



Beyond the Stage -Dance Training Remedies Instant Gratification

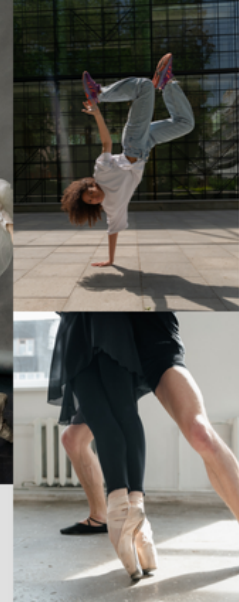
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*Prioritizing the holistic wellness
of our next generation through
mindset, community and
resilience.*



There are so many reasons that people invest in dance. For some, it's the spectacle of performance or the escape through entertainment. For others, it's the marriage of athleticism and artistry, and the sense of community. Regardless of what lures you into the dance world, dance inherently gives back to its community in the most beautiful ways imaginable.

More specifically, dance teaches a multitude of life lessons and skills, otherwise known as transferrable skill sets. Transferrable skill sets are built through deliberate practice and become learned characteristics/qualities that can be applied outside of the dance setting. In our last blog post, we discussed how the mental, physical, and artistic abilities of dancers are constantly evolving and expanding.

This month, we are talking about instant gratification and how dance training actually helps reverse this cultural mentality. Instant gratification can be summarized as the "I want it now and I can have it now" phenomenon. This mindset directly influences the way young minds see and understand the world around them, especially as it relates to school/learning. For example, let's say a child is struggling to understand fractions in math. While this seems like a normal situation, the child is more likely to negatively interpret it as a deficit in their abilities or self-esteem.

You can't blame them! The instant gratification culture holds them to the standard that they should understand right away. The good news is that dance inherently teaches remedies to the instant gratification mindset: the virtues of patience and persistence, critical thinking, and observational learning.

Every dance style has its own vocabulary or "language" that is used to articulate the specific steps, and choreography. Like learning any language, this process doesn't happen overnight. Dancers are activating the left hemisphere of their brain (which is responsible for interpreting language and speech) in a novel way. So, what's the difference between learning a language and school and dance training? I'm glad you asked.

Dancers are simultaneously prompted to demonstrate steps or choreography upon hearing specific phrases or words. This activates more than one part of your brain at the same time! While the left part of your brain is trying to understand what the dance teacher is saying, your motor cortex is working to coordinate the actual movement. What's even better? Combining physical movement with a mental task improves memory and retention. While we may be asking dancers to multi-task, the good news is that it solidifies the new material.

We can't forget how central observational learning is in the dance studio. Dance instructors may not answer every question a dancer has, but rather encourage them to gather context clues, review the steps slowly, or look toward a peer; yet demonstrating another simple way to instill the virtue of patience and persistence in young learners.

Admittedly, the implications of this instant gratification exceed dance training and performance. But there's no denying that dance offers a remarkable intersection for young minds to approach any learning process in a more patient and compassionate manner.

