

Sample Salsa Curriculum for Peer Teaching

Lesson 1: Basic Step (Salsa Timing and Rhythm)

Objective: Learn the basic salsa step and understand salsa timing (1-2-3, 5-6-7).

- **Task:** The peer mentor demonstrates the basic salsa step while counting out loud to the rhythm of the music. The learner practices stepping forward and back while keeping the timing.
- **Outcome:** The learner can confidently execute the basic salsa step with proper timing, stepping forward and back on the correct counts.

Lesson 2: Side Step and Weight Transfer

Objective: Master the side step and the importance of weight transfer in salsa.

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates the side step, emphasizing the shift in weight from one foot to the other. The learner practices shifting their weight while stepping side to side in rhythm.
- **Outcome:** The learner can smoothly perform the side step, transferring their weight effectively.

Lesson 3: Basic Turns (Right Turn)

Objective: Learn how to execute and lead a basic right turn.

- **Task:** The peer mentor breaks down the steps for a right turn (on the 1-2-3, pivot on 5-6-7) and demonstrates leading or following it. The learner practices turning with the correct footwork and timing.
- **Outcome:** The learner can confidently perform a right turn while maintaining balance and rhythm.

Lesson 4: Leading and Following Basics

Objective: Understand the fundamentals of leading and following in salsa.

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates how to establish frame, connection, and communication through light tension in the hands. The learner practices leading and following the basic step and turns with a partner.
- **Outcome:** The learner understands how to lead and follow, maintaining connection and responsiveness to their partner.

Lesson 5: Cross-Body Lead

Objective: Learn the cross-body lead, a fundamental move in salsa.

- **Task:** The peer mentor demonstrates how to lead a cross-body lead by guiding the follower across the dance space (1-2-3) and completing the movement (5-6-7). The learner practices leading and following the cross-body lead with a partner.
- **Outcome:** The learner can execute a smooth cross-body lead, transitioning their partner from one side to the other with control.

Lesson 6: Inside Turn from Cross-Body Lead

Objective: Add an inside turn to the cross-body lead to increase complexity.

- **Task:** The mentor shows how to incorporate an inside turn during the cross-body lead. The learner practices leading or following the inside turn, paying attention to hand positioning and timing.
- **Outcome:** The learner can perform a cross-body lead with an inside turn, maintaining timing and connection.

Lesson 7: Arm Styling and Body Movement

Objective: Introduce basic arm styling and body movement to enhance salsa aesthetics.

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates how to add natural arm movements to basic steps and turns. The learner practices incorporating arm styling and body isolations into the steps they've already learned.
- **Outcome:** The learner feels comfortable adding simple arm movements and body isolations to basic salsa steps to improve their personal style.

Lesson 8: Footwork Variations - Suzie Q

Objective: Introduce a common salsa footwork variation (Suzie Q).

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates the Suzie Q footwork, explaining the rhythm and movement pattern. The learner practices the step and integrates it into their dancing.
- **Outcome:** The learner can confidently perform the Suzie Q, using it to add variety and flair to their footwork.

Lesson 9: Open Break and Back Spot Turn

Objective: Learn the open break and back spot turn to increase movement vocabulary.

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates the open break and back spot turn. The learner practices the movements individually, then integrates them into partner work.
- **Outcome:** The learner can lead or follow an open break and back spot turn, adding dynamic movement to their dancing.

Lesson 10: Shines (Solo Footwork)

Objective: Practice shines (solo footwork) to build individual movement.

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates a few basic shines, explaining how to break away from a partner to showcase individual movement. The learner practices a short sequence of shines.
- **Outcome:** The learner can break away from partner dancing to perform basic shines confidently during a dance.

Lesson 11: Musicality and Improvisation

Objective: Develop an understanding of musicality and improvisation in salsa.

- **Task:** The mentor explains how to listen to salsa music for cues (accents, breaks) and demonstrates improvising movements to match the music. The learner practices responding to musical changes while dancing.
- **Outcome:** The learner can interpret music cues and incorporate improvised movements into their salsa dancing.

Lesson 12: Partner Work and Combining Patterns

Objective: Practice combining multiple moves and patterns smoothly in partner dancing.

- **Task:** The mentor demonstrates how to combine the basic step, cross-body lead, turns, and footwork into a short dance sequence. The learner practices leading or following the sequence with a partner.
- **Outcome:** The learner can lead or follow a series of connected salsa moves, maintaining timing, connection, and flow.

Teaching Instructions

Lesson 1: Basic Salsa Step (Forward and Backward)

1. Start with a brief demo: Show the basic salsa step (forward and backward).
2. Do the basic steps together to the beat.
3. Count out loud while stepping with the learner ("1, 2, 3... 5, 6, 7").
4. Guide the learner to keep timing by clapping or counting when needed.
5. Let the learner practice solo with feedback on foot placement and rhythm.

Lesson 2: Side Steps

1. Demonstrate the side step (stepping left and right).

2. Practice together with the learner to the beat, counting out loud ("1, 2, 3... 5, 6, 7").
 3. Correct the learner's posture and foot alignment if needed.
 4. Add a slight hip movement as the learner becomes comfortable with the steps.
 5. Let the learner practice on their own, emphasizing smooth transitions between steps.
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Lesson 3: Basic Turns (Right Turn)

1. Show how to do a right turn step-by-step (prep on "1", turn on "2, 3").
 2. Practice the turn together slowly, counting the steps.
 3. Correct the learner's balance and footwork during the turn.
 4. Increase speed gradually as the learner gains confidence.
 5. Let the learner practice with feedback, focusing on smooth rotations.
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Lesson 4: Partner Hold and Connection

1. Demonstrate the proper partner hold (frame, connection, and hand placement).
 2. Practice basic forward/backward steps together in partner hold.
 3. Correct the learner's hand position and frame to maintain connection.
 4. Let the learner lead or follow with feedback on tension and timing.
 5. Practice a few turns while maintaining the partner connection.
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Lesson 5: Cross-Body Lead

1. Show the cross-body lead (leader steps forward on "1", opens up on "5").
 2. Practice the steps together, walking through the motion slowly.
 3. Let the learner lead or follow with light guidance, adjusting foot placement.
 4. Increase speed gradually and ensure smooth transitions between positions.
 5. Repeat with feedback on frame, timing, and connection.
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Lesson 6: Cross-Body Lead with Turn

1. Demonstrate the cross-body lead with a right turn (add the turn on "5, 6, 7").
2. Break down the steps for both the leader and follower roles.
3. Guide the learner through the motion, offering corrections on timing and rotation.
4. Practice together, ensuring the learner is comfortable with the turn and transition.
5. Let the learner practice multiple times, giving feedback on fluidity.

Lesson 7: Basic Footwork Variations (Shines)

1. Show simple shines (solo footwork) like the Suzy Q or side tap.
 2. Practice slowly with the learner, breaking down each move into simple steps.
 3. Let the learner repeat the footwork while staying in time with the music.
 4. Add more complex footwork if the learner is comfortable.
 5. Let the learner practice solo and experiment with footwork while offering feedback.
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Lesson 8: Timing and Musicality

1. Play a salsa song and demonstrate finding the "1" beat in the music.
 2. Show the learner how to recognize the timing (counting "1, 2, 3... 5, 6, 7").
 3. Have the learner clap or tap the rhythm while counting out loud.
 4. Let the learner practice basic steps while staying on beat.
 5. Offer feedback on musicality, focusing on staying in rhythm with the music.
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Lesson 9: Leading and Following Techniques

1. Explain the basics of leading (clear signals) and following (responsive frame).
 2. Demonstrate a simple lead-follow exercise with basic steps and turns.
 3. Practice together, allowing the learner to either lead or follow.
 4. Give feedback on maintaining connection and reacting to the partner's signals.
 5. Let the learner experiment with leading or following, focusing on clarity and responsiveness.
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Lesson 10: Putting it All Together (Freestyle Dance)

1. Review all the basic steps, turns, and cross-body leads learned so far.
2. Practice putting them together into a short, freestyle dance.
3. Guide the learner through the dance, correcting any issues with timing or footwork.
4. Encourage the learner to experiment with transitions between moves.
5. Let the learner lead/follow a complete dance, offering feedback on fluidity and connection.