



My Class Is  
Too Easy

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It's the start of Term 1, new teachers, new classes and lots of very excited students, happy to be back after the long six-week break. The start of a new year at our studio is always exciting! It's hard not to get caught up in the buzz of energy that flows through the studio walls!

Then comes Week 2. Students start to settle into their classes, teachers are working hard to learn student names and to gauge skill levels and class dynamics, I am rolling over a number of new studio procedures and our admin team are doing their best to juggle the flow of new enrolments that stream in during those first few weeks of term.

By the time we reach Week 3, I am waiting for the first of a handful of phone calls I'll get in relation to class enrolments. The words I will hear (and for the sake of this exercise we will call the child Mandy) are, "Mandy thinks the class is too easy for her." Yes. After two lessons, Mandy thinks the class is too easy. Sometimes "Mandy" is only in her first year of dance. Other times "Mandy" is an experienced dancer. Regardless of the situation, I always answer the same way, "I think it's best we give it a little more time as the teacher will be just getting to know where everyone is in terms of skill level within the class." Two short lessons is rarely enough time to judge whether a class is too simple for a student.

Sometimes a comment such as this is made by an experienced dancer. Normally, it happens when the child is one of the eldest students in the class and/or is more technically advanced. The fact of the matter is, though, that every class needs to have a "strongest" or "most experienced" dancer. Just because a child fits this category does not mean that it is time for them to move up a level. It is beneficial and important for children to experience being the youngest in the class as well as the eldest. The same goes for having a season of being the least experienced and the most experienced student in their class group. In fact, when I've had students tell me their class is too easy, I am very quick to remind them to ask themselves the following types of questions:

Are you perfecting each step?

Yes, I know you can do a posé arabesque but **how** are you really executing it?

Are you using your fondu?

Are you using resistance and stepping onto a turned out leg and fully stretching through your legs and feet?

What is your alignment like?

Are you keeping your back lifted?

The list goes on...

The fact of the matter is, like other studio owners, my staff are told to inform me if a class is too easy or too difficult for a student. So I know that if nothing is said to me by a staff member,

the majority of the time, the child is in the correct class. You can think of it this way too. A ballet student will learn to do a tendu very early on in their dancing journey; however, if they then go on to be a professional, they will not stop doing tendus but they **will** execute them to a much higher standard due to their many years of training. I know right now, that despite my years of experience, I could walk into an entry level ballet class and still get something out of it despite the simplicity of the exercises because I would be focusing on the finer details and the overall performance of everything.

Easy is not always a bad thing. Encourage your child to embrace the “easy” when it comes their way in a dance class and they will improve their dancing out of sight! Remind them not to be locked into the mentality that everything always needs to be new or advanced. Older skills need to be worked on and refined so that each child can become the best dancer they can possibly be.

**Rebecca Bickerton**  
**Director – Dance Stream Victoria**