

# One-Page Summary

## How to Outlast the Competition and Why it Matters

Often, the key to being successful, in almost any endeavor, is simply outlasting the competition. The way to do that? By cultivating resilience - the ability to both cope with and recover from adversity, setbacks, and/or chronic stressors. Studies show that educators can help their dancers develop this skill by creating a facilitative environment - one that offers both high challenge and high support.

## Classroom Exercise

Explain to students the importance of resilience, and that it doesn't mean the absence of adversity.

Then, give the class a challenging scenario. Maybe something like, "Sarah really wanted to win with her solo at competition, but she fell out of her turn sequence and didn't place." Divide students in groups and ask them if this were them how they would feel, who they could lean on for help, and what they could do to bounce back. Then, have groups share their answers and discuss their ideas as a class.



## Resilience and High Expectations

Have you ever heard of the pygmalion effect? This refers to the phenomenon of students living up to the expectations of their educators, so it is imperative that we have high expectations of each one of our students. Once those are established, we should ask our students to model that for themselves as well, so that this type of "high challenge" is not only being created for them but is also being created within them.

## Resilience and Appropriate Challenges

Research shows that when we as dance educators expect our students to learn skills within a time frame outside of what they are realistically able to accomplish, we place undue strains on our students' developing stress systems. Add to that the fact that we set them up to fail. So, instead, be sure to challenge them in ways that are achievable, and when they achieve the small goals on the way to those larger ones, make sure to celebrate those wins.

## Resilience and Control

Do your best to help your students control the controllables. We may not always be able to guarantee that every dancer in the room will land a clean double pirouette by the end of the year with us, but what we can guarantee is time within each class to work on them, to do strengthening exercises to help, to have anatomical discussions on the mechanics of pirouettes, and to reflect on how far we've come and what still lies ahead. By helping our dancers control what is controllable, we help support them in achieving the high challenges and expectations we set for them.