

Tap Dance Curriculum

By: Mindy C. Kim

The following curriculum is a basic outline of what my tap dance classes will include. It is specifically designed for those with little or no previous tap experience. The subjects are very basic and the classes never exactly follow this curriculum, each class is deigned (tweaked) based on the students' abilities upon entering the class and how quickly they learn and develop as educated dancers.

1. Musicality - Musicality is very important in no matter what kind of dance a student is learning. It is important to understand where the "breaks" in the music are, and what the chorus of the song is. To teach basic musicality to my students we will play new and different songs throughout the term and identify the Chorus, and breaks many times also the rhythm and discuss which steps would fit at which points of the song. This becomes all focused on one song that we will do a performance to usually by halfway through the term.
2. Rhythm – Rhythm is so important to every dancer but specifically tap dancers because as tap dancers we provide an additional instrument to the music, our feet and the rhythm must match perfectly. To teach rhythm I play a wide variety of music including jazz, hip-hop, classical, African...with these songs we identify the rhythm through clapping then stomping and eventually doing actual matching tap steps. Again the focus goes to one song once the performance song is introduced.
3. Tap dance
 - a. Steps – the basic steps of tap which will be taught in each class are:
 1. Toe Tap (front & back)
 2. Heel dig
 3. Heel drop
 4. Shuffle
 5. Flap
 6. Ball change
 7. Step touch
 8. Buffalo
 9. Irish
 10. Cramp-RollsShould time allow I will add many more steps including Time steps and possibly moving into toe stands, pull-backs and even wings.
 - b. Combinations – Each class will learn a series of short combinations that travel across the floor all the way from walking to traveling time steps We will also learn 1 longer and more complex combination which includes all or most of the steps learned in class (and variations of each) in one performance routine.
4. A little History – I like to provide my students with knowledge of where tap dance came from and what it is all about. I provide them and their parents with

book lists, web-sites and of course my website (see “Fun Stuff”) which has profiles of some famous tap dancers throughout time. No actual class time is spent exploring tap dance history.

5. Performance (our own & others) – On any day that I miss a class (very rare) I try to get a sub or a parent volunteer to come in and instruct students with video instruction of tap or a tap dance movie (or excerpts). Also at the end of each term we do a small in classroom performance for friends and family both the kids & their parents love it and even though it’s in the classroom it feels like a real recital to these kids. I also like to have my students perform out in their community for example, in Foster City my students performed at the annual Foster City Arts & wine Festival.