

# Systemic interaction between educators of choreographic disciplines under distance learning conditions

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## ABSTRACT

Distance learning is an essential component of modern choreographic education under quarantine restrictions. It puts new tasks in front of the academic teaching staff, administrators, managers, and other educational process participants; it demands new rules of interaction. The aim of this study was to identify the main problems and difficulties encountered in choreographic education under distance learning conditions, as well as to present a set of teaching activities intended to alleviate rejection and anxiety about the changes in teaching by all educational process participants. The article highlights several activities to find ways to enhance interaction between teachers and accompanists. We used a comprehensive approach to methodology: descriptive method, analysis, and synthesis to consider the theoretical foundations, statistical methods (qualitative and quantitative), the method of questioning, as well as the method of a pedagogical experiment - collection, description and analysis of the practical results of behavioral research. Choreographic education needs close interaction between all participants in the educational process under distance learning conditions. The latter relieves stress and improves the attitude to the work of the choreographer within the conditions changed due to quarantine restrictions. This interaction is facilitated by using the possibilities of digital space and the virtualization of the educational process. Further research should consider successful forms and methods of teaching choreography under distance learning conditions and look for effective ways of improving the interaction between all participants in the educational process.

## KEYWORDS

Distance Learning; Modern Choreography; Education; Educational Process

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the XXI century distance learning is not a discovery for European education. The worldwide coronavirus pandemic has made its adjustments in the functioning and further life and evolution of the European educational space. It also requires certain changes and adjustments in the perception and ways of using distance learning in art education. Distance learning has become not a distant and abstract perspective but the reality of teachers' life, no exception for accompanists and teachers of choreography disciplines.

The introduction of distance learning requires maximum effort, creative experimentation and persistence, as well as knowledge of the specifics of dance education (Aleynikova & Roshchin, 2021). All this is necessary to create new educational technologies, which would contain a harmonious combination of distance and face-to-face learning, create opportunities for interaction of fruitful all participants in the educational process. There is a need to implement research projects in the field of teaching choreography to identify and solve problematic issues of working in a distance format.

One of the main problems is considered the use of distance education and digital technology as an enhancing tool in the teaching of choreography disciplines. This problem is attributed by some researchers to the complexity of choreography producing a creative product and unique artistic works (Huang & Liu, 2021). It is necessary for researchers to pay attention to modern systems of distance education that help choreographic education to emphasize the quality of education, indicators of its high level by Laban's theory of movement analysis (LMA), ways to transmit remotely as much exhaustive language and image to describe the movement, representation, performance and expression in a way that would be productive and could be widely used in the teaching of choreography (Laban & Ullmann, 1963; Daniel, 1987).

With the help of distance education in the arts industry, it is possible to actively introduce new technologies into arts education, to realize quality educational services in the face of pandemic and the limitations imposed because of it to improve specific positions of its higher education and to ensure a high level of professional training of artists and successful interaction of artists in the educational process.

Rapid technological development, the possibilities of educational platforms, and software have simplified access to distance education (Yu & Wu, 2015), increased the number of types of learning, methods of control, and evaluation during the study of choreographic disciplines.

This research attempts to consider how we can promote quality interaction among all participants in the educational process in a distance education setting, to find a way to promote choreography, dance, and computer literacy training, as this is what can satisfy the need for individualized creativity for each applicant for education. It should facilitate the codification and articulation of information about movement, phrasing, and composition in a choreographic context.

New conditions of contemporary art education dictate revision of existing methods and pedagogical technologies, the introduction of new innovative systems, methods, and approaches to the training of future specialists in the field of art education. Professional choreographic education is no exception, which should also evolve, work on continuous quality improvement and adapt to the challenges of the modern world.

One of the main requirements for choreographic education in higher education institutions is the overall professional development of applicants and teachers, accompanists, and choreographers working on the implementation of educational programs. It also implies the intensification of digital education, which is a mandatory requirement for educational institutions that hope to have a competitive advantage at the global level of educational services.

The aim of this research is to identify the main problems and difficulties arising in the interaction of accompanists and teachers of choreographic disciplines within distance learning, as well as to suggest ways to mitigate and eliminate the anxious attitude of employees to distance learning through several effective training technologies. The research also aims to form a set of software designed to implement the program of quality teaching of choreographic disciplines under the distance learning conditions.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The first steps in developing techniques for teaching choreography that could be used in distance learning were taken by M. Cunningham (Cunningham, 1969). With the help of computers, the researcher introduced animated figures and sticks for planning choreography into the teaching process. In the 1990s, choreographers developed Labanotation, a system of dance notes similar to the recording of musical signs. It is still widely used in America (Newlove, 1993). There is an ongoing development of an interface based on the Labanotation-system and others, which allows composing works in space and time; to coordinate the actions of all participants in the creative process (Gibbons, 2015). Poser (Curious Labs), Motion Builder (Alias), and 3dsMax (AutoCad) programs, which have functions for animating the human figure, can be useful in a distance education setting. Developers

should also work on adapting them for educational purposes. Separately, the existence of software that uses automatic control of interactive dance acts (TroikaTronix, 2011) should be noted.

Interaction between workers in the field of art education is a topic for research on the characteristics of the modern educational process (Mason, 2006; Osmanbegovic & Suljic, 2012), the need to adapt to the challenges of time to introduce new technologies and techniques, which is an important condition for the competitiveness of art education (Chakir et al., 2020; Svetsky et al., 2020) and the ability and potential of universities to provide interaction within the artistic, choreographic disciplines, ways of communication. Separate attention is paid to the search and analysis of innovations in choreographic education as a set of technological solutions (Williamson, 2016), which makes possible the functioning and a new type of interaction of participants in the educational process (Yu & Wu, 2015).

Among the educational services offered at the level of educational platforms, modern pedagogy and the arts also consider ways to automate choreography, web services involving planning with the capabilities of large-scale service repositories (Zou et al., 2014).

A further consideration is required to find ways to optimize educational services as well as choreographic education, and specific problems such as the interaction between accompanists and teachers must be solved. The educational art product under the distance learning conditions is an educational content designed to realize the possibilities of online learning and combine it with offline systems to improve the quality of traditional forms of art education and interaction of all participants of the educational process.

### **3. METHODS**

Research methodology is based on an integrated approach used to describe, process, and elucidate the declared research tasks. Scientific-theoretical developments on the problems of distance learning in art education involve the use of descriptive methods. The pedagogical experiment represents the presence of a thorough theoretical framework and consideration of past research experience.

In this paper, the research team also resorts to the involvement of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. To consider the collected and presented material, the method of observation and the statistical method are used. It is important because the study of the realities of implementing distance education in the space of art specialties dictates the need to take into account the influence of the socio-communicative component. The main method for obtaining the research data is a survey.

The study of educational realities cannot be limited to quantitative approaches, as it implies certain assessments by the society of the introduction of high technology in the artistic paradigm. The research phase included a literature review, data collection and analysis, and the formation of conclusions.

Several European universities of art direction participated in the research project (Lviv National University named after I. Franko (Ukraine). The Lviv National University named after I. Franko (Ukraine), Kharkiv State Academy of Culture (Ukraine), Vilnius Academy of Arts, (Lithuania). Within the framework of these educational institutions, student groups were involved, studying in the specialty 024 "Choreography". Distance education used all opportunities to carry out the interaction of all participants in the educational process as best as possible.

The experiment involved 35 people: teachers (28 people) and accompanists (7 people). All of them are involved in the training of specialists in the field of creative specialty 024 "Choreography" and read the educational disciplines on choreography.

Data collection was conducted from December 2020 to June 2021 (one academic semester). Distance education was the main focus of the study process, which implied certain changes in the teaching and accompanist activities.

For each teacher and accompanist, a survey (Annex 1) was conducted in 3 stages to assess respondents' problem and anxiety levels during distance education and the use of modern technology and software features. At the final stage of the study, the data were collected and analyzed.

All respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the experiment, their confidentiality and anonymity were preserved. As for the difficulties and problematic moments faced by the research team in the course of the study and the course of the project implementation, these are rather high time costs (1 semester - 6 months), impossibility to establish the causes of changes in the respondents' assessments and attitudes; lack of opportunity to conduct qualitative in-depth research.

#### **4. RESULTS**

The use of digital platforms in choreographic education, software of the corresponding direction and specialization helps to synchronize and harmonize the work of the teacher and the accompanist, preserve the creative nature of individuality in the art of dance, facilitates the organization of creative activities and monitoring of learning, teaching and improves the evaluation process in a distance.

The study was conducted in three phases:

Stage 1 involved the formation of a curriculum, the formation of instructional materials set, the identification of a set of software, and the training of teachers working within the study program.

At the 2nd stage, an active training also involved the necessary software, a survey (Annex 1) was conducted on the difficulties and disadvantages arising under the distance learning conditions in the interaction of accompanist and teacher (initial stage) author's development. It was adjusted per the results of the survey content and technical components of the learning process.

Stage 3 included analysis of the work results in conditions of distance learning, possibilities of interaction between choreographers and teachers of choreographic disciplines, establishment or mitigation of teachers' attitude towards work in conditions of distance learning. For this purpose, a final survey was conducted and the results were analyzed.

During the 1st stage (preparatory stage), the software and capabilities of electronic educational platforms designed to facilitate the process of distance teaching of choreography disciplines and the work of accompanists in the educational process were identified and involved in the educational process (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Software under conditions of distance education for choreography disciplines (author's technology).

<b>Software</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>LMA components</b>
Choreographer's Notebook	Creative	Construction, Motion	The body and its position in space
Web3D	Generative	Structure by motion	The position in space
Improvisational Technologies	Reflective	Motion	Body and space
ActionPlot	Reflective	Motion	Phrasing
Capturing Intention	Reflective	Expressivity	Phrasing/shape
Eyesweb	Interactive	Expressivity	Phrasing/shape

During the preparatory stage, permanent training courses were organized on how to work with the software used in the project, and the practice of ongoing counseling was introduced. Training materials and a set of practical tasks were developed. The training program included the second stage.

Stage 1: Content and conception of choreographic art.

Stage 2: Elements of Dance Exercise. Dance local history.

Stage 3: Methods of choreographic activities.

A survey among teachers and accompanists about difficulties and the problematic issues arising in the conditions of teachers' work in the distance mode was carried out. The survey results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Difficulties and disadvantages arising in distance learning conditions during the interaction of an accompanist and a teacher (initial stage).

<b>№</b>	<b>Difficulties and disadvantages</b>	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Non-significant</b>
1	Lack of skill acquisition (dance movements)	27%	73%
2	Inability to quickly and accurately correct errors, rhythmic peculiarities	32%	68%
3	Inability to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance	66%	34%
4	Problems with the software and capabilities of their computers	38%	62%
5	Psychological problems	43%	57%
6	Need to spend extra time downloading completed tasks	62%	38%
7	Lack of knowledge in the field of digital technology	85%	15%

The results of the preliminary survey showed a rather high level of anxiety and skepticism towards the implementation of quality teaching of choreographic disciplines, and especially if accompanists are involved in the teaching and supervising processes. On average, 40% of teachers and accompanists consider significant difficulties of distance education, despite the involvement of digital technologies and information and educational platforms.

The second stage of the experiment included a survey on the teachers' and accompanists' assessment of the difficulties faced by the employees in their cooperation in learning the skills of choreography, mastering dance movements as the primary basis of choreographic work.

A questionnaire survey was conducted among the teaching staff and accompanists working on educational programs in a distance learning environment. The respondents evaluated the emerging problems in the interaction of educators during the teaching of choreographic disciplines during distance learning. The results of the survey are presented in percentages (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Difficulties and disadvantages arising in the distance learning environment during the interaction between the accompanist and the teacher (the project's equator).

<b>№</b>	<b>Difficulties and disadvantages</b>	<b>Significant</b>	<b>Non-significant</b>
1	Lack of skill acquisition (dance movements)	17 %	83 %
2	Inability to quickly and accurately correct errors, rhythmic peculiarities	22%	78%
3	Inability to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance	58%	42%
4	Problems with the software and capabilities of their computers	38%	62%
5	Psychological problems	22%	78%

6	Need to spend extra time downloading completed tasks	45%	55%
7	Lack of knowledge in the field of digital technology	73%	27%

As the survey showed in general during the experiment, the respondents are in a fairly anxious state, the fate of pessimistic sentiment is high, but compared with the preparatory stage, the situation is improving.

The last stage (3rd stage) began after the end of the educational process. There was a final survey of teachers and accompanists about the difficulties and problematic issues of teaching choreographic disciplines and the realization of cooperation between accompanists and teachers.

**Table 4.** Difficulties and disadvantages arising under the distance learning conditions during the interaction between accompanist and teacher (author's elaboration).

№	Difficulties and disadvantages	Significant	Non-significant
1	Lack of skill acquisition (dance movements)	12 %	88 %
2.	Inability to quickly and accurately correct errors, rhythmic peculiarities	25%	75%
3.	Inability to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance	60%	40%
4.	Problems with the software and capabilities of their computers	38%	62%
5.	Psychological problems	15%	85%
6.	Need to spend extra time downloading completed tasks	50%	50%
7.	Lack of knowledge in the field of digital technology	60%	40%

As the final survey shows, in general, the assessment of difficulties and problems has a positive trend towards a reduction of categorically negative perception, an improved attitude towards distance learning and interaction of teachers in the teaching of choreography disciplines.

First, the attitude toward acquiring the necessary skills and abilities has improved (increased by 14%); a decrease in the pressure of psychological problems (decreased by 28%) indicates an adaptation to the learning environment in the family circle and a decrease in the need to communicate with colleagues, training groups. Secondly, the issue of equipment and digital literacy of respondents is practically solved (a 25% decrease in the number of those who assessed these difficulties as significant). Evolution in the perception of distance education tools and technologies is observed among the teachers and accompanists involved in the project, who collaborated during the teaching of choreography disciplines.



## **5. DISCUSSION**

Distance education technologies, system solutions to facilitate the interaction of all participants of education involving the possibilities of the software and the innovations in art education appear slowly and irregularly. However, modern changes in education dictate the need to develop the topic of distance education (Cleland, 2020), in order to create a significant advantage in the market of educational services (Ilyushina & Lvova, 2021). In fact, as the results of the study show, the attitude to distance education among employees of the art industry is quite skeptical. Employees complain about the lack of interaction, the time consumption for downloading the necessary materials into the network, psychological unpreparedness. In our opinion, distance education should be a part of modern teaching of choreography disciplines as well. However, it is necessary to take into account the need to find a harmonious combination of online and offline learning.

Some scholars (Lvova & Bakhlova, 2020; Ivanov et al., 2019), have considered software that provides for the facilitation of distance teaching of choreography, the perception of choreographic material. It provides interaction between real-time and phrasing, dance techniques, creative approaches to dance art. Overall, the study by Lvova & Bakhlova (2020), showed how an important emphasis on different software in the teaching of several artistic disciplines contributes to the choreographic experience that intelligent techniques lead to learning where digital technology can serve in the future. These developments have had positive results. As our research shows, it is possible to use distance education for choreography disciplines. At the end of the experiment, there was a decrease in anxiety and skepticism about distance education (a decrease of 40% on average) during the teacher and accompanist interactions in such settings.

According to a study by Gibbons (2015), modern education of the postmodern era is gradually but steadily changing and improving, learning to adapt quickly to modern needs. To train a well-rounded specialist, a choreographer, a worker in the creative industry, it is necessary to develop more versatile, technologically, and technically supported educational programs. They will contribute to the training of a specialist with the skills of a choreographer, performer, and teacher at the same time. Our study considers the ways of modernization of modern education, improvement of interaction between the teacher and accompanist in modern conditions of distance education. The general softening in assessments of problems and difficulties (on average by 20%) of the realities of distance education by teachers and accompanists with the introduction of special software testifies to the correctness of actions for continuous improvement of the educational process. It is necessary to

continue to work on the improvement of curricula, to expand and update them by using new methods, principles, forms, including the introduction of new disciplines.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Involvement of software in distance teaching of choreographic disciplines and improved interaction between the teacher and the accompanist can be effective. The potential of educational and social platforms shows that they can facilitate both the learning process itself and the interaction between teachers and accompanists. Educational-social platforms and thematic learning, in general, improve performance and reduce anxiety levels, attitudes toward organizational and communication problems in the arts industry. The use of these technologies on a systemic level in education: in teaching, administration, reporting, organization of public and practical activities creates new perspectives for the development and enhancement of the educational process.

Among the factors that respondents cited as difficulties in implementing the interaction of educators in the arts sector, there is a lack of possession of the necessary skills, techniques, as well as difficulties with the teaching of dance techniques, not high enough level of digital literacy. Among the subjective factors, the most significant were psychological problems. There is a positive trend in the attitude of educators in the field of dance to distance education, the acceptance of the conditions of online communication by accompanists and teachers. Thus, the attitude towards acquiring necessary skills and abilities under the distance learning conditions has improved by 14%; the pressure of psychological problems has significantly softened (by 28%) because the process of adaptation to the new conditions of communication has taken place.

However, further consideration requires the problems of teaching creative disciplines under distance learning conditions, solving the problem of lack of direct contact between the master and the student, while mastery and expression are transmitted through direct communication.

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## ANNEX 1

Dear accompanists and teachers,

We are interested in your opinion about the introduction of distance education and new software within the academic disciplines of choreography that you teach, conduct practical classes, participate in educational and creative work. The questionnaire is confidential, and your privacy is guaranteed by the research team.

You should choose from the three suggested answers the one that you think is more appropriate for you.

**Question for the survey** "Difficulties, problems and disadvantages arising under distance learning conditions in the interaction of the accompanist and the teacher".

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
1.	<i>Do you feel there is not enough opportunity during distance learning to give a full understanding of the dance movement, other necessary skills?</i>			

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
2.	<i>Did you have any difficulties with prompt and accurate correction of mistakes or rhythmic features of the student?</i>			

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
3.	<i>Did you have any difficulties during distance learning to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual assistance? Were they complete?</i>			

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
4.	<i>Have you had difficulty mastering and working with the software and capabilities</i>			

	<i>of your own computers?</i>			
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*Do you, your students and accompanist have the necessary equipment for the educational process?*

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
5.	<i>Do you feel insufficient opportunity during distance learning to fully give an idea of the dance movement, other necessary skills?</i>			

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
6.	<i>Do you have psychological problems related to the impossibility of full cooperation in the context of distance education?</i>			

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
7.	<i>Do you spend a lot of extra time downloading completed tasks?</i>			

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Non-significant</i>	<i>No difficulties</i>
8.	<i>Do you think that your and your accompanist's level of digital knowledge is problematic in a distance learning environment?</i>			

## ANNEX 2

### PROGRAM CONTENT

Stage I. Content and concept of choreographic art (32 hours). Introduction.

1. Theoretical part. Familiarization with the curriculum of the group for the school year.
2. Group behavior rules. Safety rules.
3. Basic rules and peculiarities of work with the accompanist. Organizational issues.
4. The main concepts of choreography.
5. Retrospective consideration of the choreography history.
6. The main stages of the choreography study as an art and an academic discipline.

Stage II. Elements of Dance Exercise (62 hours). Dance history (8 hours).

1. Elements of Classical Dance Exercise. Practical part. - *exercises for the feeling of power and muscle effort (relaxation and tension - different muscle groups in sequence and simultaneously); - practice I, II, III positions of the legs; - battement tendu (battement tendu) - to the side, forward, backward; - battement jete (battement jete) - in all directions; - battement fondu; - demi-plie - in I, II, III positions; - rond de jambe par terre - on points; - releve - in I position; - coup-de-pied - forward, backward; - passe - in II position; - balance.*
2. Elements of the stage folk dance practice. Practical part. *Execution of exercises: - steps on each 1/8; - tap-step; - tilt; - squats ("springs", "balls", "frog"); - hunch in the position of parallel feet (single, double, fly). Exercises in the middle of the gym. - bow for girls and boys: greeting, farewell; - hand positions: preparatory, I, II, III), foot positions: I, II, III; - the first form of rouges de bras; - second form of rouges de bras - hand position in dance (at the waist, by the edge of the skirt, in pairs); - pas dégagé. (pas dégagé) indifferent musical measures; - ordinary jumps, with tucked feet (in the position of parallel feet); - easy jumps on one foot (the second foot is in the drinking position); - sidestep; - sidestep with squatting to the third position; - pas de gallop (musical size 2/4); - watchman. Exercises in a circle: - pas marché; - variable step; - flying step; - dance running (simple run, runner, run with a hop, run with jumping up).*
3. Dance history (18 h) Theoretical part. *The main genres of Ukrainian folk dances: round dances, everyday life, stage dances. Dance and calendar ceremonies.*

*Stage III. Methods of choreographic activity (16 hours).*

*1. Basics of musical movement. The content and methodology of classes for music (art) forms and plastic movements. Music and dance, music and dance image.*

*2. Repetition: beat, key, musical size, dynamic tones. Practical part.*

*3. Contents and methods of classes in phrasing. Familiarization with the basic concepts and techniques of phrasing; free placement on the plane of the hall; dance steps in images.*

*4. The content and methods of use of musical and rhythmic exercises. Musical-rhythmic games for the consolidation of acquired skills.*

*5. The practical part. Work on the staging of dances using the software.*

**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**FUNDING**

This research received no external funding.

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