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## Examinations

Just a few words that I hope might help parents and students understand some of our thoughts and reasoning regarding exam assessments and entries. I have written a little more about exams in general in our May Newsletter that we hope to publish on our web site later this evening. (I will post the link when it is available.)

As teachers, it is never easy assessing and making a final decision as to whether or not a student is ready for an upcoming exam session. It is important to us that your child is fully prepared for the exam, that they are confident about what they need to deliver and that they have mastered all of the skills required for that level.

We fully understand how disappointing it can be for the parents and the child if they are not entered for an exam, especially when others from the same peer group are. However, we also realise how stressful it can be for a child to enter an exam room and flounder because they are unsure or struggle to demonstrate the required work. We are also aware of what a devastating blow it could be to a child's confidence to fail an exam. Equally we cannot hold a child back who is ready simply because their peers are not.

Please remember that taking a dance exam is not a race or a competition. Children's progress isn't always steady or equal – Many are late learners and an early rapid progression through the grades is not necessarily a good indicator of future brilliance or talent. Often creativity, motivation, determination and a certain "twinkle in the eye" is a far better indicator of future dancing star.

There are many factors for us to consider when entering our students for exams. We are often faced with making some very tough decisions that we know may not always be favourable to parents or students but please know that we ALWAYS have your child's best interest at heart. If we do not enter them this time it is not because they are hopeless or talentless, they simply need a little more time.

It would be foolish and wrong of us to base our decision on what our heart tells us; we can only use our professional judgement and hope that you will respect that.

Thank you.

PS. Don't forget, for us to qualify as dance teachers we also had to go through many years of graded dance exams before taking our final teaching qualifications. We have experienced first-hand the disappointment of being told "Sorry, not this time." Personally I also remember how humiliated and devastated I was being the only one of my friends who failed their grade two tap exam (Yep, I really did!) I also remember how difficult it was for me to find my confidence again to be able to re-take it! – We've all been there, survived to tell the tale AND we all have careers in dance.

Debbie

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