

Did I ever tell you my super embarrassing ballet story?

It happened when I was in 12th grade.

First of all, I don't know if you know this but... ballet is SUPER difficult. Professionals make it look easy, but it takes years and years of training to get good.

I guess I didn't know that when I was 17 years old, though... because I thought I could totally skip ballet 1 and jump to a ballet 2 class, despite never having taken a single dance class in my life.

In my mind, the idea of taking ballet 1 with a bunch of children was boring and beneath me. I wanted something "difficult." I wanted a challenge. So I asked the teacher if I could skip ballet 1 and join the ballet 2 class. Actually, I insisted.

She, being the professional that she was, graciously obliged.

"Come to class on Monday with the ballet 2 students, Stefanie," she said. "You can give it a shot and we'll go from there!"

I was so excited.

But then Monday came... and I will never forget the humiliation of trying to keep up with an advanced class that I was totally unprepared for. The music was too fast, my feet were too stiff, and my muscles were too weak.

At that point, I didn't need the teacher or anyone else to tell me what was so readily apparent-- I clearly was not ready for ballet 2, and it was naive of me to ever think I could skip the fundamentals.

I still cringe to this day when I remember that story.

But I learned something I will never forget, and that's this:

It doesn't matter how much of a hardworking overachiever you are, if you want to master a skill, you **cannot** skip the fundamentals!

Mastering the basics gives you a solid foundation on which you can build. And then, as you learn, practice, and train diligently... advancing becomes natural and inevitable.

Every expert was once a beginner. Every skilled craftsman was once an apprentice. Every great artist was once a novice.

And yet... I often see so many English students wanting to practice FAST, CONNECTED speech in English when they STILL haven't mastered their vowel sounds in English, or the TH, or the R.

That's unwise and impractical, because poor pronunciation strung together quickly in a sentence will simply result in spoken English that is difficult to decipher or simply unintelligible.

So, here's my advice:

Take the time you need to completely master every sound of the English language, according to the accent you aim to master.

Once you achieve this, your English will shine with clarity and your eyes will beam with confidence.

If you would like me to help you with this, [go here](#) to see what I have for you.

Wishing you all the success in the world,

Stefanie