

22 Golden Tips for Giving a Great Dance Class by Morry Krispijn from Salsaventura

1. **Be prepared**

Make sure you prepare a lesson well. Know what you are going to do, what songs you will use and make sure that your partner also knows what you have in mind for that class. Are you at a location for the first time or are you teaching with a partner you normally don't teach with? Then get together before the class and go through the lesson before you start.

2. **Open the lesson with CRC**

This term comes from the fitness world and stands for Contact – Response – Compliment/Comment and originated from the aim to have a moment of contact with everyone in the class. That contact moment is only valid if there is a response. That can be very short. This is then followed by a compliment or a tip from the teachers side to improve something. This moment of contact can also be made to the entire group by, for example, asking: "*who went dancing last week*"? If you put up your hand first you will notice that those people that did go out dancing last week will also put up their hands.

3. Determine your position

Know where you are going to stand on the dance floor. Make sure you can see the group well and make sure the group can see you. If at partnerwork you choose to stand in the centre of the room, make sure you regularly change direction.

Note: do the first several times from the same direction/angle (usually at least 4 times) before you change direction. This is because people usually pick unconscious coordination points in the room. By changing directions too fast they will easily lose their coordination and it will take longer to learn.

4. Make people change partners in the class

Changing partners does indeed guarantee that people learn to dance better. This is because not every partner reacts the same way. Nevertheless, I advise you not to make changing mandatory. Sometimes people choose to dance together.

However, do not change too quickly either. People need some time to get used to each other before they can do the exercise together a number of times. Only when there is quite a difference between men/women in a class you can change every 2-3 minutes.

5. Give an example first

Of course you can start a warm-up by setting up a song and starting. If you decide to handle something new, always give an example first. Many people are visually oriented and learn by watching. Without an example, it can be more difficult for this group of people to learn something new.

Now beware: if it is a new group or if you are replacing another teacher I would advise you not to show the full example. The level might be lower than you think, and you might have to adjust your plan. Showing the full example can then be a mistake.

6. Teach

We are not in Cuba where a teacher is swinging in front of the group and shouts "Baila, baila"! Like; "just join in, then you'll be fine". I can tell you from my own experience; it's not going to be okay. In more western countries most people do not (yet) grow up with a swinging Merengue or a romantic Bachata. So to my opinion there is a need for explanation. Preferably as clear and structured as possible with a little pace but not too fast. A class is not about you as a teacher. It is about the students!

7. Teach in pieces until each pitfall

Every shine, movement or combination has difficult and easy parts. Explain until the part where the first problem can occur and repeat it up to that point 3 to 4 times. Then continue until the next pitfall and repeat that 3 to 4 times. Then stick parts 1 and 2 together. Continue till you have taught the full pattern. Do not forget to watch the group all the time. We call this Quick Scanning.

8. Teaching program

At Salsaventura we work with the 6 Turn Pattern System. For Kizomba, Bachata and Zouk we have a separate teaching program. Whatever you do, make sure you have a lesson program that you can fall back on. This lesson program also provides the necessary structure in both the course and the lessons.

9. Teach together

Is it a lesson where people dance together? Then try to teach as much as possible together. Ladies usually find it easier to get the tips for the lady explained by a lady.

10. **Enough music during the lesson**
Make sure that your lesson consists of at least 50% tot 70% music to be able to practice.

11. **Choose the correct tempo for the music**
Make sure that the tempo of the song matches the exercise and explanation; not too fast and not too slow.

12. **Personal attention**
Walk around and help those who have difficulty first.

13. **Know the names of the students**
I myself am not a star in remembering names but some of my colleagues make it a sport to remember the names of each person and people love it.

14. **Control your Cueing**
Make sure you have mastered this part to the last detail.
Counting or announcing an action repeatedly, at the same time is the best tool to help people learn a shine or combination.

15. **Know how to use your Quick Scan**
Do you know those Irish dancers? 50 in a line and all executing the same piece of footwork. If one makes a mistake, do you see that? The answer is yes! How come? Well, we have, as a human species, a great talent for mismatching. This can help you while scanning your group and will help you to identify errors. This is of great help when giving tips to the group. When you only mention what goes wrong it will save you tons of time.

16. **Be aware of the direction in which you are explaining**

Direction: the direction in which you do something determines the extent to which someone else can see what you are doing. Example: if you explain a cross body lead with your face to the group, the men will take the same position and will not be able to see you anymore.

17. **Voice control**

Use your voice sound. A monotonous voice quickly becomes boring. Therefore, make variation in height and speed and speak clearly.

18. **Connect with the group**

Are you concerned with yourself or are you involved with the group? As a teacher you are not there for yourself. People immediately notice if you are not in contact with them. Therefore, make sure your story is based on "me too" and not on "so what".

19. **Teachers language**

There is a whole list of things that you should say or not say. For example, be specific. Do not use words as "actually", "a little", "about".

20. **Mindset**

Get the right mindset. You are not proving anything to the world by putting yourself down. Stay positive, focus on the lesson and on the participants and let the rest of the world wait. And foremost: be your authentic self. Do not try to be someone else.

21. **Humor**

Use humor in class. People learn faster when they enjoy themselves. You can actually prepare your jokes if you find it hard to improvise on the spot.

22. **Sociability**

Last but not least! Ensure fun in class. No matter how good a lesson is, people will eventually stay away without socializing. Tips: talk to your students, change partners so they get to know each other, let them give each other tips, make them join an online group so they can go out together etc.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article.

Are you interested in becoming a teacher?

Please check out our yearly teacher program. You can send an e-mail to mordechay@salsaventura.nl for more information.

No time to come to Europe?

We are happy to come to you. If you get enough participants (min 12) in a group we are more than willing to come your way. You can send an e-mail to mordechay@salsaventura.nl for more information.

Online Teacher Program

Yes, that is right! We have a full teacher program online. Please check it out at: <https://salsaventura.tv/teacher/>



Links:

- [Salsaventura.tv – Online platform with hundreds of high quality instruction video's](https://www.salsaventura.tv)
- [Youtube channel](#)
- [YouTube 6 Turn Pattern System](#)
- [YouTube 7 Ways of Holding Hands](#)
- [Salsaventura playlist on spotify](#)

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Salsa Teacher Training

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Dance Classes

- We offer high quality dance classes for all levels in Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba and Zouk. Please check out: www.salsaventura.nl

About myself

I started dancing back in 1996 and picked up my first Salsa steps in Cali, Colombia. When I came back to Holland after this great latin adventure I decided to take classes. With a background of martial arts I had received great teachings from great teachers. During that time there were not many great teachers around in the latin scene so after receiving another quit disappointing class I decided to make a change. My main goals then was, and still is, to offer step by step, structured dance classes with an eye for detail and space for fun.

I developed a system called “The 6 Turn Pattern System”. This was till recently probably the best kept secret in the Salsa scene. I am very happy to see how people are picking up on the system using it in their dancing.

My main goal is to spread the passion for Salsa around the globe. So if you are interested in partnering up, let me know. You can reach me at: morry@salsaventura.nl



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