

Report on the 2004-5 Teacher Candidate Course  
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The class ran from October 17 until the dancing and teaching exams held April 8 & 9.

A new examination procedure has been adopted by the RSCDS. Therefore this was the last time that the preliminary exam would be given in its traditional combined form. The prelim candidates who pass the exam will need, in two years, an opportunity to take the full certificate. After this the society will be offering the training in separate modules; while they plan to stage examination tours, the details are yet to be worked out and will likely require restructuring our training classes.

Fourteen preliminary candidates began the class and saw it through to completion. From this group, the following twelve passed the exam:

Kathy Allen	Christopher Berner
Patti Cobb	Debby Dahlstrom
Gail Erwin	Sandra Fritts
Linda Henderson	Don MacQueen
Jim Passage	Sandra Schultz
Larry Wakeman	Tim Wilson

Two full certificate candidates began the class; Lori Farrell Howard completed it and passed the exam, but Margaret Schlobohm dropped out because of physical health concerns.

Many Branch dancers, teachers, and musicians helped substantially. Those who particularly made a contribution of their time and effort include Andy Imbrie, Lyle Ramshaw, Bruce Hamilton, Ellen Aaron, Ron Wallace, Carolyn Hunt, Susan Worland-Bentley, Steve Wyrick, Kathleen McAdam, Claudette Sigg, Keith Grant, Sheena MacQueen, Mark Caplin, Greg Reznick, Cheryl Ishida, Marianna Harvey, and, especially, the class manager Witsie McKelvy.

We began the class by circulating a questionnaire inquiring what each candidate intended to get from the class and what they expected would be their strongest and weakest aspects. Overwhelmingly, the candidates expressed discomfort with understanding music. Therefore, we had two guest lecturers on music and one intensive session during the retreat on working with a musician.

Most class sessions began with a guest lecture of either an hour or a half-hour. While these were generally very valuable, many class members felt that some of the lectures took too much time away from the content of the exam.

The twelve repertoire dances caused quite a bit of concern among the candidates and an additional class session was added to revisit them all. In the end, all candidates

performed to the top of their abilities during the dance exam and we do not believe that further work, for the prelim candidates, would have been justified.

Written materials to support the class are minimal. The RSCDS is in the process of revising its manual, but the manual is a reference, generally, and not a suitable text. A handbook by Geoffrey Selling, which had been out of print, was discovered by a class member to be available and most candidates purchased a copy. It does not have the imprimatur of the Society, but it covers the material in a comprehensive and readable way. Similarly, after being exposed to it at the retreat, many class members sought out copies of 'Won't You Join the Dance' from online booksellers and expressed deep appreciation of its coherent voice and readability.

The large number of prelim candidates presented many difficulties. We did not attempt to exclude anyone from the course, although we had several serious discussions with people who had expressed interest and an orientation meeting to discuss the scope and workload. The large number of candidates meant that we could not have all of them practice teaching at each class session. Therefore, we urged them and the teachers of classes in the branch to work together to allow as much real-world experience for the candidates as possible. Dwayne McQuilliams, Trina Merriman, Bob McMurtry, Linda Pettengill, and Claudette Sigg were particularly helpful in this regard and the candidates benefited greatly.

Accommodating the two full certificates presented considerable difficulties. We did not establish a separate group of angels to support the fulls until shortly before the exam. Since there were only 1 or 2 full candidates we always needed personnel to allow them to practice their dances. Working the fulls with the prelims allowed some mutual support. Having two instructors also allowed more attention to be given to them as separate classes. However, in future we would suggest a real recruitment of angels that could be consistently relied upon to support a small training class. Fortunately, the dance community was very supportive for the actual exam, and we had enough angels to support the full certificate dancing and teaching exams and the prelim teaching exams, which occupied the whole of a very long day.

We do not know how the new exam structure will affect the mechanics of future classes, but likely some of these concerns will still need to be addressed.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce and Alan