of Dunkirk (Age 6-8), Let's Dance Pg. 55
 - Dance OF The Little Birds (All), Let's Dance Pg. 71, D4BP Pg. 283 (LSF 117)
 - Danish Dance Of Greeting (LSF 160)
 - Hokey Pokey (All), Let's Dance Pg. 115, D4BP Pg. 281 (LSF 283)
 - Seven Jumps (Age 4+), Let's Dance Pg. 169 (LSF 515)
 - Tooty Ta (Age 4+)

- 2nd – 3rd Graders
 - Solo
 - Cry of the Celts - Cry Of The Celts (Single Edit With Taps) from Amazon.com
 - Cha Cha Slide – Mr C The Slide Man - Cha Cha Slide
 - Cupid Shuffle – Cupid Shuffle (Radio Version)
 - Dance of The Little Birds / Chicken Dance (All), Let's Dance Pg. 71, D4BP Pg. 283 (LSF 117)
 - Texas Freeze – Elvira by The Oakridge Boys
 - Alley Cat / Popcorn, Age (6-8), Let's Dance Pg. 33
 - Bunny Hop (All), (LSF 95)
 - Hokey Pokey (All), LS E-25/LS E-38, (LSF 283), Let's Dance Pg. 115, D4BP Pg. 281
 - Seven Jumps (Age 4+), LS E-8 (LSF 515) Let's Dance Pg. 169
 - Tooty Ta (Age 4+) – Dr. Jean Feldman on Spotify
 - Partner/Buddy dances
 - Children's Polka (Age 6-8), LS E-7 (LSF 119) Let's Dance Pg. 53
 - Chimes Of Dunkirk (Age 6-8), LS E-7, (LSF 120) Let's Dance Pg. 55
 - Dance OF The Little Birds / Chicken Dance (All), Let's Dance Pg. 71, D4BP Pg. 283 (LSF 117)
 - Danish Dance Of Greeting, LS E-6 (LSF 160)
 - Virginia No-reel (Age 7+), D4BP Pg. 146 (LSF 617)
- 4th – 6th Graders
 - Intro Circle
 - Cry of the Celts - Cry Of The Celts (Single Edit With Taps) from Amazon.com
 - Fraley's Frolic – Bonita or Eldon & Ethel contra tune
 - Circles
 - Dance basics: Circle left/right, Forward/Back, Arm turns, DoSaDo, Promenade – MAC 1100 - Something Else, RAM 1001 - Ramblin' Rose Rag, Honeycomb Fiddler
 - Squares
 - Dance pattern: Circles & Stars – Blue, v2 or Rachel
 - Dance pattern: Solomen Levi – Daddy Cool or Bob's Cripple Creek
 - Original Singing square Solomen Levi (LSF 130)
 - Dance pattern: Divide the ring – Sunspots or FR 10034 - Honeycomb Fiddler
 - Mixers
 - Jiffy Mixer – LS E-35 (LSF 315), Cannonball Shuffle, Hit the Road Jack
 - Lancashire Barn Dance – (LSF 342) or I'm From the Country by Tracy Byrd
 - Patty Cake Polka / Heel & Toe Polka, LS 228-45, LS 149-78 (LSF 449)
 - Contra
 - Tunnel Contra (Age 8+), D4BP Pg. 148 – Tunnel Contra or Farewell to Whiskey or Accordion Crimes, Williams Lightening
 - Virginia Reel (Age 9+), Let's Dance Pg. 199, D4BP Pg. 85 – Virginia Reel

- Solo
 - Cab Driver – MCA P-2758
 - Cha Cha Slide – Mr. C The Slide Man
 - Cupid Shuffle – Cupid Shuffle (Radio Version)
 - Electric Slide – COL 2607
 - Popcorn / Alley Cat, Age (6-8), Let's Dance Pg. 33 – Eric 4009
 - Texas Freeze – MCA 53546 - Elvira by The Oakridge Boys
 - YMCA – COL 4337
- Trios
 - Clap Dance for Three's (*Hamilton's Reel*), LS E-12 (LSF 130) – LSF Let's Dance, #1
 - TBC Trio (Age 8+), D4BP Pg. 217 – RR 217 - San Antonio Stroll
 - Theil's Trio, D4BP Pg. 211 – Phrase Craze LS E-17 (LSF 460), La Bastrinque, Accordion Crimes/Crossing Wyoming
 - Wild Turkey, D4BP Pg. 210 – Green 15008 Sherbrooke

REFERENCES:

Let's Dance – an Elementary Dance Kit provided through the Lloyd Shaw Foundation with music for all the dances. Note the dances are organized alphabetically, but each dance has a recommended age. This Kit is available at www.LloydShaw.org.

Dancing For Busy People (D4BP), written by Calvin Campbell, Ken Kernen, Bob Howell and published by Calvin Campbell, deceased ... The book is available in electronic form on the Internet Archive at archive.org.

Dances.CALLERLAB.org, an online resource that includes a wide variety of dances for all ages and venues.