

The Sonshine Syllabus at Suzanne's School of Dance

We are so pleased to have implemented the Sonshine Ballet Syllabus here at Suzanne's School of Dance. The benefits to the students, as well as teachers, are many. We would like to share the following excerpt regarding the background of the syllabus from

<http://sonshinesyllabus.com/>

About the Syllabus

The SCB syllabus was written by Kari Taylor, Sonja Staines, and Liza Pollok from the Sunshine Coast of Queensland, Australia (hence the derived name, Sonshine) during the early 90's.

The SCB derives its technique from the background of its three authors: Kari Taylor (RAD), Sonja Staines (Cecchetti), and Liza Pollok (RAD & ISTD) with a vision to help raise the standard of Christian classical ballet worldwide.

The syllabus provides:

- *A tool for teachers to use for both novice and professional dancers, including higher education options which include an Associate Bachelor of Arts Degree in Christian Ministry (Dance) and a Teacher Diploma and Certification program*
- *The opportunity to unite Christian ballet teachers through common teaching methods and seminars*
- *A tool for both teachers and students; the yearly examination system promotes accountability in each student, providing them with detailed goals that helps them develop and build their skills*
- *A tool for studio owners; grade-level specified work provides a firm and structured curriculum so that parents and teachers know what is being taught*
- *A tool for teaching new teachers and the continuing education of established teachers during the yearly examinations*
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The Syllabus in the United States

Over a decade ago, Sonja Staines and her daughter, Liza Pollok, relocated from Australia to the US, bringing with them the Sonshine Christian Ballet Syllabus.

Today, Liza and her mother, Sonja, continue their work, making the syllabus available to teachers across the United States.

At Suzanne's, we currently utilize the syllabus beginning with Grade 3 through Grade 7, and do not offer a Teacher's Diploma or Certification.

Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, opportunity to examine will be by invitation only. Your instructors will be observing your progress all year, and will send out letters of recommendation to those students showing the ability to achieve the exam. These letters will be sent out by Spring Break.

About the Examinations

The syllabus does not work without the examinations. The purpose of the yearly exams is to give both students and parents a common goal to work towards. It is through the examinations that these goals are fulfilled, and the achievements become a source of inspiration.

Each student pays an Examination Registration Fee, six week prior to the exams. We will require attendance to at least a portion of the weekly pre-exam classes, starting about 4 to 6 week prior to the exams. On average, a 70% improvement takes place during this preparation time.

Examination Policies

Examinees receive one grade for technique and one for expression and artistry. Each student receives a certificate and a written report from the examiner.

Examination Fees

Grade 3: \$35

Grade 4: \$40

Level 5: \$45

Level 6: \$50

Level 7: \$60

Level 8: \$70

Be Prepared for Exam Day

Students need to arrive at least **1 hour before their exam time**. This is to allow time to make sure their appearance is in proper order, and have time to warm up/practice in the other studio before they exam.

Arrive with hair neatly pulled back into a **classical bun**. Please use hair gel, hair spray, a hair net and bobby pins to make the hair as clean as possible! No bangs.

Students will be wearing a white ribbon around the bun during the exam, we will provide these at the studio

Clean ballet pink tights, no runs or holes

No skirts

Clean pink shoes, no ratty edges or hole, **no elastics tied under the foot** (wear them inside instead, or sew them on) and ribbons sewn on. These are the same ribbons that are used on pointe shoes, we sell them in A Dancer's Trunk.

Black tank strap leotard, please make sure your bra straps do not show! We sell some of this style in the store as well

No make-up, (if the student usually wears make-up, she can wear light street make-up for the exam)

No jewelry, watches rings, only post earrings allowed

The mirrors and windows will be covered during the exam, treat it like a performance! Once you step foot in the studio you are on stage. No talking, (except to ask or answer a question from the

examiner) no eye contact with one another, no lounging or sitting or leaning against the barres, no bathroom or water breaks either! The exam only lasts an hour.

Grade Descriptions:

Grade 3 (Ages 11-Adult)

A 1 hour class held twice a week

Grade 3 students include dancers who have passed Grade 2, beginner teens, and beginner adults. This grade level adds more to the barre and center work but is still suitable for laying the foundations for older beginners.

Grade 4 (Ages 12-Adult)

Meets twice a week for a total of 2 to 2.5 hours

The last of the children's grade levels, Grade 4 is for students who have passed Grade 3.

However, Grade 4 also accommodates beginners who have had a solid ballet/dance foundation. Coursework includes the addition of new skills like pirouettes and detailed enchainments to be mastered for their exam.

Level 5 / Senior Grade

Meets twice a week for a total of 2.5 to 3 hours, pointe work is added at this level.

Level 5 is the first of the Major Grades.

Level 6 / Pre-Elementary

Meets twice a week for total of 2.5 to 3 hours, including pointe

Depending on the skills of the individual dancer, this course may take two years to complete.

Level 7 / Elementary

Meets a minimum of twice a week for a total of 3 to 4 hours, including pointe

Level 7 is the elementary level of advanced dance. Students develop detail, excellent placement, and strength. This course is a two year course, although there are exceptions

*Although Levels meet basically twice a week for their course work, it is highly recommended that serious students attend another ballet class as advised by the instructor. These students usually attend modern dance lessons and/or a conditioning class for abdominal, back, arms, and legs strengthening.