



UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA

SQUARE DANCE – AMERICAN FOLK DANCE



USDA Beyond the Dance Floor - Social Square Dancing (SSD) - What Is It and How Does It Work?

Presented by: Bear Miller & Deborah Carroll-Jones

Saturday July 10, 2021

SSD-Why Do We Need it?

Simple...we are slowly dying.

We had a Pandemic to quicken our demise.

We (yes including ME) are guilty of NOT seeing our activity through the new dancer's view.

SSD-Why Do We Need it?

Denver/Colorado is a very strong Mainstream area, here is the dreaded but, with over 90% of the clubs being Mainstream, over 95% of existing dancers dance at least a soft Plus.

Something doesn't add up!

SSD-Why Do We Need it?

IMHO One of the Biggest causes is The Star Tip!

New dancers come to dance, ***then must sit out*** while the “experienced” dancers preplan their square.

If you put that Star Tip at the end of dance, then you have 2 endings & lose out on Social Bonding opportunities, especially with the new dancers.

SSD-What is it?

There are some great pieces of work out there describing the history & details to Social Square Dancing. See Barry Johnson for the best! IMHO

This presentation is more of a quick look, then how to implement it.

We will then have a testimonial from World Renown Deborah Carroll-Jones as she has been using it for the last few years.

SSD-What is it?

This presentation is mostly the work of a collaboration by:

Barry Clasper

Brad Bruner

Kurt Gollhardt

These gentlemen are talented in the skill of wordsmithing & getting a lot of info in a Nutshell. They were great to work with!

SSD-What is it?

It is a CALLERLAB-approved “alternate entry-level destination dance program, intended for use without requiring any change to any other dance program.”

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SSD uses a 50-call subset of Basic/Mainstream (“MS”) chosen to maximize dance variety, fun & easy learning.

SSD Approach

More Than Just a Call List

- Bring back a focus on the social and entertainment aspects of square dancing at the entry level to attract and retain a broader base of casual dancers.

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- Make classes more accessible (shorter, easier, multiple times per year).
- Provide ongoing dancing, with variety, at this entry level.
- Many dancers will be content to stay with SSD. As needed, make SSD-to-Plus classes available for a bridge to Plus for avid learners who wish to learn more.

Three Pillars of SSD

SHORTER

12-14 weeks, 2-4 times/year

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12-14 weeks, 2-4 times/year

Less of a commitment

Stop Holiday attrition

Prospects can start quicker

Friends bring friends to next class

Three Pillars of SSD

SOCIAL

Three Pillars of SSD

SOCIAL

Emphasis on social bonding
Less focus on technicalities

Most beginners' goal is to learn just enough
for some fun dancing
(Avid learners take later classes)

Three Pillars of SSD

Let Them DANCE!

Three Pillars of SSD

Let Them DANCE!

Integrate spirited dancing quickly

Minimize “LEARN Mode”

Focus on entertainment

Fun dancing for all dancers

Provide SSD dancing year-round

Three Pillars of SSD

SHORTER

SOCIAL

Let Them DANCE!

SSD Benefits

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- Easier to recruit for shorter classes
- Retain more new members by supporting casual dancers
- Growth through multiple classes per year
- Leave “escalator” to Plus for those best suited

SSD Implementation

Many Options

- There are lots of ways to structure an SSD program.
- Existing clubs can modify or extend their current programs according to their circumstances.
- New groups dedicated to SSD can be formed. Both can work together.

SSD Implementation

- Multi-level clubs can easily replace Basic or MS with SSD as their entry level, offering SSD-to-Plus classes as needed.
- Plus-only & Plus-entry clubs could add SSD, or recruit from nearby SSD groups by offering SSD-to-Plus classes.
- MS-only groups might refocus on SSD alone or expand to support both SSD and either MS or Plus.

SSD Implementation

In all cases, the SSD activity should be self-contained (not just a *stepping-stone* to Plus), supporting ongoing SSD dancing.

Treat SSD dancers as First-Class Club Members.

Make SSD-to-Plus classes available to avid learners when they are ready.

So That is SSD in a Nutshell

So, Sounds like a plan?

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So, Really Need a plan!

SSD Bear Take

My Mainstream Club has had for years a half hour of Pre Rounds followed by 2 hours of Square Dancing with at least 1 Plus Tip (Rounds between tips).

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Not wanting to add another (make the new dancer sit during the dance), we decided to offer a half hour of Plus before the Pre Rounds then rest of the night was Mainstream. It is a good compromise for the experienced dancers while the new ones who came at 8 did not have to sit out during the dance.

SSD Bear Take

My Club will easily adapt to have SSD replace the Mainstream & keep our current format.

Trying to convince as many Mainstream clubs in our area to adopt a similar format as the new SSD dancers will need other opportunities to dance with their skill level.

There are a few who have already committed but so many are on the fence because Change is Hard. We have NO better time to make a change than post pandemic.

SSS Real Life Examples

Introducing:

One of the absolute best Callers, Teachers, Entertainers, Caller Coaches, Story Writers & just pure Talents in our Activity (she also happens to be very passionate about Square Dancing).

Honored to call her My Friend
Deborah Carroll-Jones
Arlington TX



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