

Contra Dance Callers Survey 2013

Country Dance and Song Society
Contra Dance Task Group



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1. Introduction

Introduction: The what

This report presents the findings of a survey conducted in Spring, 2013.

There were 480 respondents with 11 countries represented.

Introduction: Who administered the survey

CDSS Contra Dance Task Group:

The task group is comprised of volunteers plus one CDSS staff member. It works independently of CDSS staff but with their encouragement and input.

Who we are:

- Lynn Ackerson (El Cerrito, CA)
- Emily Addison (Ottawa, ONT)
- David Chandler (Metuchen, NJ)
- Martha Edwards (St. Louis, MO)
- Lisa Greenleaf (Bolton, MA)
- Chris Page (San Diego, CA)
- Louise Siddons (Stillwater, OK)
- Mary Wesley (Lincoln, VT)

The CDSS contra dance task group was created in April 2012 to:

- Explore what CDSS offers to contra dance callers, musicians, dancers, and organizers.
- Explore what CDSS could and/or should offer (or support as others offer it)
- Explore the question "What does contra dancing need?" and whether CDSS is the place to provide it or not.

We decided to start with a survey of callers.

Objectives of the survey:

- Learn what contra dance callers need. Find out what challenges callers face, resources they find beneficial, and additional resources that would be helpful.

Additional considerations:

- Survey a diverse population, with a particular interest in (1) callers from more isolated areas and (2) beginning/novice callers in addition to established callers.
- Given our mandate, we decided to focus primarily on contra dance calling rather than expanding to include English country dance, square dance, family/community dance, etc. We know that these are areas of need but felt as though we couldn't do all styles of dance justice including contra if we were collecting that much information.

Outcomes arising from the survey:

- A summary of results has been made (i.e., this document) as well as an abstract.
- Raw data and task group summaries have been kept for future analysis.
- Recommendations have been made for 'next steps' coming out of the survey.

2. Study Description

Developed through input from the whole task group in consultation with CDSS staff

Contained 37 questions (e.g., multiple choice and fill-in questions)

Focus:

- Demographics
- How callers learn to call
- Challenges currently facing callers
- Resources currently being used by callers
- Needed future resources

Survey was open May 1 – June 1, 2013

Statistical data analysis:

- Basic descriptive statistics provided by Survey Monkey.

Written response analysis:

- Questions were divided among the task group members and each was charged with looking for emerging themes and summarizing findings.

Reporting:

- The report drafted by two team members with feedback provided by all members.
- Suggestions for next steps were developed as a whole group.

Implementation:

- Our task group includes many members with expertise in surveys, statistical analysis etc. However, we had somewhat limited time for design, testing and analysis.
- Approach to analysis of written responses was different for each task group member.
- Data analysis focused on finding key results that we can take action on rather than exhausting the data for all possible responses.

Target groups:

- One of our particular goals was to survey newer callers in addition to experienced callers. We had a small percentage of newer callers respond to the survey. However, we are satisfied with the results as we asked all to talk about the process of learning to call.
- Another of our particular goals was to survey callers in isolated communities. Given the demographic information collected, we couldn't clearly identify isolated vs. more densely populated dance communities. However, we were still able to see patterns of differing challenges and needs based upon how respondents completed written responses.

3. Demographics:

Who participated in the survey?

Who: Age & gender

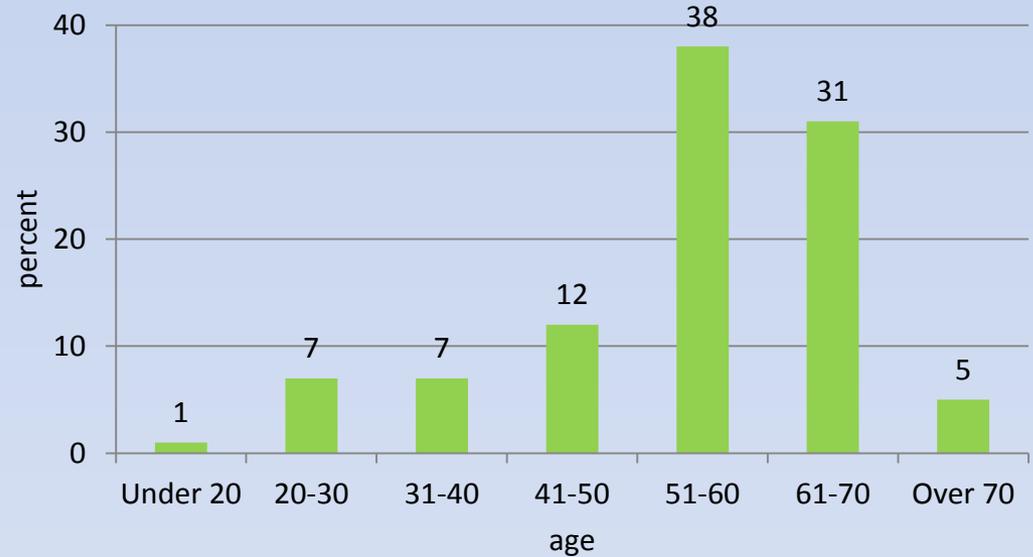
Age:

- ~75% ages 50+
- 8% ages 30 and under

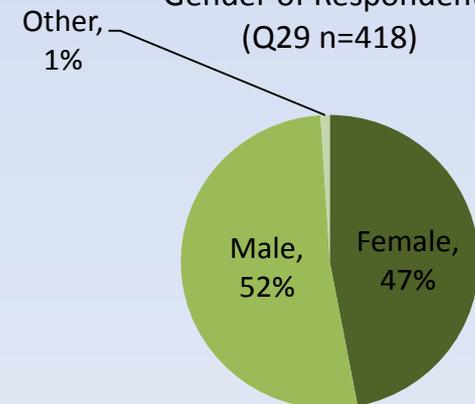
Gender:

- Roughly equal female/male

Age of Respondents
(Q28 n=418)



Gender of Respondents
(Q29 n=418)



Who: Geography (i.e., primary residence)

By Country:

300 USA
22 Canada
15 Denmark
13 Australia
10 England
2 New Zealand
2 Germany
1 Netherlands
1 Switzerland
1 Sweden
1 Czech Republic

By State:

2 Alabama
2 Arizona
6 Arkansas
31 California
5 Colorado
3 Connecticut
1 Delaware
2 DC
13 Florida
10 Georgia
1 Hawaii
2 Idaho
4 Illinois
2 Indiana
4 Iowa
1 Kansas
7 Kentucky
1 Louisiana
8 Maine
9 Maryland
18 Massachusetts
6 Michigan
3 Minnesota
12 Missouri
5 Montana
1 Nebraska
10 New Hampshire
7 New Jersey
3 New Mexico
22 New York
15 North Carolina
5 Ohio
4 Oklahoma
13 Oregon
11 Pennsylvania
1 Rhode Island
2 South Carolina
5 Tennessee
10 Texas
2 Utah
8 Vermont
5 Virginia
10 Washington
2 West Virginia
6 Wisconsin

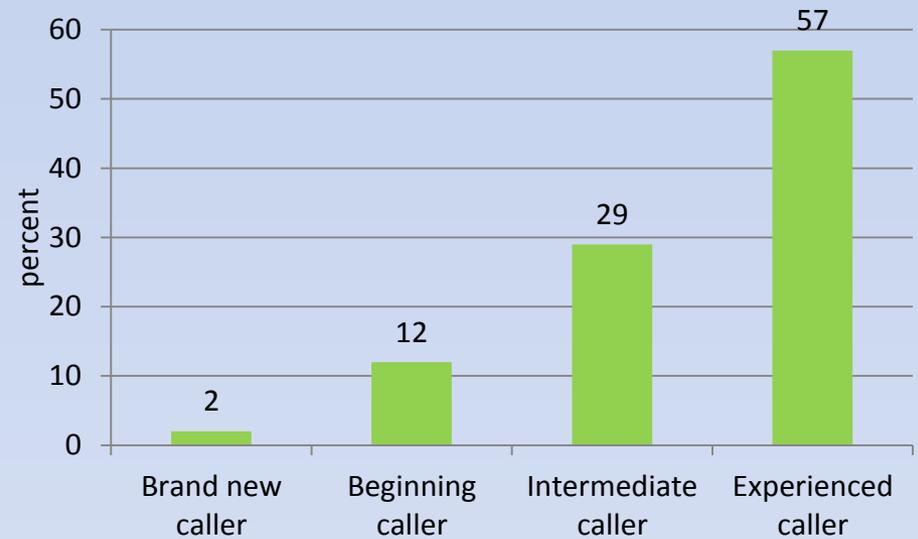
By Province:

2 Alberta
4 British Columbia
1 Manitoba
2 Nova Scotia
11 Ontario
2 Quebec

Self-identification of calling experience:

- About 3/5 of participants identified themselves as an experienced caller
- About 1/3 identified themselves as an intermediate caller
- About 15% identified themselves as a brand new or beginning caller
- A few callers' comments reflected that there was some ambiguity in this question (e.g., 'experienced but not pro class'; 'calling a long time but not in the experienced class') (Q2)

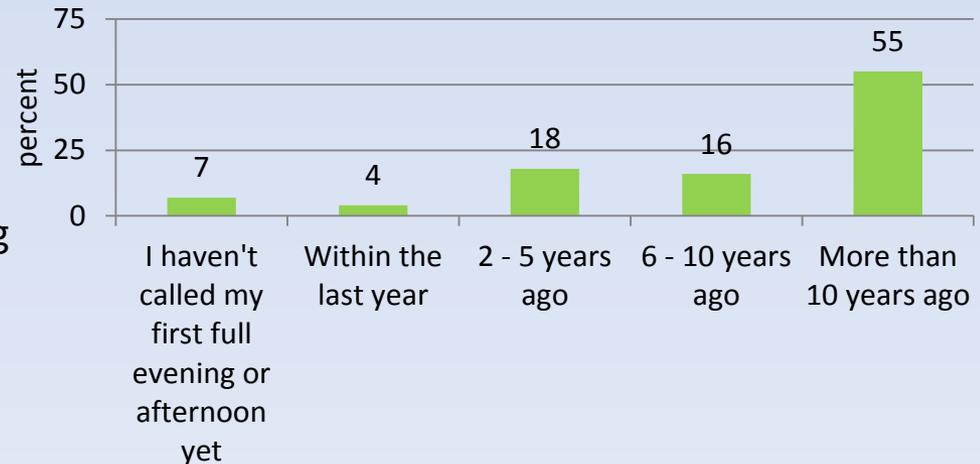
Self-identification re. calling experience level
(Q2 n=478)



Number of years since started calling:

- The majority of callers started 10+ years ago
- About 1/3 of callers started 2-10 years ago
- About 10% haven't yet called or started calling in the last year

When did you call your first evening or afternoon of contras?
(Q13 n=459)



Who: Calling frequency

Frequency of calling a full contra dance in one's home community:

- 32% call 5 or more times a year
- 25% call 3-4 times a year
- 28% call 1-2 times a year
- 8% call less than once a year
- 9% haven't (just started calling or have stopped calling)

PLUS 17% said they were the sole caller most of the time at their local dances.

Frequency of calling a full contra dance in another dance community:

- 28% call 5 or more times a year
- 15% call 3-4 times a year
- 21% call 1-2 times a year
- 12% call less than once a year
- 11% haven't (just started calling or have stopped calling)
- 14% other

**We looked at the data more closely:
Only 20% call 10+ dances a year**

Satisfaction with the frequency of calling opportunities:

- 43% are calling less than they would like
- 2% are calling more than they would like
- 54% are calling 'about right'

Who: 'Home Dance' context

10% said that they **don't really have a home dance.**

10% said that a **majority of their dancers were under 30.**

35% said that their **dance attendance** has been increasing this year WHILE 17% said that their **dance attendance has been declining** this year.

35% said the majority of their dancers were **highly experienced.**

30% said the majority of their dancers were **relatively inexperienced** AND 29% said that **more than ¼ of their dancers are new** at every dance.

53% said that there are a **number of other contra dances within a 1-2 hour drive.**

11% said that regional 'special' dances or weekends were **strong competition** for their local dance.

Callers were asked to describe the **size of crowd** they typically call for at a 'regularly scheduled contra dance'.

- 10% typically call to less than 20 people
- 29% typically call to 20-40 people
- 32% typically call to 41-60 people
- 32% typically call to 61-99 people
- 14% typically call to at least 100 people
- 22% typically call to a variety of sizes

Basic demographics:

- A large majority of survey respondents were over the age of 50.
- While the majority of respondents self-identified as being an ‘experienced caller’ and/or had over 10+ years of experience, there was a substantial number of brand new and beginning callers who participated.
- The vast majority of respondents were from the US. Other countries represented by multiple respondents included Canada, Denmark, Australia, and England. 45 US states as well as 6 Canadian provinces were represented.

Callers are working in a wide range of contexts:

- Many have multiple dances close by; many others do not.
- Some call to a highly experienced crowd; many others call to a crowd of mostly inexperienced dancers and/or a large number of beginners each time.
- 39% typically call to a crowd of fewer than 40 people. Only 46% are regularly calling to crowds of 61+ dancers while 14% of those regularly call to crowds of 100+ dancers.

Callers have widely varying opportunities to call:

- Most respondents, even those identified as experienced, are calling a relatively small number of dances a year. While 20% of respondents call 10 or more times, about one third of respondents call a maximum of 2 times a year.
- Over 40% would like to be calling more.

4. Challenges callers face

Challenges: What challenges callers face

385 individuals commented on challenges they currently face as a caller. (Q12)

Six common responses emerged, varying by callers' experiences and aspirations:

Limited opportunity to call:

- Few dances in the area
- Too many callers in the area
- Especially hard as a beginning caller to improve without live practice
- Hard to break in with tight competition for dance weekends and high profile dances
- Organizers booking 'out-of-town talent', making it hard for local talent to get hired
- Organizers booking young callers ('the next new thing') over established callers

Issues around programming an evening:

- How to call for a mixed level of dancers or for dances where there are always newcomers
- How to teach style effectively
- How to determine appropriate dances/choreography for different crowds

How to market and promote oneself:

- Wanting a resource list of dance events by area, including type of dance (adult, family, community) and contact information

Community Issues:

- General lack of style (e.g., timing) in favor of flourishes and fancy moves
- Demands for increasingly complicated dances and only contemporary contras (e.g., no chestnuts or other formations)
- Dealing with some know-it-all or rude dancers as well as the selfish attitude of some dancers

Working with the band:

- Understanding tune choices
- Working with unfamiliar bands
- Calling techno

Burn out:

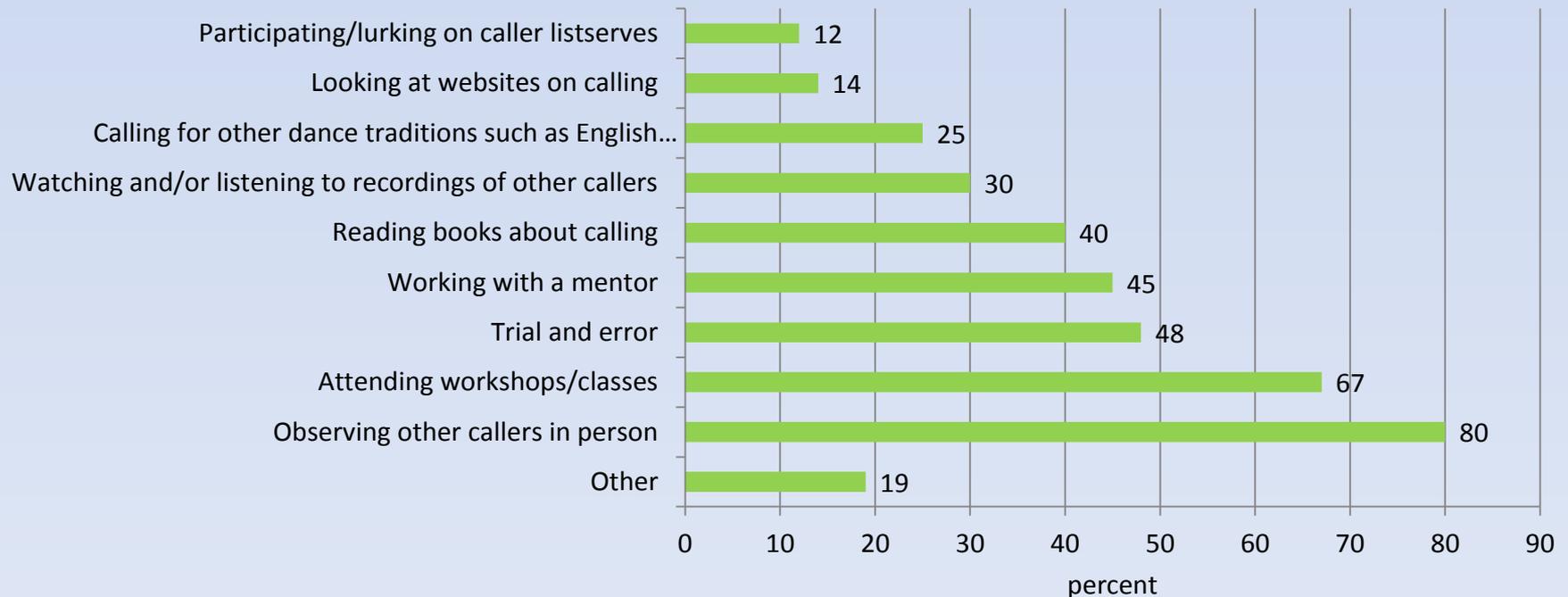
- Wanting to dance more
- Being tired of low pay and too much travel
- Being tired of doing all the set up
- Needing new repertoire

5. Starting to call: Resources & process

Callers were asked how they learned the basic mechanics of calling:

The vast majority (4/5) learned through observing other callers in person. Attending workshops and classes are also very popular approaches to learning (2/3). Still, many other methods were used showing that individual callers learn in multiple ways.

How callers learned the basic mechanics of calling contras - choose all that apply
 (e.g., calling ahead of figure; counts for each part of dance)
 (Q14 n=455)



Starting to call: How callers learned the basics

220 callers detailed how they learned the basics. Common responses included: (Q14)

Books – common titles being:

- Tony Parkes' *Contra Dance Calling*
- Larry Jennings' books (*primarily Zesty Contras*)
- Don Armstrong's *Caller Teacher Manual*
- Ted Sannella's *Balance & Swing*
- David Kaynor's *Calling for Beginners by Beginners*

Calling/leading in other traditions and then moving over to contra:

(e.g., English Country Dance, international folk, one-night-stands, morris, Scottish, aerobics, Australian bush dance, Irish ceili, Modern Western Square Dance)

Workshops and classes:

(e.g., Pinewoods, JC Campbell Folk School, Augusta Heritage Weekend, individual callers)

Other common responses included:

- Having mentors
- Attending local callers group meetings and practices
- Studying recordings of callers or by observing callers
- Practicing solo at home or in the car to recorded music
- Trial and error
- Being a musician
- Dancing

A few callers mentioned the following:

- Practicing with friends
- Diagramming dances
- Calling at open-mic/guest spots
- Calling while in line on the dance floor
- Family connections

Starting to call: How callers first gained experience

Callers were asked how they first gained experience calling.

- The most common approach to gaining experience was through guest slots of 1-2 dances during someone else's evening of programming (2/3 did this).
- Other approaches such as calling in workshops or at open mics were also common.

How callers first gained experience calling - choose all that apply
(Q15 n=423)



129 callers also wrote about how they first gained experience. (Q15)

Common responses included:

- Organizing their own dance event (e.g., dance series, one dance, a dance with a group of friends, adult education class)
- Calling individual contras within other traditions (e.g., international folk dance, ceilidhs)
- Calling one night stands (e.g., private parties, school events, community dances)
- Sharing evenings with other callers
- Starting directly with full evenings
- Less common responses included but were not limited to:
 - Running beginner workshops
 - Being a musician in a band and doing single calling slots

Starting to call: Mentorship

268 callers wrote about what they found most helpful in being mentored. Below are the most common responses. (Q17)

Teaching/learning:

- Receiving feedback on calling performance
- Receiving help with the teaching language for figures and walk throughs
- Receiving programming advice
- Being able to talk about music/band details
- Having questions answered by phone or email
- Being able to attend official workshops or classes
- Having informal discussions on various calling topics
- Having a role model to observe

Moral support:

- Receiving encouragement and support
- Learning qualities of a good caller (e.g., having fun, caller responsibilities, keeping a good attitude)

Gig support:

- Benefiting from guest slots during another caller's gig
- Help with networking to find gigs as a new caller

Other:

- Receiving dances/cards as well as suggestions for good dances

Starting to call: Other feedback

When asked, 220 callers took the opportunity to respond regarding any additional thoughts on learning to call. Common responses included: (Q20)

- Feedback from other callers is usually more helpful than feedback from dancers
- Get out and observe other callers – note what does and doesn't work
- Learn to take in feedback, cull out the important points, and not beat yourself up
- If you're not a musician already, become one - it will greatly help your calling
- The attitude of your community is so important (e.g., are they very supportive or very critical?)
- There's always more to learn

Starting to call: Summary

Learning the basics:

- There's no one way to learn.
- Observing other callers was by far the most common response as a way to learn. This was followed by attending workshops and classes. However, learning by trial and error, working with a mentor and consulting various books were among other methods commonly used.
- Other less-common ways of learning were also mentioned such as being a musician and calling other forms of dance.
- In terms of mentorship, respondents provided insight into how mentors can support new callers through specific teaching/learning opportunities, moral support, and help in finding gigs.

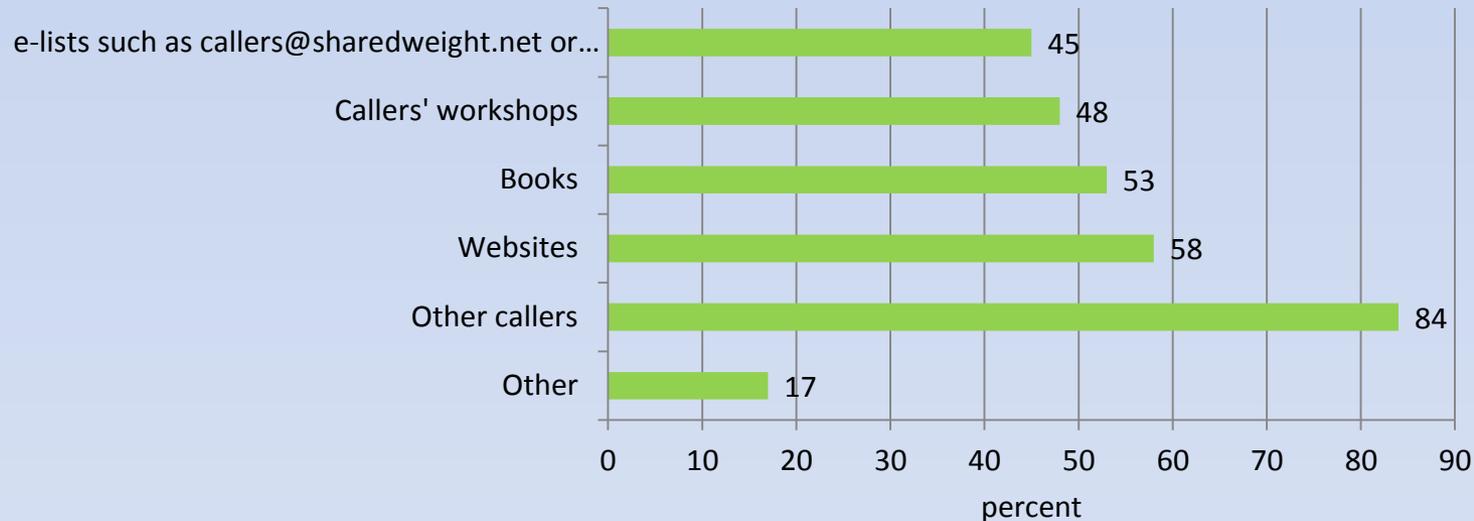
Gaining experience:

- There's no one way to gain experience.
- Having the opportunity to call 1-2 dances during another caller's gig was by far the most common way in which respondents first gained experience. Respondents also gained experience by calling at workshops and open mics.
- There were many other less common ways in which callers also gained experience such as organizing their own dances.

6. Current resources

Callers most frequently go directly to each other for information. However, they also use other resources.

Where callers currently go to get information about calling
(Q9 n=465)



282 callers wrote about ways they get information about calling: (Q9)

- Watching callers at dances
- Collecting dances at a dance
- Going to personal caller websites (e.g., Seth Tepfer, Rick Mohr, Chris Page, David Smukler)
- Using other online resources (e.g., CDSS, Northern Junket, YouTube)
- Reading books (e.g., New England Dancing Masters, Zesty Contrasts, On the Beat with Ralph Sweet)
- Reading magazines/Publications (e.g., The American Dance Circle, CDSS news)
- Attending callers workshops (e.g., Pourparler)
- Keeping up with e-lists (e.g., Shared Weight, Trad-Callers Yahoo Group, Callerlab)
- Other (e.g., attending local caller meetings)

Resources: Which are most helpful and why?

357 callers told us which resources they find the most helpful and why. (Q10)

Overwhelmingly, callers prefer person-to-person interaction and being able to talk or interact with other callers in formats such as workshops or caller groups.

Callers also like online forums but some are frustrated by individuals who dominate or ‘rant’ a lot.

Callers repeated resources listed in Q9 including but not limited to: books, websites, Ralph Page Dance Legacy Weekend syllabi, list-serves, and YouTube videos.

For resources specific to individual dances, callers liked details such as the following to be included:

- Tips for calling
- How the dance came to be/history
- Possible glitches that might come up when teaching/calling/dancing a particular dance

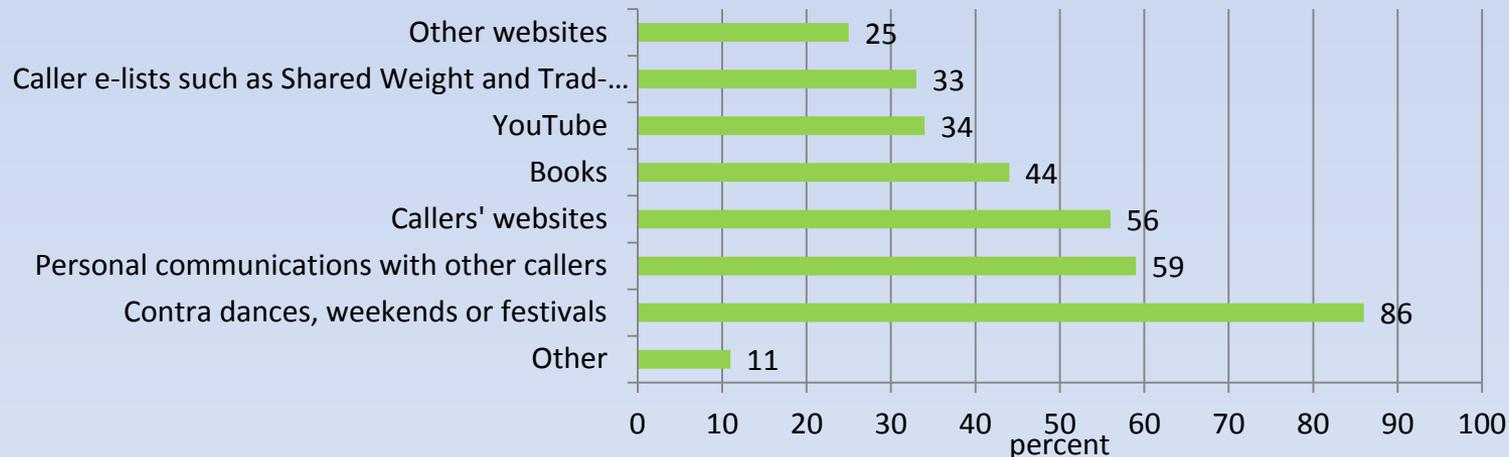
Differing needs:

- Newer callers tended to want material on the basic mechanics of calling
- More experienced callers tended to want resources for new dances/choreography. Some also commented that most caller workshops are geared towards beginners and that they would like higher-level offerings.

Resources: Finding new choreography

Overwhelmingly, callers collect new dances through attending dance events. However, there are many other approaches they also use to find new choreography.

Where callers look for new contra dance choreography to call
(Q11 n=468)



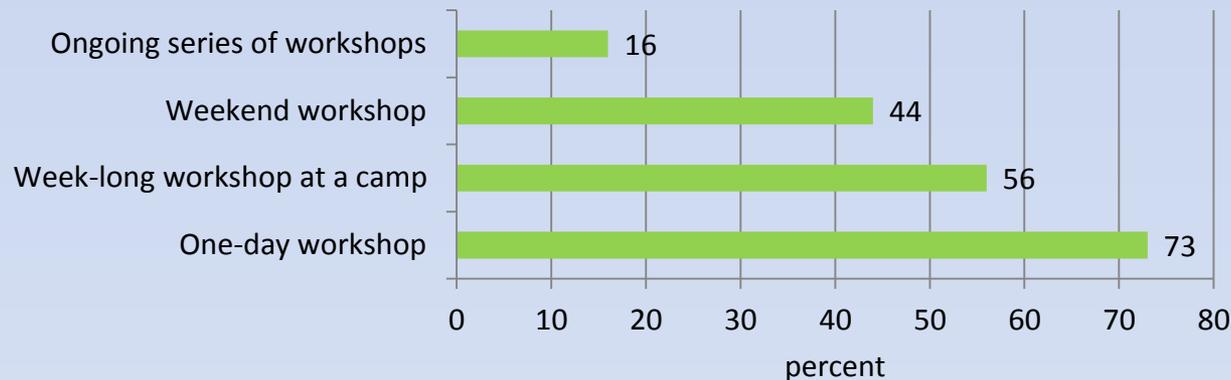
263 callers spelled out their particular resources for choreography : (Q11)

- Websites of specific choreographers (e.g., Rick Mohr, Cary Ravitz, Chris Page, Bill Olson)
- Websites with multiple choreographers (e.g., Michael Dyck, Cambridgefolk)
- Books (e.g., by Larry Jennings, Tom Hinds, Gene Hubert; some books are out of print)
- Writing their own dances (many mentioned this)
- Communication with other callers at events or via email

Resources: Types of workshops

One-day events were the most common type of workshop that callers attended. However, over half of respondents had also attended a week-long caller workshop.

Whether attended any of the following types of workshops – choose all that apply
(Q18 n=338)



95 callers also wrote about other types of caller workshops they have attended: (Q18)

The most common responses were a single session (1+ hours) at a weekend dance camp or at a festival.

Other responses included:

- Limited series of weekly or monthly classes
- 1-hr daily as part of a week-long camp
- Callerlab

312 callers responded to what they find most helpful about workshops. (Q19)

Common responses included:

- Having the opportunity for camaraderie and discussion with other callers
- Having the opportunity to call on the microphone
- Receiving specific personal feedback
- Being able to learn from an expert
- Watching others call
- Learning mechanics (e.g., AABB format of dances; # of counts each figure takes; cueing ahead of the dance phrase)
- Learning how to improve the teaching of dances and/or figures
- Focusing on specific questions in more depth/immersion at longer camps

Several callers complained about having brand new callers in workshops unless they are advertised for new callers as the workshop leader often spends most of the time explaining basic mechanics.

There is a wide range of resources that callers are using. Just a few examples are:

- Other callers themselves (e.g., email, in person, watching at a dance)
- Various e-lists
- Websites, YouTube, books, other publications
- Workshops

Regarding workshops specifically:

- They are organized by a wide range of individuals and groups in many different formats.
- Most popular formats tend to be one-day workshops or week-long camps although other formats are used as well.

There are many ways that callers are learning the various complexities of calling.

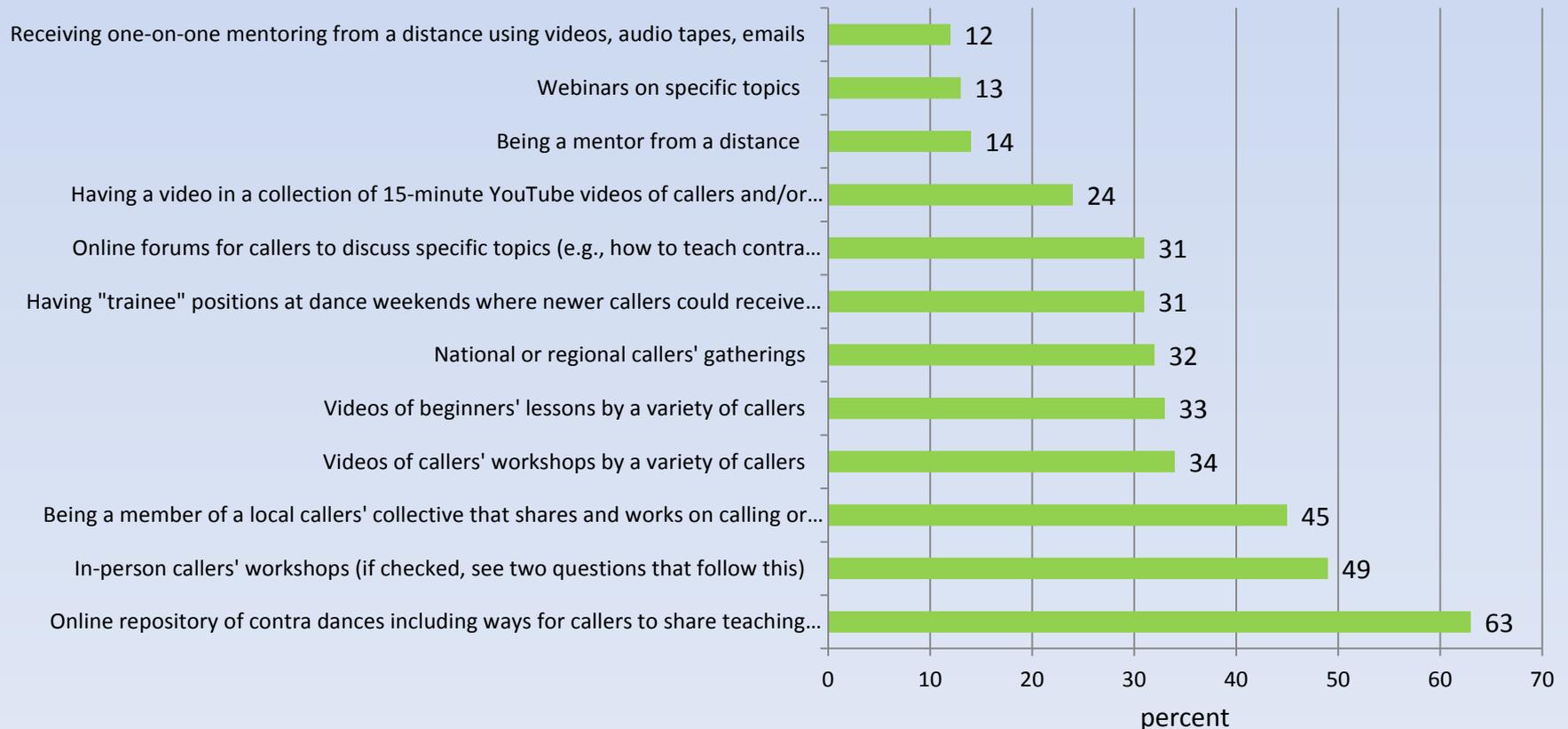
7. Looking ahead: What callers need

Needs: What would be most helpful?

Callers identified a wide variety of tools that would be most helpful to them as a caller.

- Approximately 2/3 of callers expressed interest in an online repository of dances including ways for callers to share teaching and calling tips
- About 1/2 of the respondents wanted in-person workshops
- Many expressed interest in being various other supports

What would be most helpful to you as a caller - choose at most 5
(Q22 n=400)



Needs: What would be most helpful?

91 callers also provided written responses to what they would find most helpful. (Q22)

Common responses included:

- Don't reinvent the wheel (i.e., already getting great info and camaraderie through various resources).
- Caller collectives are very helpful. Recommend getting these started in new places.
- Like the idea of trainee or guest spots at dances or weekends.
- Want access to organized information (e.g., 100 dances that are tried and true).
- Caution against the slip towards standardizing how things are done by using training videos/manuals/teacher training as with Scottish Country Dance and Modern Western Square Dance.
- Multiple concerns about the effectiveness of mentoring at a distance with a strong preference for live one-on-one connection.
- Want to find ways to connect music and calling (e.g., class on music for callers, list of adjectives a musician would associate with a particular tune); also, learning effective use of one's voice.
- It is difficult to collaborate when living in regions with small numbers of callers and/or large distances. Suggest exchanges or connecting with callers.
- Interested in helping mentor others.
- A few requested a system to connect organizers and callers (e.g., in-person gatherings, list of people who arrange tours).

Needs: Most important resource not available

237 callers commented on ‘What is the most important caller resource that is not currently available?’: (Q27)

Overwhelmingly, the most common resource identified as not being currently available is a **single location that collects all of the pre-existing online resources, linking to them from one place**. Many respondents pointed out that while there are videos, databases of dances, calendars of dances, and more, they can be hard to find and many people do not know about them.

Other common resources identified as not currently available include:

- **Mentoring and/or feedback:** Callers wrote that they lacked feedback and/or someone to mentor them. While respondents were most interested in local supports, some were open to long-distance mentoring.
- **Local caller workshops:** Some callers acknowledged that while the best way to improve as a caller was to actually call, there is a lack of opportunities to call and/or gigs don't seem to be the right place to practice tricky/new dances. A regular caller workshop was seen as an appealing solution to this problem although many felt that they didn't have enough callers in their immediate vicinity to make this viable.
- **Other local callers:** Related to the above point, many wrote about not having other callers living close by and that the lack of a community resulted in respondents feeling isolated.
- **Opportunities to call:** Many callers felt limited by the opportunities available in their immediate vicinity, both in terms of the skill level of the dancers and the types of dances the community was interested in. For example, callers may be interested in chestnuts but their community may want only modern choreography; or most commonly, a caller may want to call more challenging dances but their community can only support beginning-to-intermediate dances.

Needs: What to include in a comprehensive web resource

Callers identified a wide range of ideas to include in a comprehensive contra dance web resource:

- 3/4 of the callers identified the need for a database of contra dance instructions (choreography) with options for discussion and adding teaching tips
- 2/3 of the callers wanted links to lists of contra dance instructions (choreography)
- 1/2 of the callers wanted links to YouTube videos of contra dances
- And still much more was identified as important (e.g., videos of callers workshops, calendar of dances across N Am)

If there were a comprehensive contra dance web resource, which 5 items would be most important to you? (Q26 n=411)



51 callers provided written responses on what would be helpful in a web resource. (Q26)

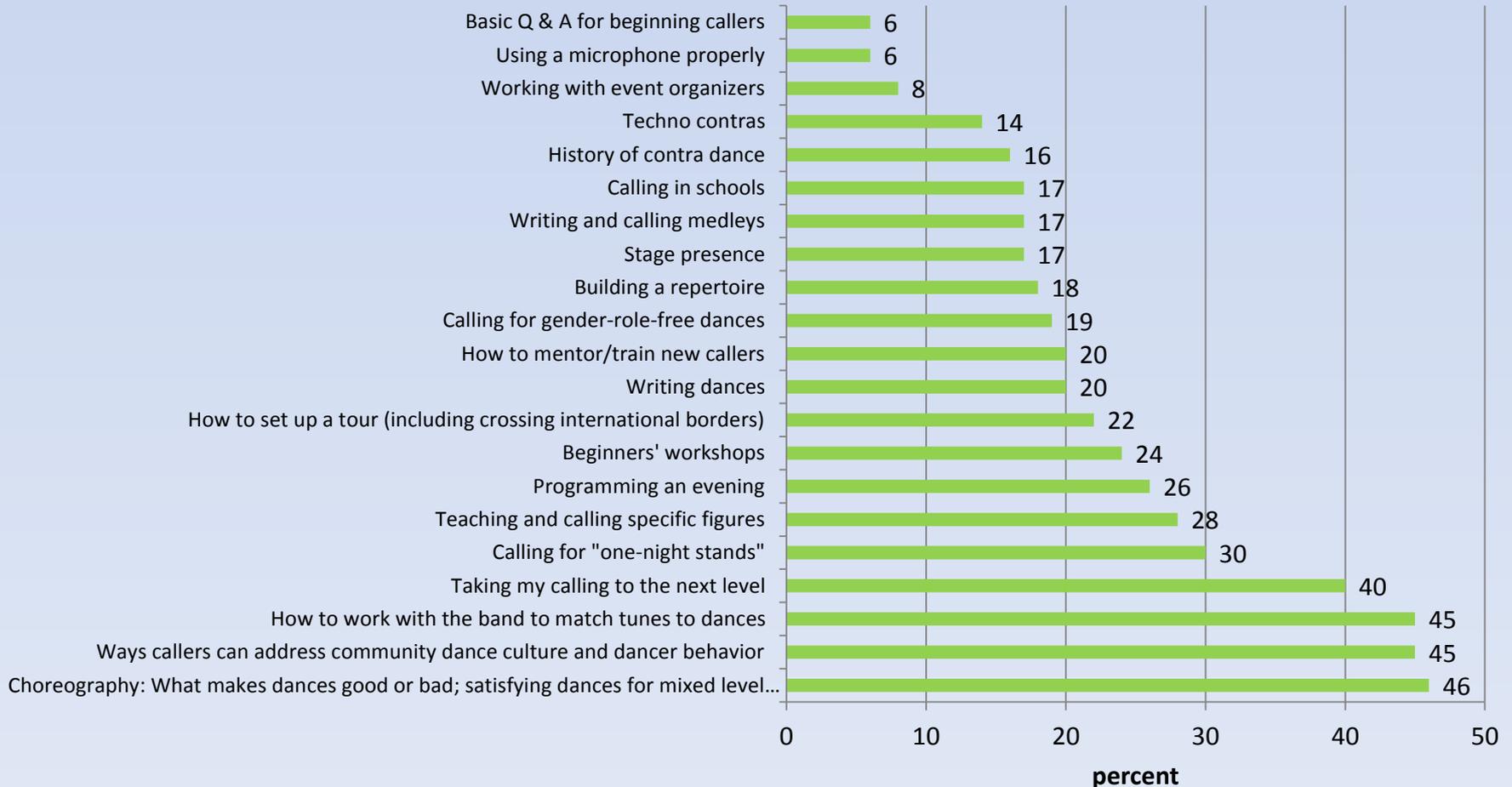
Many ideas were mentioned only a few times each. Below are some of these ideas:

- Inclusion of more information in the dance database (level, type, noted figures, choreographer/trad, related dances, history of dances)
- Directory of dance events including contact information, requirements for calling there, and local procedures for selecting callers
- How to find, recruit, and train musicians who have never played for dances
- Videos of teaching/walkthroughs/first few times through a dance
- Dance etiquette and how to teach style
- Support for existing resources, not just links

Needs: Topics for online discussions or webinars

Callers were interested in a wide variety of topics for online discussions or webinars. However, no one topic was of interest to over half of the respondents.

If you want to participate in online discussions or webinars, what 5 topics would interest you?
(Q25 n=349)



57 callers wrote about what topics would be of interest for online discussions or webinars. (Q25)

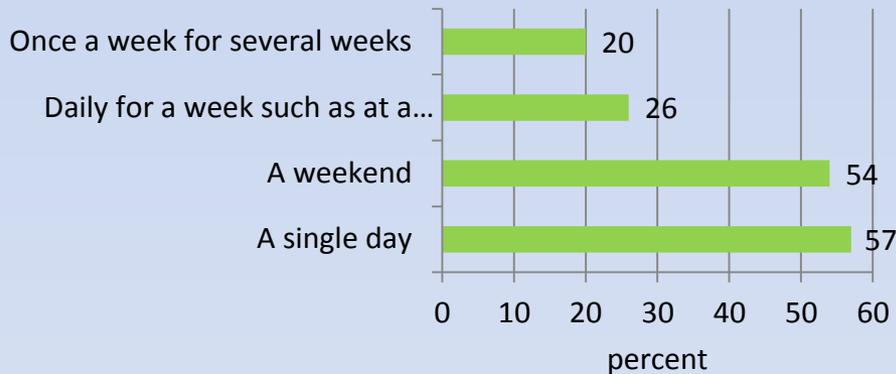
Ideas were only mentioned a few times each. Some of the suggested ideas included:

- Square dance calling
- Managing voice endurance/voice lessons/improving voice quality
- Effective teaching and calling language
- Working with the band (e.g., controlling band tempo, encouraging bands to relate to dancers)
- Working with problematic egos in the caller community
- Attracting younger dancers
- Teaching good dancing skills from the stage

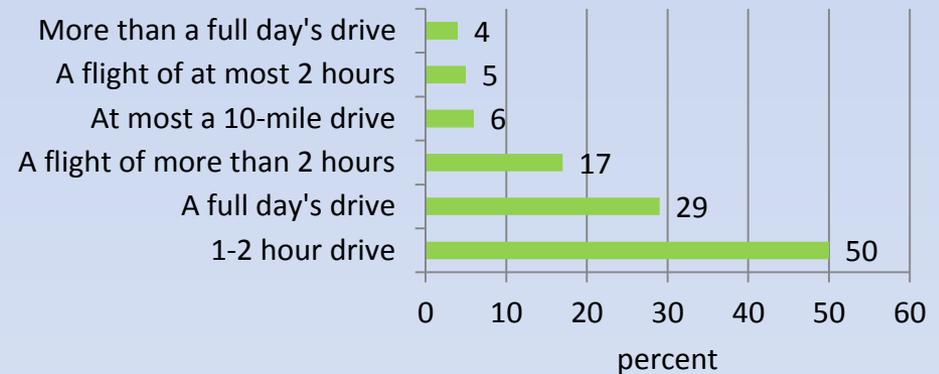
Needs: Caller workshop format

When asked about workshops, most callers preferred the idea of a 1-day or weekend workshop within a 1-2 hour drive from home.

Workshop format(s) that would work best for participants (Q23 n=205)



Farthest distance would travel if want 'in-person workshops', choose 1 (Q24 n=191)



46 callers wrote about what formats of workshops would work best for them. (Q23)

There was no unanimity among responses but a few callers mentioned the following:

- Any format would work, or has worked
- An intensive weekend format is good
- Once-a-month format with a chance to practice in between would be helpful
- A week of calling-camp would be great. However, cost, and to a lesser extent time, are impediments to attending.
- It would be good to have workshops geared specifically toward more experienced callers

Many current needs were mentioned by callers:

- The most commonly mentioned resource that callers felt wasn't currently available was a well-advertised, centralized resource to collate all available information. Related, participants mentioned supporting and augmenting existing resources, and expressed concern that we not reinvent the wheel.
- A very large percentage of callers expressed interest in an online repository of dances that would include ways for callers to share tips on how to teach and call the dance. Many callers provided specific suggestions on format and content for such a database.
- Workshops and national or regional callers gatherings were of interest to callers as were online discussion forums. However, there was relatively little interest in things like one-on-one mentoring from a distance or webinars.
- Callers liked the idea of working together as a group (collectives) or having the opportunity to be mentored/to mentor face-to-face.
- About 1/3 of callers liked the idea of having 'trainee' positions at dance weekends for newer callers.
- There was interest in online resources such as videos of caller workshops, beginner lessons, and videos of specific dances.

Needs: Summary (continued)

Many other topics were of interest to callers, not all of which can be listed here. A few examples of topics that a third or more of respondents were interested in are:

- A list of CDs with dance-length tracks
- Historical notes about contra dancing (e.g., video/audiotapes of caller and musician interviews, essays on historical events)
- Calendar of contra dances across North America
- Tips on calling one night stands
- Ideas on how to take one's calling to the next level
- Ways to work with the band
- Ways callers can address community dance culture and dance behavior
- Choreography: What makes dances good or bad; satisfying dances for mixed level crowds

In written responses, some callers also suggested other topics that we hadn't listed in the survey questions such as calling square dances, vocal technique, and teaching good dancing skills from stage.

8. Wrap up: Next steps

Callers want to know about new initiatives:

Of the 88% of participants who answered this question, 94% wanted to be notified about new calling resources and projects.

Many callers expressed an interest in helping make various initiatives happen.

This included:

- Helping with the online dance database
- Creating/curating video
- Being a mentor
- And to a lesser extent, ideas such as developing training materials, setting up a list of dances throughout North America (e.g., calendar; how to contact communities; setting up a network for community barn dances)

Wrap Up: Priorities for the task group

Through survey responses, participants raised so many great ideas that could be acted on. Using this information, the task group created a priority list and sent it as a recommendation to the CDSS board and staff. Completion of these items will depend on the priorities, funding, and time of the CDSS board, staff, and the task group. The priorities are:

- Create a resource on the CDSS website that organizes and links to as many external contra dance resources as possible. This would be a launching pad of sorts, helping callers connect to all of the great resources that already exist.
- Explore the development of an interactive dance database including contra dances, family dances, barn dances, other formations such as triplets
- Create a toolkit ('how to') on developing a callers collective in one's own community
- Create a toolkit ('how to') on marketing yourself as a caller
- Post videos online of caller workshops from around the continent
- Post videos online of several callers teaching and calling the same dance – for several dances
- Get permission to put out-of-print contra dance books on CDSS website

Interested in helping out?

If you are interested in helping with any of these initiatives, you can contact the CDSS staff at volunteers@cdss.org. Please put "Contra Dance Task Group" in the subject of the email.

Also, state which item you are interested in and how you think you may be able to contribute.