

# **EFFECTIVE TEACHING INTEREST SESSION**

(Compiled by Dottie Welch for CALLERLAB Workshop in Raleigh, North Carolina, 2013)

## **PREPARATION:**

- a) Consider teaching order issues when choosing the call.  
Attempt to maximize transfer aids and minimize sequential confusion.
- b) Analyze the call so that your presentation can be made with confidence and clarity.  
Learn the definition, styling, timing, and standard formations and arrangements.  
Determine which starting and ending formations will be used.  
Think about appropriate preceding and following calls.
- c) Think about various ways to describe or demonstrate the action.  
Plan a quick, global synopsis and concise quick cues that conform to the definition.  
Include information for the visual, auditory and tactile learners.  
Make use of available teaching hints, and try to anticipate trouble spots.
- d) Prepare choreography that efficiently covers the possible applications.  
Design a logical sequence that gradually increases in difficulty.  
Concentrate on one idea at a time and give all dancers equally practice opportunities.  
Focus on the call being taught and avoid mixing in other new or difficult calls.  
Plan singing call figures which match the applications that have been taught.

## **PRESENTATION:**

- a) Begin with some warm-up time and review of necessary foundations.
- b) Select non-invasive music that has a positive feel (major key) and a smooth rhythm.
- c) Project confidence that they can succeed, give encouragement, and be patient.
- d) If there is difficulty, take the blame yourself, apologize, and try a new explanation.
- e) Limit the teach time to ten minutes and find honest words of praise for their success.
- f) Use the call in the Singing Call if success is likely, but be prepared to allow extra time.

## **FOLLOWUP:**

- a) Re-teach and review several times using a variety of choreography.
- b) Strive for error-free practice while using the call in standard ways.
- c) For those who find them useful, provide written descriptions and diagrams and point dancers to internet animations. Offer long term memory keys to differentiate calls.

## **AWARENESS OF COGNITIVE LIMITS:**

- a) Initially cater to short term memory limits by providing cues and allowing extra time.
- b) Provide regular practice until the dancers begin to dance the call as a "chunk".
- c) Avoid the development of call sequence chunks by varying the sequences.
- d) Use appropriate timing so dancers can concentrate on one call at a time.
- e) Give clear and concise calls to minimize time spent interpreting the call.
- f) Intermix difficult calls with easier ones to avoid memory overload.
- g) Use short sequences so that dancers experience more successful resolutions.
- h) Aim for smooth body flow with gentle right and left turns and alternate hand usage.
- i) Help with changes in focus such as from waves to boxes.
- j) Minimize time in odd formations and give reassurance when the unusual is correct.
- k) Give clues to help sort out facing directions so minor mistakes can be corrected.

References: What Makes Square Dancing Hard, by John Sybalsky  
The Caller Text, The Art and Science of Calling Square Dances, compiled by Bob Osgood

### **EXAMPLE: TEACHING CAST OFF 3/4**

[ *These four applications should be expanded and spread over at least two separate tips.* ]

**Global Description:** We are going to workshop Cast Off 3/4. When two dancers Cast Off 3/4 they maintain their mini-wave or couple formation and use a common pivot point to turn three-quarters around (270 degrees).

#### **Teaching Sequence from Right-hand Waves with Girls in the Center:**

Heads Pass the Ocean, Extend [ *Callers note that the heads are facing out.* ]

Consider the right handholds in each half of the wave to be pivot points. To Cast Off 3/4 you will maintain those pivot point handholds and walk forward in a three-quarter turn around that point counting new walls as you turn – Cast Off 3/4 – 1<sup>st</sup> new wall, 2<sup>nd</sup> new wall, 3<sup>rd</sup> new wall. This ends in waves facing the head walls with the girls facing in and the boys facing out.

Boys Run, Pass the Ocean [ *Now the sides are facing out, so all dancers experience both.* ]

Again: Your pivot point is your right hand, use two steps per wall, and count three new walls: Cast Off 3/4, Boys Run, Ends Star Thru, Centers Box the Gnat and Right & Left Thru to home

**Singing Call:** Heads Pass the Ocean, Extend, Cast Off 3/4 (boys are facing out), Boys Run, Forward and Back, Star Thru, Pass Thru, Trade By, Swing and Promenade

#### **Teaching Sequence from Right-hand Waves with Boys in the Center:**

Sides Pass the Ocean, Extend, Swing Thru. Use your right hand as the pivot point and Cast Off 3/4 (1<sup>st</sup> wall, 2<sup>nd</sup> wall, 3<sup>rd</sup> wall) you should end facing side walls with the boys facing in).

Girls Run, Box the Gnat, Pass the Ocean, Swing Thru. Another way to find the three-quarter point is to trade (go where the other dancer is) and then turn an extra quarter: Cast Off 3/4, Girls Run, Centers Right and Left Thru, Others face in at home.

**Singing Call Figure:** Sides Pass the Ocean, Those Ladies Trade, Extend, Swing Thru, Cast Off 3/4, Girls Run, Box the Gnat, Pass the Ocean, Girls Circulate, Boys Run, Promenade

#### **Teaching Sequence from Lines Facing Out with Normal Couples:**

Heads Lead Right, Circle to a Line, Pass Thru. Now you and your partner are facing in the same direction. The rule for Cast Off 3/4 from lines is to always turn away from the center of the line, so the centers walk forward around their near end who mostly pivots: Cast Off 3/4 (ending in lines facing in and toward the head walls). Right and Left Thru, Pass Thru, Cast Off 3/4 (now facing side walls), Right and Left Thru, All Circle Left (short) to Home

**Singing Call Figure:** Heads Lead Right, Circle to a Line, Pass Thru, Cast Off 3/4, Forward and Back, Pass the Ocean, Boys Circulate, Swing and Promenade

#### **Teaching Sequence for Double Pass Thru, Centers In, Cast Off 3/4:**

Sides Star Thru, Double Pass Thru, Now we are going to combine Centers In with Cast Off 3/4 so the center dancers (trailers) will step between the outside dancers to make a line and hold on their near outside dancer while continuing to walk forward in a three-quarter turn: Centers In, Cast Off 3/4 (this should end in BBGG facing lines), Forward and Back, Star Thru, Double Pass Thru, Centers In, Cast Off 3/4, End Dancers Star Thru, You should be at Home

**Singing Call Figure:** Sides Star Thru, Double Pass Thru, Centers In, Cast Off 3/4, Forward and Back, Star Thru, Double Pass Thru, Leaders Partner Trade, Swing and Promenade