

Teaching Scottish Country Dancing Guidelines for tutors, teachers and candidates

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GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

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FOREWORD

This document is intended for all those interested in or involved in the teaching of Scottish country dancing. It sets out information about the RSCDS examination system, addresses the fundamental principles of teaching and gives guidance on good practice for all candidates, teachers, mentors and tutors. I am sure it will be a valuable resource for all those who aspire to become teachers and for all those who aim to improve their teaching and tutoring.

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Convenor, Education and Training Committee

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DEFINITIONS

Examination System:

The five sections of the RSCDS syllabus designed as a teaching qualification.

Teaching Certificate Part 1

- Unit 1: Theory
- Unit 2: Practical dancing
- Unit 3: Teaching Level 1

Teaching Certificate Part 2

- Unit 4: Teaching Practice
- Unit 5: Teaching Level 2

Refer to the syllabus for detailed information on each unit.

The Manual:

The current Manual of Scottish Country Dancing published by the RSCDS.

Candidate:

A dancer who qualifies to sit the teaching examination.

Examiner:

An experienced RSCDS teacher who has been appointed by the RSCDS to examine candidates for the RSCDS Teaching Certificate.

Teacher:

A dancer who has attained the RSCDS Teaching Certificate Parts 1 and 2, i.e. Units 1-5 of the examination system or who holds a Teacher's Certificate prior to 2006.

Tutor:

An RSCDS teacher with wide and varied teaching experience who has been invited by a Branch or centre to prepare candidates for the examinations.

Mentor:

An experienced RSCDS-qualified teacher, chosen by the candidate, who will advise the candidate and discuss their teaching with them during the teaching practice required for Unit 4.

INTRODUCTION

The previously published *Core Programme for Tutors – A Synopsis* has proved to be a valuable tool for both tutors and examination candidates. With the introduction of a new examination system it is therefore appropriate to update this earlier document and expand its content to serve candidates, teachers, tutors and mentors.

The aim of these guidelines is to:

1. give helpful assistance at all levels of teaching
2. cover some of the essentials which give quality in teaching
3. highlight some of the fundamental aspects of teaching movement.

The Society's teaching system works well with all levels, but every teacher eventually develops his/her own teaching style and teaching techniques and learns how to apply them according to circumstances and needs of the class. However, this takes time, experience and continuous self-assessment. This publication is designed to show how teaching skills can be developed from first attending a teacher candidate course to completing the RSCDS teaching qualification and beyond. At all times it is worth remembering the art of teaching and the practical skills of movement which are relevant to SCD should be done without losing sight of the fact that dancing is a social, recreational activity, there to be enjoyed.

The content is structured to match the teaching elements of the examination process and to assist:

- Candidates to be aware of the content and requirements of examination courses.
- Tutors to prepare courses for candidates. Candidates should be given every opportunity to practise the principles set out in this publication during their course.
- Teachers with an aide memoire. Even after qualification, it may be helpful to have a reminder which supports their continuing development.
- Mentors in their role in Unit 4.

1.0 Theory (Unit 1)

Candidates are required to complete a written paper demonstrating their knowledge of the Manual.

- A thorough knowledge of the content of the sections of the Manual specified in the syllabus is required.
- The Manual is not a teaching manual but contains useful hints on music and an in-depth description of steps and formations required for teaching.
- The Unit can be self taught.
- Sample questions are issued on application or are available on the RSCDS website.

2.0 Practical Dancing (Unit 2)

Candidates are required to dance to a high standard. The tutor will work on:

- Improvement of performance and technical correction of steps.
- Rhythm and response to music.
- Achievement and maintenance of correct body alignment and posture necessary to underpin the practical aspects of SCD. (See "*An introduction to warming up and cooling down for Scottish Country Dancing*")
- Analysis and preparation for performance of formations and the set dances.

Candidates should learn observation skills and how to correct faults from the tutor's coaching and preparation of the dancers. It is also an opportunity to learn how to analyse a dance.

Dance Analysis:

Tutors may find it helpful to have candidates note the following for each dance:

i.	Number of bars, rhythm/time signature, number of couples, set arrangement	
ii.	the steps used in the dance	Include special uses e.g. retiring, travelling or setting, as this will need to be taught.
iii.	the bars in the dance where there is a change from one step to another in an 8 bar phrase	Any such transition will need to be taught (or at least highlighted if time is short)
iv.	any changes of step between 8 bar phrases, including between ending first time through and starting second time through.	
v.	any changes of foot for dancing and supporting couples	
vi.	a list of formations in the dance with points to note	Note, if a corners formation is included, corners have to be identified.
vii.	if stepping up/down is required	This has to be taught/revised.
viii.	the method of progression	with bar numbers
ix.	areas of possible difficulty	
x.	any notes in the manual about the dance	

3.0 Warm-ups and Cool Downs

The booklet *“An introduction to warming up and cooling down for Scottish Country Dancing”* covers the points given below and gives examples of suitable activities.

Warm ups and cool downs are important elements of any lesson.

- Warm up and cool down should be included in all classes, including those classes to prepare candidates for examinations. (Note that candidates are not expected to include warm ups and cool downs in their examination lessons. For the purposes of the Unit 3 and 5 exams, dancers will have been warmed-up beforehand.)
- The purpose of a warm up is to stimulate blood flow through the muscles and prepare the muscles and joints for the type of exercise experienced in SCD.
- Exercises should be relevant to SCD.
- Exercises should be appropriate for the level of class.
- Appropriate exercises require some knowledge of anatomy.
- Incorrect exercises can be damaging as can exercises done incorrectly.
- Advice should be given that dancers should work within their physical limitations.

It is good practice for the teacher, at the beginning of the class, to ask members of the class about any injuries or physical difficulties they may have.

4.0 Teaching - Level 1 (Unit 3)

It is crucial at this stage that the candidate is given a sound and solid foundation of good teaching practice on which to build for the Teaching Certificate. The quality of training given to Unit 3 candidates is of prime importance since the basic principles of teaching are common to both Unit 3 and Unit 5.

This unit is designed to teach candidates the basics of teaching movement and provide a foundation on which teaching skills can be developed. While teachers eventually develop their own teaching style, it is essential that candidates work to a definite plan for teaching a step and a formation and this plan should be followed consistently – it works! Use of this method gives candidates a feeling of security and stability as well as providing a logical and acceptable structure to the lesson plan. Good teaching is structured on progressive teaching methods ie building from the known to the unknown.

The fundamental points which underpin effective teaching include:

- Personal technical knowledge.
- An ability to explain using SCD terminology with total knowledge, understanding and fluency.
- The ability to give high quality demonstration.
- The ability to observe, analyse, isolate and correct faults.
- Good use of the voice.
- Appropriate use of music.

Candidates should come prepared with the technical knowledge and will be given the opportunity to practise and develop the other fundamental points during the course.

The course will also include practice on how to develop the following qualities and skills required to produce effective teaching and learning in SCD:

- Observation to assist and to progress the level of skill.
- Knowledge and understanding of how to build confidence also motivate and encourage in order to enhance learning.
- Use of praise.
- Approaches which have the appropriate level of expectation with emphasis on success.
- Adaptation of content, according to the needs of the dancers.
- Relationships through interaction, communication and social skills.

Unit 3 gives the candidates the opportunity to learn the structure of teaching steps and formations at basic level including observation skills, the importance of feedback and an appreciation of self assessment. During the course the tutor will ensure candidates are given practical assignments in teaching practice covering all the elements listed on the examination assessment sheet. As would be expected in any lesson, feedback will be given to candidates to help development and improvement.

Preparation and Planning:

- Progressive, long-term and detailed planning of each lesson should be discussed thoroughly.
- All lessons should be prepared on paper. No step, formation or dance should be taught without planning the work.
- Encourage the full use of the walking stages to introduce and emphasise teaching points. Teaching points are used to coach, to improve movement skills and to avoid difficulties and common faults. They should become an habitual and integral part of every lesson. [A Teaching point is any point you make in class that facilitates the teaching of a step/formation/dance BUT it is not sufficient to say WHAT the teaching point is, it is also necessary to demonstrate HOW to achieve the teaching point and then have the class FEEL how to achieve it.]
- Insist upon extensive use of good quality demonstration throughout all stages of the lesson. Demonstration is a visual presentation of what the dancers are being asked to do and candidates should be trained to get results quickly by accurate demonstration rather than by lengthy explanation.
- Aim to have the maximum possible number of dancers moving throughout. This is an aid to promoting skill and enjoyment.
- Develop the use of dance/formation analysis and devise imaginative but RELEVANT exercises which will involve everyone. Select which elements or formations can be taught/practised as a class exercise prior to forming sets, e.g. one or two handed

turns; hands round; setting and casting; handing; awkward links between formations; phrasing etc.

- Avoid spending time teaching the same elements to each individual couple in a set if the movement can be taught/practised as a class exercise.
- Guard against complicated exercises and complex organisation as these will be time consuming and slow the pace of the lesson. Organisation should be clear and speedy.

The following guidelines should be used for teaching steps and formations:

Guidelines for teaching a step:

Before beginning, discuss the music with the musician or select suitable recorded music. Greet your class and organise them quickly.

1. Tell the class the name of step and its purpose.
2. Listen to the music (8 bars is enough in quick time, 4 bars in strathspey time) while you and the class clap, tap or beat out the rhythm. Show animation.
3. Demonstrate the step to the best of your ability, giving the class a main point to watch. Do not have the music too fast (8 steps are enough)
4. Have the class try. Class concentrate on showing the same main point. Comment.
5. Break the step down. Walk it slowly showing correct foot placing while the class copies. You count rhythmically. Observe carefully. Comment.
6. As soon as it is appropriate, bring in the music at walking speed for the practice and then gradually speed up. Use your voice to control the speed.
7. When the class is secure in the rhythm introduce "on the toes" without stopping the music. If there is a hop or a spring this can also be introduced as the music is speeded up.
8. After the breakdown, which need not take long, build up the step by practising and emphasising one main teaching point at a time. Comment.
9. Dance the step up to time with the music. Coach through the music while the class is dancing. Give appropriate praise.
10. Give appropriate practice exercise to help improve the individual elements of the step – but it must be relevant!
11. Continue to correct and improve.

Notes:

- Items 1-4 to take approximately 2 minutes.
- Give one teaching point or correct one fault at a time by demonstrating the point then having the class copy.
- Remember to start with left foot when facing class.
- Show the step with your back to the class, at least once, for strathspey setting.
- Introduce any special uses of the step which are in the given formation or dance e.g. retiring in skip change or travelling/turning.
- Demonstrate and have the class practise transitions between steps, e.g. setting with pas de basque to travelling with skip change of step.

- Constantly remind class about posture.
- Keep in mind the “galloping method” for teaching skip change ie 8 gallop steps leading with the right foot and 8 gallop steps leading with the left foot; 4 with the right foot and 4 with the left foot; 2 with the right foot, 2 with the left, 2 with the right and 2 with the left.

Briefly:

- Name step.
- Listen to music.
- Teacher demonstrates – give point to watch.
- Class tries – give point – comment.
- Break down step for correct positioning of feet and have the class walk the step rhythmically.
- When rhythm is correct, add other important points one by one. Always observe, comment and correct.

Note: These guidelines are mainly for Unit 3 candidates. Unit 5 candidates must adapt the method to suit an “improver lesson”, i.e. observing and correcting, but must still include the main teaching points for each step.

Guidelines for teaching a formation:

1. Arrange class in sets with correct number of couples required for the formation.
2. Name the formation – if a progression, say so. Name the step to be used.
3. Politely take one dancer’s place.
4. You walk formation roughly, guiding the others in the set and talking as you walk. (Be sure your own handing etc is correct. People learn by various methods – one being imitation).
5. Have class walk formation roughly – more than once if necessary. Comment.
6. You walk formation precisely to counts guiding the others in the set. Stress the points bar by bar. Be careful to teach the entry and exit (whether curving or diagonal, together with the phrasing).
7. Have class walk to counts (this could eventually be done with music, but be sure to have it at the correct tempo). Remain at this walking stage until your class is secure in the formation. Add the teaching points one by one as you go. A 2nd, 3rd or 4th walk through is frequently needed.
8. By the final walk through, your rhythmic counting should be at dancing tempo.
9. Listen to the music while you talk the class through the formation or you could demonstrate with the music, if dancers are secure.
10. Have the class dance formation with music. Encourage by talking (coaching) as they dance.
11. Continue to correct and improve.
12. Walk and dance formation from other positions.

Note: When teaching reels of 3 or 4 walk each position in turn, talking as you go.

Briefly:

- Teacher walks out basic shape.
- Class walks it.
- Teacher walks to counts.
- Class walks to counts.
- Teacher demonstrates or talks it to music.
- Class dances to music.

Sample lessons for steps are given in Appendices 1 and 2 and for a formation in Appendix 3.

Using these guidelines will ensure a consistent and effective structure to the lesson and gives a basis for a simple lesson plan. In addition the use of space, organisation of the class, pace and timing of components need to be practised. See Appendix 4 for a sample lesson plan.

The Unit 3 examination is structured to test the application of the above guidelines in teaching a step and a 16 bar phrase, usually a combination of two formations, from first principles. This will of course require some thought be given to the analysis and practice of any transitions in addition to the skills mentioned earlier.

5.0 Teaching Practice (Unit 4)

This unit of the examination process is intended to give candidates the opportunity to practise and develop their teaching skills learned in Unit 3 before going forward to the higher grade of teaching, Unit 5. Throughout the period, candidates will be guided by mentors of their own choice. By teaching “real” classes, candidates will learn how to adapt their skills, be flexible in their application and most importantly assess their effectiveness as a teacher. Although not required in either Unit 3 or Unit 5, candidates should make provision for warm-up and cool down exercises in their lessons.

Note: When confronted by a “real” class it is important to draw attention at the start of the lesson to any Health and Safety regulations that may apply.

6.0 Teaching – Level 2 (Unit 5)

The Teaching Certificate awarded by the RSCDS is an endorsement to continue promoting the Society’s work. Considering that RSCDS teachers are the caretakers and public relations officers of our rich heritage of Scottish country dancing, it is important that the candidates are trained to achieve all round competence – not just to pass.

By the time candidates present themselves for this final stage of the examination process they will be expected to show higher levels of competence in the prescribed elements listed on the examination assessment sheet. They will need to demonstrate the ability to cope confidently with any teaching situation, showing greater confidence in presentation and a wider knowledge of Scottish country dancing in general. The teaching examination is longer than Unit 3 and requires the candidate to teach a complete dance to demonstrate a

more in-depth analysis of the content to a higher level of dancer i.e. improvement stages for all dance steps. Once again, tutors will ensure candidates are given practice at the appropriate level and will provide feedback for improvement. See Appendix 5 for an outline of a lesson plan.

7.0 Teaching Elements

Having outlined the structure and expectations of the examination system, it is important to emphasise the elements on which candidates and indeed practising teachers are assessed. The following gives some guidance on how these elements can be achieved.

7.1 Steps and Formations

The structure in teaching steps and formations has been covered above, but application of teaching points and relevant exercises to practise the movements should be incorporated in the lesson. Teaching points need to be demonstrated with clear instructions. Explain and show HOW to achieve what is wanted.

Main Teaching Points for Steps (N.B. In all steps a good turnout of the leg and foot from the hip joint is required to maintain accurate foot positions)

Steps of Progression:

1. Skip Change of Step (1 step per bar)

- a) The hop.
- b) The straight front leg and the reach forward.
- c) The third position.

2. Strathspey Travelling Step (1 step per bar)

- a) Long first step, with bent supporting knee to give urge forward.
- b) Accurate soft closing in third position.
- c) The second long step forward (no bend in supporting knee) to leave the rear leg fully extended.
- d) Long, slow and smooth bringing through of back leg from extended position.
- e) The hop as the foot is pulled through.
- f) Character of step.

3. Slip Step (2 steps per bar)

- a) Maintain the angle of the feet – 1st and 2nd position.
- b) Heels touch in mid air.
- c) Step smooth and even.
- d) Anticipate the change of direction.
- e) Feet in 1st position at change of direction.

Setting Steps:

1. Pas de Basque (1 step per bar)

- a) The three distinct beats (momentary change of weight on the 2nd beat).
- b) Pick up the knee on beat 1
- c) The third position.
- d) A strong jeté with full extension of the foot, ankle and leg.

2. The Common Schottische or Strathspey Setting (1 step per bar)

- a) Long first step, with bent supporting knee to give urge towards second position.
- b) Accurate soft closing up into third rear position.
- c) The smooth, unhurried lifting of the foot in the hop.
- d) Position of foot behind the supporting leg on the hop.

Note: Omitted are the Running Step (progression), Highland Schottische (setting) and The Glasgow Highlanders Step (setting).

See Appendix 4 for an example of the main teaching points of a formation.

7.2 Build up of the dance (not required for Unit 3)

This requires analysis of the dance to identify any difficult movements or transitions between steps or formations, formation entries and exits and to plan appropriate skills practices . (See section on dance analysis in Unit 2.)

7.3 Observation

The observation of faults is a skill which comes with practice. Candidates can be given observational worksheets to record common faults in technique, formations and dances. Practical skills can then be practised knowing the common faults to look for.

Main Faults to Correct in Steps:

1. Skip Change of Step

- a) Lack of outward rotation from the hip.
- b) Incorrect third position – leaving gap, closing in first position or passing feet.
- c) Lack of hop.
- d) Front leg kicking up on hop.
- e) Lack of extension in knee and foot.
- f) Coming down on a bent front knee (lack of reach).
- g) Pulling in leading foot as it takes weight.
- h) Poor poise.
- i) Scraping.

2. Strathspey Travelling Step

- a) Lack of outward rotation from the hip.
- b) Hop at start.
- c) Lack of urge without long reach forward.
- d) Incorrect third position – leaving gap, closing in first position or passing feet.
- e) Too quick a close into third position.
- f) Bent rear knee on third beat.
- g) Short step on third beat.
- h) A quick or jerky pull through.
- i) Foot high and knee up in pull through.
- j) Knee pointing forwards.
- k) Exaggerated outward rotation in pull through.
- l) Lack of hop.
- m) Poor poise.
- n) Scraping.

3. Slip Step

- a) Lack of outward rotation from the hip.
- b) Feet facing line of travel.
- c) Heels not closing in first position.
- d) Too much elevation.
- e) Poor poise.
- f) Scraping.
- g) Lack of anticipation of the change of direction.

4. Pas de Basque

- a) Lack of outward rotation from the hip.
- b) Two beat step.
- c) A tap of the foot on the second beat.
- d) Incorrect position of jeté.
- e) Lack of extension of jeté.
- f) Incorrect movement into third position.
- g) An incorrect third position.
- h) Poor poise.

5. Strathspey Setting

- a) Lack of outward rotation from the hip.
- b) Lack of urge in the step without long reach to the side.
- c) Too quick a close into third position.
- d) Incorrect third rear position eg closing in front.
- e) Short step on third beat.
- f) Too quick in drawing up of the foot on the fourth beat.
- g) Poor position of working foot on the fourth beat.
- h) Body turning from side to side.
- i) Lack of hop.
- j) Poor poise.
- k) Scraping.

Correction of faults must be done tactfully with a good demonstration to explain how to achieve the correction, followed by a class practice.

Good observation depends on the position of the teacher in the class:

- Stand well back so that you can see everybody and they can see you.
- Teach the whole class and avoid the common mistake of speaking to one set or one small group.
- Teach from the front until you are sure the class is secure in what is being taught – then move around to observe and help, positioning yourself carefully each time.
- Avoid having your back towards any of the class whenever possible, unless demonstrating a rear position of the feet.

7.4 Presentation

Much of the quality and success of a lesson depends on good demonstration. It should be used at every opportunity whether using simple hand gestures, walking or dancing. Everything should be demonstrated to the very best of your ability. It is permissible to use someone in the class to help if the teacher is incapacitated. Always demonstrate where you can see and be seen by the whole class and know exactly what you are doing to show the pattern, number of bars and steps and phrasing for each movement.

To give effective explanation needs a clear knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught. Reinforce the words with demonstrations and observe and correct any mistakes.

The pace of a lesson determines whether or not a teacher can hold the class's interest. If it is too slow the class loses interest and attention wanders. If it is too fast, dancers will leave feeling they have not learned anything. The teacher has to be able to assess the class and know how and when to speed up or slow down elements of the lesson.

- Avoid spending too much time for the benefit of helping a small group if the majority are ready to move on. This will slow the pace.
- Avoid standing and talking too much. Get into the habit of walking (demonstrating) and talking at the same time to keep a lively pace.
- Make the class practise the unusual or difficult movements before building the dance so that the whole dance can be tackled with confidence.

To some extent, the division of time will affect the pace of a lesson, so it is important that this is taken into account when planning. Step practice should be relatively short, but meaningful. Move on to step transitions and skills practices for formations. Finally, allowing time for the object of the lesson, teach the combination of formations, in the case of Unit 3, or a dance, in the case of Unit 5. Step practice in Unit 5 should concentrate on ensuring that improvement is produced.

A teacher should be cheerful, alert, friendly, patient, interested, confident and decisive at all times. Comment should be given after every class effort to encourage the class towards improvement before progressing to the next part of the lesson. Remember, praise should be earned.

7.5 Class Management

When planning a lesson thought must be given to the class management. Arrangement of the dancers for step practice may be different than for formations so try to plan for minimal changes from, for example, lines to circles or sets. Always arrange the class to involve as many dancers as possible for as much of the time as possible. Having people standing will not hold their interest. Using circles for skills exercises is a convenient way of using all the dancers, but it is not always the best arrangement. Try to make the class arrangement for an exercise in the orientation which relates to the dance, e.g. avoid teaching "lead down the middle and up" in a circle. Beginners for example will find it easier to envisage a formation they are not familiar with if it is danced in a set, but only use the number of couples required for the formation, which may be different from the number required for the dance.

It will be easier to control the class if the teacher is quite clear in his/her own mind how the dancers are to be arranged and gives clear instructions about how to achieve this.

Good class management will contribute to the pace of the lesson.

7.6 Use of Music

The choice of correct or suitable music has to be made when planning the lesson. This usually falls on the teacher when using recorded music but when using musicians, be sure to consult them in advance of the class so that they can advise and prepare themselves. Advice on music and suitable tunes is contained in the RSCDS Manual and in the RSCDS publication *“A Guide to Music in the Teaching of Scottish Country Dancing”* by Muriel A. Johnstone.

Use music as soon as it is appropriate and as often as is sensible. Control the speed on a player if it is possible or by using your voice (rhythmic counting) to show the musician what you want. It is not acceptable just to say “slower” or “faster”. Wherever possible use the correct musical phrase for the part of the dance being practised. Make sure the musician is clearly instructed how many or which bars are required.

7.7 Use of Voice

The voice must be clear and audible in all situations. It should be cheerful, confident and vary in tone. Use clear wording and as few words as possible. Make use of pauses and the tone and speed of the voice to encourage, emphasise and create atmosphere.

Coach through the music, count rhythmically (using numbers) and coach rhythmically (using words) when teaching steps and formations.

Give appropriate encouragement and praise throughout the lesson.

8.0 Beyond the Teaching Certificate

Having completed the course, candidates can then develop their own teaching style but they will be faced with new challenges, for example mixed ability or social classes. These challenges will require lesson plan flexibility and continual assessment of the needs of the class with any necessary adjustment of expectations. Always remember dancing is for fun, so keep the class entertained and active. Where appropriate provide constructive criticism of the dancers remembering to tell them how to correct faults and then praise corrective effort.

Teaching long term or established classes may give rise to problems, including ensuring the interest of the dancers is maintained. Always set class objectives and assess progress at the end of the lesson to make sure you are not being over particular for the level of class. It is common to set themes for classes or a series of classes (a development of progressive teaching), but teachers should experiment with different ideas provided they are realistic and relevant. Continue to plan lessons in detail. Keeping a record of lesson plans which can be repeated or adjusted ensures consistency and avoids repetition. Acquire the habit of reviewing and evaluating each lesson, particularly with respect to your own teaching skills. Be aware that even experienced teachers can lose pace in a lesson or talk too much.

For classes with musicians, consult the musician about choice of music and involve them in the class by asking them to explain to the class why they have selected particular tunes. Musicians less experienced in playing SCD music will require guidance from the teacher, but they can still contribute to the class.

Teachers are encouraged to maintain their own standard of dancing and so should attend other classes and day schools wherever possible. In doing so there is always an opportunity to learn from others and assess the effectiveness of one's own performance.

In addition to the opportunities provided at St Andrews, other branches, groups and associations run classes for teachers which are well worth attending. The main Teachers Associations also provide very helpful levels of support for all teachers especially those who are newly qualified. These can be contacted through the following websites or telephone listing :

Teachers' Association Scotland [TAS]

Contact: Sue Porter - Treasurer
Schiehallion
Grianach Gardens
Oban PA34 4LB
Tel 01631 563103
E-mail sue.porter3@btopenworld.com

Australian Teachers Alliance Inc [ATA]

Contact: Neryl Adams – Membership Secretary
Tel: +61 (0)2 4948 4940
Email: neryl.adams@bigpond.com.au
Web: http://www.rscds.org.au/mgxroot/page_10808.html

South East Region Teachers' Association [SERTA]

Contact: Mike Johnston
4 Gatehampton Cottages
Gatehampton Road
Goring
Reading RG8 9LX
Tel: 01491 873 026.
E-mail: mikejohnson@waitrose.com
Web: www.serta.org.uk

Teachers Association Canada [TAC}

Contact: Alicia Manson
586 Rebecca Street
Oakville
Ontario
L6K 3N9
Canada
E-mail: Secretary@tac-rscds.org
Web: www.tac-rscds.org

Teachers are encouraged to build a portfolio or Continuing Development Record (CDR) of their experience to extend their learning. Such a record can be used to compare notes with mentors or other local teachers or in applying to become adjudicators, teachers at Society schools or examiners. For more details, refer to the RSCDS website.

Since 2010 courses in Basic Teaching Skills, which are not examinable, have run both at St Andrews Summer School and through Branches. These courses are suitable for non-qualified teachers, who may be leading groups of dancers, and who wish to improve their knowledge and skills.

APPENDIX 1:

Sample lesson plan – Skip Change of Step

1. Give name and purpose and cover numbers 2, 3 and 4 from the guidelines in section 4.
2. Rhythmic words – Hop Step Close Step
 - a) Walking words – “And Step Close Step” or “And Right Close Right”
 - b) While walking, bring in music, gradually increasing speed.
 - c) While music is playing introduce “On your toes”.
 - d) As speed increases introduce “Hop Step Close Step”.
3. Hop
 - a) Isolate the movement. Demonstrate the hop and have class copy 2 or 3 times with each foot. (Avoid using spring points as the toe of the front leg is not on the floor during the “Hop”).
 - b) Dance step concentrating on “Hop”.
4. Straight Front Leg
 - a) Show position and have class show also.
 - b) Show and practise the hop with fully extended front leg 3 or 4 times with each foot (keep front foot off floor).
 - c) Dance step concentrating on full extension on hop.
5. Reach
 - a) Link the three movements – Hop, Reach Forward, Close.
 - b) Have class practise with R and L foot 3 or 4 times.
 - c) Dance step concentrating on the “reach”.
6. Third Position
 - a) Practise – Step forward, close in 3rd – 3 or 4 times with the same foot and then with the other.
 - b) Repeat on toes.
7. Finally dance the complete PERFECT STEP! If necessary go on to teach skip change of step travelling backwards.

APPENDIX 2:

Sample lesson plan – Pas de Basque

1. Give name and purpose.
2. Rhythmic words – Spring beat beat (or step beat beat to start).
 - a) 1 2 3 or 1 2 3 - Step mark time and step beat beat and (This on flat of foot)
 - b) Pick up knees/feet to emphasise three beats.
 - c) Bring in music, gradually increasing speed.
 - d) While music is playing, introduce “On your toes”.
 - e) Introduce spring, beat beat and – make beats heavy to re-emphasise three.
3. Third Position
 - a) On flat of foot show 3rd position elevated, i.e. Left and Right foot with heel tucked into instep. Have class show with you.
 - b) Mark time with feet in 3rd position – Left in front then Right, 3 or 4 times with each foot. Have class look at their feet. 1 2 3 -
 - c) Step, in front, behind, and – pick up feet/knees.
 - d) Bring in the music.
 - e) While music is playing introduce “On your toes” (You dance along with your class).
 - f) Introduce spring, in front, behind, and/ spring, beat, beat.
 - g) Continue to demand 3 clear beats and 3rd position.
4. Jeté
 - a) Demonstrate the step slowly to Left and Right emphasising the jeté 1 2 3 - i.e. Spring, beat jeté and
 - b) Have class practise jeté from 3rd position with you – only 3 or 4 times with each foot.
 - c) Demonstrate complete step emphasising “extend”.
 - d) Have class dance whole step.

Point out step is danced on the spot.

If necessary go on to teach travelling and turning pas de basque.

APPENDIX 3:

Sample lesson plan – Strathspey Travelling Step

1. Give name and purpose and cover numbers 2, 3 and 4 from the guidelines in section 4.
2. Rhythmic words – Step Close Step Pull-Through
 - a) Walk – “Step Close Step Hop” or “Right Close Right Pull-Through”
 - b) While walking, bring in music, gradually increasing speed.
 - c) While music is playing introduce “On your toes”.
 - d) As speed increases introduce “Reach Close Step Pull-Through”. Note the even counts.
3. Reach
 - a) Isolate the movement. Demonstrate the bending of the supporting leg and the long, strong reach forward of the fully extended working leg. Have class copy 2 or 3 times with each foot.
 - b) Dance step concentrating on bent supporting leg and full extension to give “Reach”.
4. Reach Close
 - a) Link the two movements – Reach Forward, Close in 3rd position elevated.
 - b) Have class practise with R and L foot 3 or 4 times.
 - c) Dance step concentrating on the “reach”, close.
5. Step
 - a) Demonstrate the long second step (no bend of supporting leg) and transfer the weight to the front foot to show full extension of rear leg.
 - b) Have class practise the transfer of weight with R and L foot 3 or 4 times
 - c) Dance step concentrating on the difference between the first and second steps.
6. Pull-Through with hop
 - a) Demonstrate the pull through of the rear leg from the fully extended position, toe just off the ground, well turned out, with the hop on the supporting foot as the working foot passes the ankle and then reaches forward to start the next step.
 - b) Have the class try pull through with hop on R and L foot 3 or 4 times
 - c) Dance the step concentrating on the controlled pull through and soft hop.
7. Finally dance the complete PERFECT STEP! If necessary go on to teach strathspey travelling step retiring.

APPENDIX 4:

Sample lesson plan – Rights and Lefts

1. Skills Practice (handing and phrasing)

Organisation: A circle facing partners, women facing clockwise and men anticlockwise.

- a) Dance 8 bars passing right hand, left hand, right hand, left hand (2 bars to each hand) to finish facing new partner. Make sure hands are given in shake hand hold, at shoulder height, elbows down and released at shoulder height, with the head and shoulder turning to maintain eye contact. Demonstrate and have the class walk the polite turn.
- b) Repeat a) to finish facing the centre of the circle (women will complete the polite turn. Check that all 8 steps are danced and that hands are released to enable the polite turn).
- c) Repeat b) to retrace steps i.e. men dance clockwise, women anticlockwise (men will complete the polite turn).

2. Formation Practice

Organisation: Two couple sets.

Name the formation, the number of couples required, the number of bars and the step to be used.

- a) The teacher walks the formation from 1st man's place.
- b) The class walks the formation.
- c) Repeat a), this time counting the phrasing – 2 steps to each hand.
- d) Repeat b) to rhythmic counting as often as necessary to improve each teaching point.
- e) The teacher demonstrates the formation to music.
- f) The class dances to music.
- g) If necessary repeat from e) to correct any faults.
- h) Dance from new position

Teaching points:

- i. Approach on a curve
- ii. Shake hand hold
- iii. Hands at shoulder height with elbows down whilst joined
- iv. Hands released at shoulder height
- v. Eye contact
- vi. Rectangular shape – dance into each corner
- vii. Phrasing, two steps to each side
- viii. Polite turn to finish (1st man and 2nd woman)

3. Common Faults

- i. Hands not at shoulder height
- ii. An exaggerated curve whilst passing
- iii. Not dancing into corners
- iv. Poor phrasing
- v. Adding an extra polite turn after the first left hand change
- vi. Pivoting on the polite turn (ensure 2 steps for the polite turn)
- vii. Omitting the polite turn at the end

APPENDIX 5:

Sample lesson plan – Unit 3

Formations: Teach “turn corners and partner” followed by “six hands round and back”.

Given step: Probably “skip change of step” as turn corners and partner is the more difficult formation, but either step could be given.

1. Step Practice

Teach skip change of step (see Appendix 1).

2. Skills Practice

Prior to arranging class in three couple sets, teach a turning practice to whole class
e.g. Organisation: a circle with partners back to back, women facing clockwise and men anticlockwise.

Bars

1-2 Turn facing dancer once round with right hand

3-4 Turn partner one and a half times round with the left hand

5-6 Turn next dancer once round with right hand

7-8 Turn partner half round with left hand to finish in original places all facing inwards

Teaching points:

- i. shake hand hold
- ii. shorten arms for tight turns, by bringing elbows closer and pointing down
- iii. counter balance between dancers
- iv. phrasing
- v. use of flight and full extension in skip change
- vi. long arm for passing movement during bars 7-8

3. Formation Practice

Organisation: a circle with hands joined.

Bars 1-8 hands round and back (this leaves only the entry and exit to teach for 6 hands round and back)

Teaching points:

- i. arms joined at shoulder height with elbows down
- ii. maintain arm position
- iii. control body weight prior to change of direction
- iv. a tilting change of direction with feet in 1st position
- v. points for slip step given in section 7.1

4. Presentation and Build Up of Formations

Organisation: arrange class in three couple sets

- i. identify first and second corner positions
- ii. teach turn corners and partner (see section 4)
- iii. teach entry and exit for 6 hands round and back (mention/show/if time practise first couple change of foot into hands round – the simple “hop, step, together would suffice)

5. Coach and Improve Class Performance

- i. Teaching points:
- ii. first couple closely back to back in the middle
- iii. corners alert
- iv. helpful handing i.e. counter balance and handing on
- v. enter hands round on a curve
- vi. exit to side lines on bars 7 and 8, each line retaining hands for balance

APPENDIX 6:

Sample lesson plan – Unit 5

1. Name of Dance: reel, jig or strathspey; number of couples required; number of bars; source
2. Introduction: [Omit warm up. Class will already have been warmed up. Allotted examination time should not be used for this]
3. Step Practice: [The main step but may involve more than one step. Note any special uses, e.g. retiring, travelling pas de basque etc.]
4. Formation Analysis: Skills Practices
[Having analysed the steps and formations for changes of direction, transitions etc, organise the class so that as many people as possible are working, e.g. in twos facing each other to practise petronella turning.]
5. Formation Practice: [e.g. ladies' chain; poussette; allemande; rights & lefts etc.]
6. Presentation and Build Up of Dance

For each activity include:

- a) the class organisation
- b) the precise content including bars of music
- c) the teaching points