

# How to be a Successful Student

## DO YOU OWN YOUR DANCING, OR ARE YOU JUST RENTING IT?

From [www.usistd.org](http://www.usistd.org) (See Dance Techniques Articles link); written by Lori Woods-Gay

Over the years I've seen so many dancers look for the short cut or the quick fix to learning to dance.

More specifically there has been a trend over the past ten years or so to learn from the back end so to speak. Get a few basics under your belt then go to the coach and get your pre-choreographed routine. Dancers spend small fortunes on coaching, costumes etc. and learning what I call the "Rent a Routine". This is a short cut to get you out on the floor and be relatively competitive in the shortest amount of time.

*"Learning builds upon itself so basic principles must be solidified before more sophisticated understanding develops."*

One of the problems I see with this is that there are other couples on the floor and if you have no flexibility to lead or follow and alter your "routine" in any way that is when it becomes brawl room dancing instead of ballroom dancing and more worthy of the World Wrestling Federation than Dance Sport.

Maybe I'm overstating it a little. Learning choreographed routines is not totally wrong and does have some benefits. Let's face it, it would be boring to do nothing but basics until you got them right, it could take years and by then you would have quit.

What I do advocate is to find some balance between learning the basic root figures and doing choreographed routines. By all means do the fancy stuff; kicks, drops, spins and have some fun but balance it out with some regular work on the basics and root figures. Take training in the basics as well as your open work. Perhaps start your practices with only basics for the first 15 minutes to half hour then go on to practice your choreographed routine. If you do this I guarantee you will see an improvement in your open work and your partnership.

*"It's much easier to show off what you know than to find out what you don't know and work on it."*

I heard someone once say "in order to be successful you have to do the things you don't like to do" and for many dancers that is studying the basics. It's not glamorous and can be tedious at times, but it's so important if you hope to reach the top whether as an amateur or a professional. Otherwise you will always be the bridesmaid and never the bride or semi-finalist but never the finalist. The short cut very often ends up being a long cut or worse a dead end. If you don't have the basics and the fundamentals it will be transparent to the trained eye especially if you are on the floor next to the real deal, someone who has it all.

*"To be successful you have to do the things you don't like to do."*

With the right attitude effort and practice you will be sure to be successful. I wish you every success in your dancing and hope you find these points worth pondering.