



Level 1 · Teacher Training Manual

Teaching Dance

The Method & the Magic

A foundational guide for instructors and
educators in modern Indian dance studios.

Tapash Das

Founder & Director, Twist N Turns Dance & Fitness Studios

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From the Author

DEAR READER,

If you're holding this book in your hands, let me start by saying — thank you. Thank you for caring enough about dance education to seek out guidance, structure, and depth. That tells me you're already on the right path, not just as a dancer, but as a teacher.

This manual was born from a very personal place. It's not just a book filled with tips and templates — it's a reflection of my journey, my challenges, and my 25+ years of teaching, learning, and growing with students and instructors across India. It's my way of passing the torch to you.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

I didn't start my career thinking I'd one day write a manual for dance teachers. Like many of us, I began by simply loving movement — purely, intensely. But as I transitioned from dancer to teacher, and eventually to mentor and studio director, I started noticing something that troubled me: so many passionate dancers were becoming teachers, but with no roadmap. They had the talent, but not the training to teach. They had the heart, but not the tools to handle a class of mixed-age, mixed-skill students. They had the moves, but not the method.

This book is not about how to dance. This book is about how to teach dance well — consistently, joyfully, and professionally.

FROM STUDIO FLOORS TO TEACHER ROOMS

In my early teaching years, I made all the classic mistakes. I thought enthusiasm was enough. I believed choreography alone could carry a class. I remember teaching a batch of 6–8-year-olds for the first time with an adult warm-up, fast music, and complex transitions — within ten minutes, I had lost them completely. That was one of many moments where I realized: teaching is a different skill set altogether.

TWIST N TURNS — THE EXPERIMENT THAT WORKED

Over the years, Twist N Turns evolved into more than a dance studio. It became a training lab, for both students and instructors. Syllabus planning by age and level, batch-specific warm-ups, student tracking systems, trial follow-ups, communication scripts, teacher development modules — we documented everything, and the more we documented, the more we saw results. New teachers stopped feeling lost. Students stayed longer. I knew this format had to be shared beyond my own team.

THIS IS FOR YOU, TEACHER

If you're a new teacher, this manual is your map. If you're experienced but want more structure, this is your reset. If you're running a studio, this is your training manual. If you're a freelance instructor, this is your business guide. This is for the teacher who wants to not just teach a class — but build a culture. Who wants to teach not just better dancers, but better people.

THANK YOU

Thank you for trusting this manual. Thank you for being a teacher. Thank you for being the reason some child somewhere learned to love movement, feel confident, and find their rhythm. If this book helps you teach even one class better, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

With warmth, gratitude, and rhythm,

Tapash Das

Founder & Director, Twist N Turns

Dance Educator | Curriculum Designer | Mentor

Preface

WHY THIS MANUAL MATTERS

Dance is more than movement — it is storytelling, discipline, emotion, rhythm, and transformation. As studios grow and more instructors join the mission of teaching, it becomes essential to have a unified guide to deliver structured, purposeful, and engaging dance education. This manual helps bridge the gap between passion and pedagogy.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS MANUAL

- New dance teachers entering the studio space
- Senior dancers transitioning to instructional roles
- Studio managers building curriculum consistency
- Franchised studio owners setting up instructor onboarding
- Freelance instructors seeking a solid foundation for teaching

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

- Read it sequentially for a complete learning journey
- Use the templates and worksheets in the Appendix to plan your classes
- Highlight action items and reflect in the Try This prompts throughout
- Revisit chapters for quick revision and deeper application

This is Level 1 — an entry point. Upcoming manuals will explore advanced choreography design, in-depth musicality, advanced student psychology, event and recital planning, and digital dance education.

LEVEL 1 · TEACHER TRAINING MANUAL

01

The Role of a Dance Educator

From performer to educator. From technique to trust. From "watch me" to "I see you."

Tapash Das · Founder & Director, Twist N Turns

The Role of a Dance Educator

It's 6:47 PM at a Twist N Turns studio. A twelve-year-old girl is standing at the back of the room, arms crossed, refusing to join the warm-up. Everyone else is moving. She isn't.

A dancer in that moment would finish the choreography and let the class flow around her. A teacher stops the music.

That ten-second decision — music off, attention shifted from “the routine” to “the person not doing the routine” — is the entire difference this chapter is about. Nobody claps for it. Nobody posts it on Instagram. But it's the difference between someone who can dance and someone who can teach.

This chapter is about that shift: from performer to educator, from technique to trust, from “watch me” to “I see you.”

1.1 Defining the Role: Mentor vs. Performer

KEY DIFFERENCE

A dancer performs. A teacher transforms.

Being a dance educator means shifting the spotlight from yourself to your students. It's not about how well you dance — it's about how effectively you can help someone else get better than they were an hour ago.

This is harder than it sounds, especially for teachers who came up as performers first. The instinct to *show* is strong. The instinct to *step back and watch* has to be trained.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DANCE EDUCATOR

- **Facilitator of Learning** — you don't just do the move; you break it into pieces a beginner's brain and body can actually absorb. A double pirouette isn't "just spin twice" to a student who's never spotted a turn — it's three separate skills stacked on top of each other, and your job is to know which one is missing.
- **Mentor and Guide** — you nurture confidence and help students discover who they are through movement, not just what they can copy.
- **Role Model** — your discipline, punctuality, and attitude set the emotional temperature of the room before you say a single word.
- **Bridge Between Art and Discipline** — you hold creativity and consistency in the same hand. Too much of one and class becomes chaos; too much of the other and it becomes drilling.

EXAMPLES FROM THE CLASSROOM

- A performer shows off a routine. A teacher demonstrates it, then explains *why* the arm goes there — so the student can reproduce it without you in the room.
- A performer wants applause. A teacher wants progress — even the invisible kind, like a shy student finally making eye contact with the mirror.
- A performer thrives on solo success. A teacher knows they've done their job when the whole back row is keeping up, not just the front row.

REAL-LIFE SCENARIO · THE STAR STUDENT PROBLEM

Riya is the strongest dancer in a batch of fourteen. She picks up choreography in one run-through and gets visibly bored waiting for the rest of the class — she starts chatting, distracting two other students.

Teacher's move: pull Riya aside for ten seconds during a water break. “You're ready for more — after this, I want you leading the back corner group through the 8-count on your own.” Riya gets a real challenge instead of a repeat performance, and the boredom disappears because she now has a job, not just a routine.

REAL-LIFE SCENARIO · THE QUIET KID AT THE BACK

A new student joins mid-term. Technically fine, but says nothing, avoids the mirror, always picks the spot furthest from you.

Over two classes, you learn — without asking directly — that he switched studios after being publicly corrected in front of his old batch. Corrections go quiet and one-on-one for two weeks. By week four, he's the one demonstrating.

TRY THIS

Before your next class, write down one student's name and one thing you know about them *beyond* their dance level — a fear, a strength, a reason they joined. Teach that class with that fact in mind.

TEACHER TIP

If your students can teach a step to another classmate — clearly, patiently, without you jumping in — you've succeeded as an educator. That's the real exam. Not the recital. The handoff.

1.2 Emotional Intelligence in Teaching

WHY IT MATTERS

Dance education isn't only physical — it's deeply emotional. A step is easy to fix. A student who's decided they're “not a dancer” is not. An emotionally intelligent teacher reads the room before the music even starts.