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PROBLEMS

OF IMPLEMENTING DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES IN CLASSICAL CHOREOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

PROBLEMAS DE IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE TECNOLOGÍAS DE APRENDIZAJE A DISTANCIA EN LA EDUCACIÓN COREOGRÁFICA CLÁSICA

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ABSTRACT

Special choreographic disciplines in the classical system of professional training of ballet dancers are traditionally studied exclusively through the contact work of teachers with students, which is determined by the need for direct demonstration of the studied elements and immediate correction of incorrect performance. In the context of the introduction of restrictive anti-epidemic measures, the forced introduction of distance learning requires the search for optimal ways to implement classical choreographic education without losing the quality of training. In this research it is analyzed an experimental study of the possibilities of correcting the organizational and pedagogical conditions of choreographic education when using distance learning tools at the Moscow state Academy of choreography which allows to identify the best ways to implement the educational process with elements of electronic distance learning technologies.

Keywords: Distance learning, choreographic art, digital technologies in training, choreographic education.

RESUMEN

Las disciplinas coreográficas especiales en el sistema clásico de formación profesional de los bailarines de ballet se estudian tradicionalmente exclusivamente a través del trabajo de contacto de los profesores con los estudiantes, que se determina por la necesidad de demostración directa de los elementos estudiados y la corrección inmediata de la actuación incorrecta. En el contexto de la introducción de medidas restrictivas contra la epidemia, la introducción forzada del aprendizaje a distancia requiere la búsqueda de formas óptimas de implementar la educación coreográfica clásica sin perder la calidad de la formación. En esta investigación es analizado un estudio experimental de las posibilidades de corregir las condiciones organizativas y pedagógicas de la educación coreográfica cuando se utilizan herramientas de aprendizaje a distancia en la Academia Estatal de Coreografía de Moscú que permite identificar las mejores maneras de implementar el proceso educativo con elementos de tecnologías electrónicas de aprendizaje a distancia.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje a distancia, arte coreográfico, tecnologías digitales en formación, educación coreográfica.

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern art education in all its aspects (choreography, music, visual arts) is linked inextricably with the inclusion of digital technologies in the educational process. A new direction in art pedagogy is being formed, related to the methods and methodologies of using digital and information technologies in real pedagogical practice in the field of choreography.

Events caused by the coronavirus pandemic and measures taken to prevent its spread have updated the problem of the development of digital technologies in choreographic education. In this regard, the Moscow state Academy of choreography, known worldwide as the BOLSHOI Ballet Academy (hereinafter referred to as the Academy), has become necessary to build a system of distance learning in all subjects of the curriculum.

The Moscow State Academy of Choreography is one of the oldest ballet schools in the world, characterized by maintaining a high level of development of the academic school of ballet, fundamental training of future performers, and preserving artistic and pedagogical traditions (Olenev, 2015).

In modern conditions, the Academy not only preserves, but also develops the achievements of its great predecessors in Russian choreographic education. Over many years of training ballet dancers, the Academy has accumulated extensive didactic material, including film and video recordings of lessons, exams, concerts, and competitive performances, which until recently was used mostly as visual content that illustrates the teacher's explanations. Video materials were actively used to solve specific pedagogical tasks: conducting structural and coordination analysis of classical dance movements, identifying the principles of spatial choreographic construction and determining the composition of various constructions (Alferov, 2015).

The current stage of the socio-cultural situation in the world on a global scale poses the challenges of comprehensive implementation of digital technologies, in particular distance learning in the educational process. This requires changes in all components of the traditional model of classical dance training: the organization of the learning process approaches to developing the content of interactive classes and the technology of its implementation, and training teachers to work in a digital environment. It is practically necessary to create a completely new model of classical dance training, integrating age-old traditions and technological innovations.

Sharp and significant changes in the conditions for organizing educational activities due to the worsening epidemic situation, which is fraught with repeated quarantine measures, put forward new requirements for the organization of the educational process in choreographic education, which, as previously noted, is particularly dependent on the quality of classroom work. Nevertheless, force majeure forces to provide educational activities in choreography with distance learning technologies that replace a significant part of the classical classroom components of the educational process. Leading educational organizations in the field of choreography, such as the Moscow State Academy of Choreography, are required to ensure the highest level of quality of education. This requires studying the possibilities of distance education in the structure of classical professional training of ballet artists and teachers, evaluating the effectiveness of distance education and forming requirements for the optimal structure of the educational process in choreography, built using distance educational technologies.

Such problems and research questions should be solved by means of a multi-aspect study of pedagogical tools and conditions for digitalization of choreographic education on the example of technological solutions introduced into the educational environment of the Moscow state Academy of choreography, designed to ensure continuity and high quality of professional training of future figures of classical ballet art.

The purpose of this research is to form a well-founded model of optimal pedagogical means of ensuring high quality of classical choreographic education in the context of the introduction of distance educational technologies by summarizing the current experience of implementing distance educational technologies in the educational process of the Moscow state Academy of choreography.

The organization of distance learning in choreographic disciplines is particularly difficult. This is determined by the specifics of teaching choreographic art, which require not only the need for a visual display of motion and its explanation by the teacher, but also his physical sensations, which in the tradition of Russian classical ballet school is under the control of the teacher, allowing the generation of the correct mounting of the running motion. Thus, "setting the movement" from "feet to feet" is a fundamental basis for teaching classical dance (Alferov, 2019). An outstanding practitioner of choreographic art, who continued her ballet career by teaching choreographic disciplines, people's artist of the USSR Komleva (2019), describing the living connection of the teacher's contact classroom work with the achievement of a high level of skill by students, notes that: "*undoubtedly, expressive, meaningful, "talking"*

dance is the ultimate goal of both pedagogy and tutoring" (p. 115). Nevertheless, some young modern researchers claim that in the system of choreographic education *"at present, various types of media and online technologies are used very successfully"*. (Kotovskaya, 2020, p. 45)

The problem of personal communication between a teacher and a student in the disciplines of the creative cycle is very important, but the use of remote technologies does not always fully compensate for the importance of such communication for the quality organization of the learning process (Mazur, 2020).

Quite a lot of research has been devoted to the introduction of digital technologies in the educational process, which considers various aspects: the organizational basis of training, the development of training content, training teachers to work with new technologies, and the formation of an information security system for organizing online training. Most modern foreign researchers are inclined to believe that digitalization of education is an integral sign of technological development of society, and the gradual improvement of e-learning technologies will gradually reach a level sufficient to provide digital educational technologies even in such areas as art education (McKenney & Visscher, 2019).

Among the advantages of using information and digital technologies directly in choreographic education, researchers note the possibility of organizing the process of remote learning (Parrish, 2016). This expands the possibilities of professional training, as it creates conditions not only for online training, but also for the organization of independent work of students. This is particularly important for the Academy, as it allows to solve the problems of developing branches in Vladivostok, Kaliningrad and Kemerovo, which were created as part of the state project for the development of cultural and educational complexes in these regions.

Parrish (2008), studies the possibilities of using video conferencing technology not only for dance training, but also for analyzing dance techniques and composition. This also provides an opportunity to organize students' performances as a result of training in various choreographic disciplines

To improve the quality of professional training of future ballet dancers, it is proposed to use the technology of video cases with fragments of choreographic practices. According to the developers (Gartmeier & Hascher, 2016), the use of this technology in educational practice develops the emotional perception of future ballet dancers, sharpens the understanding of the emotional state of dancers captured on video. Thus, the use of digital materials

in the format of video cases focuses on the function of nonverbal influence on the formation of communicative behavior and the influence of emotions on it.

The accumulated experience of using digital technologies in the field of art education indicates a change in the nature of the activities of participants in the educational process in accordance with the specifics of different types of arts (Krasilnikov, 2018). For students, there are additional opportunities that allow them to go beyond the standard scope of the lesson: if necessary, re-viewing the content, setting an individual pace of mastering the material, organizing self-monitoring of the success of mastering complex coordination movements using video recording. On the other hand, the introduction of online learning requires special training from teachers, combining the skills of a digital technology user and a sense of "live", face-to-face communication (Cooperman, 2018).

Thus, the introduction of digital technologies in the educational process solves the following tasks: ensuring the availability of high-quality educational content in various positions (territorial, economic, temporary); combining training sources (video lessons, video cases, webinars, electronic libraries, databases, online consultations, training simulators, creative tasks, etc.) and improving the professional competence of teachers. At the same time, noting the demand for digital technologies in choreographic education, the research analysis in this area shows that they are introduced sporadically, formally, and in fact there are practically no complete models for implementing digital technologies in the learning process (Li, et al., 2018). These aspects are directly related to the identification of satisfaction determinants with distance learning among its users (Cidral, et al., 2018).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Theoretical and empirical research methods and techniques were used during the research. Theoretical methods: analysis and generalization of the obtained data, method of classification of research results. Empirical metrics: method of monitoring the process of organizing and conducting distance learning, interviewing participants in the educational process (students, teachers), method of expert evaluation, methods of statistical analysis of the data obtained.

The observation method was used as the main research method defined by the specifics of the research object – choreographic education-. The survey method was also actively used.

The study was conducted in several stages:

1. preparatory, which consisted in the analysis of existing practices for the introduction of digital learning in choreography, the study of scientific publications on the problem of research, determining the stages and timing of the study.
2. theoretical stage: selection of research methods, development of an observation plan with the definition of tasks, methods of observation and indicators that determine the content of empirical data.
3. experimental stage – conducting research, analyzing the data obtained.
4. the final stage is to summarize the results obtained and formulate conclusions based on them, in order to assess the effectiveness of the digital learning model in the Academy.

The main stage of the study took place under the conditions of introduction of quarantine measures related to Covid 19.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Moscow State Academy of Choreography implements educational programs at all levels – from pre-professional to postgraduate and assistant training. The basic value for providing the national art of classical ballet with highly qualified artists is the educational program of secondary professional education (hereinafter-SPO), the educational programs of Basic General and Secondary General education (52.02.01) which are integrated with the Art of ballet, which begins at the age of 10-11 years and lasts in accordance with the Federal state educational standard for 7 years and 10 months. It is at the end of this educational program that graduates enter the leading ballet companies of Russia and the world, or continue their studies in the bachelor's degree, and then, if desired, in the master's degree and then – in postgraduate and assistant training.

Training in the art of ballet educational program is a stressful process of obtaining classical choreographic education, in which classroom classes of a practical nature and practice take up about 55% of the total time of mastering the educational program. In ballet halls, the teacher's work with the student-correction of performed movements, training elements, demonstration of performed movements, etc., often occurs through physical contact: for example, the teacher can demonstrate support by performing the function of a partner, or by physically correcting the student's body position when they perform an element incorrectly. This is what makes it particularly difficult to switch training to remote mode.

Such contact work is also abundant in the bachelor's educational programs-52.03.01 Choreographic art and

52.03.02 Choreographic performance, in the master's educational program 52.04.01 Choreographic art, and in the educational program of assistant training 52.09.01 Art of choreography.

The transfer of training exclusively to remote mode at the Moscow state Academy of choreography was carried out at the end of March 2020 due to the complication of the sanitary and epidemic situation. Training exclusively in remote mode continued until the end of the school year, in this mode, the state final certification was implemented and recruitment was conducted. From September 1st, 2020 in accordance with the Orders of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation and other relevant agencies, training is done in the format of a combination of classroom contact and elements of distance mode for students of correspondence courses and foreign students who are not able to return to the Russian alma mater. The Moscow state Academy of choreography is ready to switch to an exclusively remote mode in the event of the resumption of strict restrictive measures, and the results of this study, conducted from the end of March to the beginning of September 2020, have taken into account alternatives to improve the distance learning system at the Academy, providing significant assistance in the implementation of digital distance learning.

It should be noted that some of educational organizations have adapted very quickly to the implementation of distance learning in the context of restrictive measures, even when conducting practices (Abasli, et al., 2020). For example, in the work of Tyuleneva (2000), it is described the progressive experience of creating pedagogical conditions for industrial practice in a remote format: *“it is determined locally how many hours will be implemented using e-learning, distance learning technologies, how tasks performed by students will be monitored, and how the results of practice will be evaluated in General”* (p. 47)

Nevertheless, the implementation of practical classes in creative disciplines in a remote format has been and remains extremely difficult and time-consuming. Distance learning in theoretical subjects is well developed in the entire educational system of Russia and the world; video conferencing is used for lectures and seminars, interactive and discrete platforms are developed and used for providing educational materials, checking works, testing, etc. However, conducting practical classes in such disciplines as Classical dance, Duet-classical dance, etc., requires not only the use of video conferencing, but also the creation of unique hardware complexes that take into account the configuration of ballet halls, the specifics of musical accompaniment, and the number of students,

simultaneously participating in the same communication session, etc.

During the period of using exclusively distance learning technologies at the Moscow State Academy of Choreography, classes were conducted using the Zoom video conferencing system. Teachers used laptops with built-in Webcams to conduct remote classes in the framework of theoretical academic disciplines. A special section of the official website provided students and teachers with a rapid exchange of educational materials and completed tasks, as well as methodological, normative and instructional materials. Computers equipped with multimedia systems and video capture boards with connected video cameras and web cameras that provide three-dimensional overview and image integration were used for remote training in practical choreographic disciplines. In the ballet halls, large-format TVs with connected graphic stations are installed, working in conjunction with cameras that can capture and broadcast high-resolution video (full HD, 4K), professional mixing consoles, wireless microphones, microphones with armature mounting on the speaker's headband are used. Fiber-optic Internet access is used for broadcasting. This enabled high-quality multi-user training video conferencing, allowing students to interact synchronously with teachers, and teachers to monitor students' performance.

During the course of the classes, about 360 students of SPO, 180 senior students, postgraduates and trainee assistants were trained in an exclusively remote mode, and 89 teachers conducted classes. The specifics of education in the art of ballet program are mandatory professional stage practice, which includes all subjects included in the final state certification. It is held throughout the entire period of training and provides multiple public demonstrations of students' achievements in performances and concerts, as well as at all – Russian and international competitions, the jury of which is composed of outstanding artists-representatives of employers. The use of digitalization tools in practice, namely digitized video materials of practical results of training of students of the Academy, made it possible to carry out the training within the established time frame, in compliance with all the established standards of state final certification. On the initiative of the rector of the Academy, people's artist of the Russian Federation Marina Leonova, made a decision on the remote implementation of the state final certification procedure. If it is not possible to conduct full-time state examinations in professional disciplines: Classical dance, Duet-classical dance, folk-stage dance, the final qualification work in the form of a stage performance, using e-learning and distance learning technologies, they are

evaluated by the decision of the educational organization. The evaluation it is based:

- a) on the results of intermediate certification in the professional modules of the educational program, taking into account the creative achievements demonstrated in practice
- b) on the results of intermediate certification in the professional modules of the educational program and the status of the winner and prize-winner, as well as a participant in all-Russian and international creative competitions in the profile of the student's specialty.

This initiative made it possible for graduates not to lose their professional form, to find a job immediately after graduation or to enroll in further education, which allowed the Academy and other universities to fulfill the state task in terms of the control figures for admission to higher education programs.

Based on the results of the completed 2019/20 academic year, the last 3 months of which training was conducted exclusively in the distance format, a survey to students and teachers was conducted to identify satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the new training regime, which is not typical for choreographic education. The survey also contained an open question that allowed to identify the cause of dissatisfaction if there were one. The survey revealed the following results:

Students:

- fully satisfied-41%;
- partially satisfied-46%;
- not satisfied-13%

The reasons for partial or complete dissatisfaction were systematized and generalized:

- desire to work directly with the teacher "live" - 62%;
- reduced self-discipline and motivation to learn due to an unusual training regime-17%;
- the desire to be in the usual circle of communication with their own kind-14%;
- other reasons – 7%.

Teachers:

- fully satisfied-59%;
- partially satisfied-37%;
- not satisfied – 4%

Reasons for partial or complete dissatisfaction:

- recognition of greater effectiveness for choreographic training disciplines, working in the mode of traditional classroom classes-71%;
- technical problems when implementing distance learning (Internet connection failures, etc.) - 16%;
- lack of knowledge and skills in the field of information technology application-9%;
- other reasons – 4%.

Statistical assessment of the reliability of the survey results was carried out using the principle of variation series, that is, ordering the distribution of population units by decreasing values of the attribute and counting the number of units with a particular attribute value.

The analysis of academic performance showed at first glance paradoxical, but quite understandable results. Overall, academic performance in all classes and courses of the art of ballet program increased by an average of 3.8%, and in all bachelor's programs (on average, combined in all areas and profiles) – by 6.1%. The paradoxical increase in academic performance was not due to the effectiveness of distance learning, but to the exclusion of third-party employment of students who did not have the opportunity to be distracted from their studies to other classes during self-isolation.

Thus, in General, the forced digitalization of the educational process in the spring semester of 2019/20 at the Academy was successful, but it revealed an attributive problem of implementing distance technologies in choreographic education – an essential need for contact classes. Despite the fact that digitalization of education is usually resisted only by the most conservative part of the pedagogical community contact work remains a priority in choreographic education.

On September 1, 2020, a survey was conducted among teachers at the Academy to identify ways to improve the digitalization of choreographic education in the event of a renewed need for expanded introduction of distance technologies. The survey participants were offered an open survey with the following content: “What do You think should be included in the distance learning mode at the Academy in order to optimize it and ensure high quality of education? The responses were systematized and summarized, and the responses are listed below in descending order of prevalence:

- to disseminate distance learning only a theoretical discipline or in the introductory and theoretical parts of the special choreographic disciplines;

- when working with complex equipment, use the help of technical specialists (individual assistants) for teachers;
- flexibly vary the schedule of application of remote and traditional technologies, allowing students to alternate between remote and traditional classes;
- create a consulting service for teachers and students on the use of digital remote technologies.

As it can be seen, the optimal format is not only distance learning, but a system of pedagogical tools that organically combines distance learning and traditional forms of contact work. Currently, this heterogeneous format of training in the works of modern domestic and foreign teachers is called mixed learning (Chou & Chou, 2011). Vasileva, et al. (2019), establish that mixed learning is *“an umbrella term that does not define something monolithic and integral in approaches to learning, but combines various models that combine - “mix” a traditional or technologically rich learning environment with an online environment”* (p. 23). They also claim that *“online, mobile and mixed learning is a predetermined future in education, and if any educational organization has not yet developed a clear strategy for integrating these models into the learning system, it is simply doomed to extinction”* (Vasilyeva, et al., 2019, p. 22). In the context of forced use of the dominant shares of distance learning in the educational environment of choreographic educational institutions, this is more than relevant.

Thus, the implementation of educational programs in the field of choreography in terms of digitalization of the educational environment is enhanced when stimulated the introduction of distance learning technologies, which requires adaptive multimodal forms of learning, leaving students the possibility of contact work with teachers (the majority of whom are experienced practitioners of the art of ballet and not just teachers) because practical work is still the most effective way to transfer skills to new generations of artists

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the transformation of choreographic education in the Moscow State Academy of Choreography under the influence of distance learning technologies allowed us to draw the following conclusions. The level of professional and pedagogical competence of the Academy's teaching staff involved in organizing and implementing the transition of teaching tools and methods to new digital technologies is shown to be high. The coverage of the contingent of students with pedagogical technologies was complete, and foreign students were also trained. The qualitative indicator of the results of the learning

process and assimilation of knowledge in the blocks of General humanitarian knowledge and professional disciplines was higher than usual.

As a result of the survey were identified problematic areas as well as the benefits of digitization. It was investigated the vectors of change in educational programs in the field of choreographic art, and the effect of this changes in the students' performance, proving that the digital transformation of the environment of the Academy brings a new model of formation of professional competence of students as a necessary condition of artistic freedom, of choosing the route of self-determination and professionalism in a situation of restrictive anti-epidemic measures limiting the applicability of traditional forms of learning.

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