

Only the most basic skating vocabulary is used as these lessons are not to teach skaters how to skate but to help them transfer what they are learning in their regular ballet lessons onto the ice. It is important for both the teacher and the skaters to understand that even though the skating technique itself will be very basic in these lessons, the addition of the details of Classical ballet elements, musicality, form and flow of movement will be challenging. Skaters in general are not used to high levels of prolonged concentration on “slow” elements or the core control need to sustain these movements... so the lessons are quite demanding from this standpoint alone.

The primary purpose of the lessons is to:

- Incorporate Classical ballet port de bras, épaulement, extensions and flow of movement into basic skating elements.
- Provide a time of connection with the students to discuss concerns in transferring concepts and techniques – often questions don’t arise until the skaters are back on the ice
- Work on musicality in conjunction with velocity – a very different concept for off-ice dance teachers!
- Give the skaters an awareness of how being in their element can bring back certain “bad habits” which were addressed off-ice but now need to be addressed on the ice.
- Provide a time for experimentation and movement improvisation.
- Give the ballet instructor an opportunity to observe and work with the skaters on-ice (a vital element in teaching skaters)

\*\*It is advisable to read the following section thoroughly before attempting to teach these classes\*\*

### **Figure Skating 101 for the Ballet Instructor**

It is very important that the ballet instructor understand the basic language of the figure skater. Ballet will not translate easily otherwise and the students will become frustrated if the teacher is not at least somewhat acquainted with the principles included in this section. I highly recommend that the serious ballet instructor of figure skaters observe and even take several on-ice lessons, ask many questions and take notes so that you become familiar not only with the terminology but gain an appreciation for the feel of the movement itself. Book recommendations are also listed in the appendix.

The importance of edges

Figure skating blades have a concave edge to them which provides skaters with two distinct knife-type surfaces to skate with which cut into the ice forming patterns. Thus the original term “figure” skating as every movement makes a specific pattern on the ice. Because skaters are essentially always skating on a curve, either going counterclockwise or clockwise, there are considered to be eight blade edges:

**Right Forward Outside edge; Right Forward Inside edge**  
**Right Backward Outside edge; Right Backward Inside edge**  
**Left Forward Outside edge; Left Forward Inside edge**  
**Left Backward Outside edge; Left Backward Inside edge**