

POSSIBILITY OF USING DISTANCE LEARNING  
TECHNOLOGIES IN CHOREOGRAPHIC EDUCATION

*Olga Komarova*

*Acting Associate Professor, State Academy of Choreography  
of Uzbekistan Tashkent, Uzbekistan Olunechka*

*1955@gmail.com*

**Abstract.** The article analyzes the process of remote study of special choreographic disciplines by students during the pandemic. The factors influencing the formation of students' professional abilities in traditional and distance learning are considered.

Cause-and-effect relationships between teaching methods and the formation of students' pedagogical competencies have been established. Based on the facts studied, conclusions were drawn about the possibility of using distance learning only as an additional extracurricular form of organizing the educational process.

**Keywords:** choreography, distance learning, professional competencies

ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО  
ОБУЧЕНИЯ В ХОРЕОГРАФИЧЕСКОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

Ольга Комарова доцент

Государственная академия хореографии Узбекистана

Ташкент, Узбекистан

Olunechka1955@gmail.com

**Аннотация.** В статье проанализирован процесс дистанционного изучения специальных хореографически дисциплинам студентами в период пандемии. Рассмотрены факторы, влияющие на формирование профессиональных способностей студентов при традиционной и дистанционной формах обучения.

Установлены причинно-следственные связи между методами обучения и формированием педагогических компетенций студентов. На основании изученных фактов сделаны выводы о возможности использования дистанционного обучения лишь как дополнительной внеаудиторной формы организации учебного процесса.

**Ключевые слова:** хореография, дистанционное обучение, профессиональные компетенции.

In a period of pandemic and self-isolation, the development and application of distance learning in various fields of education became an urgent issue.

The first forms of education remotely appeared in Europe in the XIX century at the University of London. Students were remotely taught stenography. They sold the developed course by mailing educational material and assignments. In 1892, in the United States, the University of Chicago announced the first registered distance learning department. In 1914, distance learning appeared in New Zealand and Canada. In 1922, distance learning courses began to appear in Australia, in 1939 in France [1].

Distance learning started to develop actively in educational institutions with the beginning of the era of comprehensive digitalization. Many distance projects in different countries have shown their effectiveness and have become an effective form of learning.

In 2020, the global pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus forced educational institutions worldwide to switch to online education for all their students, including undergraduates, graduate students, postgraduates, and doctoral students. Our country's educational institutions, including creative universities, also transitioned to online learning.

The teaching staff of the State Academy of Choreography in Uzbekistan faced the challenge of adapting traditional teaching methods to the new realities of online education. They had to learn how to work on various educational platforms and messengers, such as Moodle, Mover, Zoom, and Telegram.

During the quarantine and self-isolation period, the teachers of special disciplines at the academy did the following:

- Conducted online classes using the Zoom server.
- Published teaching and methodological materials, including theoretical and practical (video) materials, educational literature, music samples, tests, assignments, timetables, and more, on the Moodle platform;
- Posted educational videos, dance exercises, combinations, and etudes on video hosting sites like Mover.uz.
- Worked in the Telegram messenger. To establish feedback on each subject, groups and channels were created for each academic group. Students pre-posted completed assignments in the form of multimedia files for consultation and verification by the teacher. These assignments were then posted on the Moodle platform in the "Assignments" section.

Students' online work included:

- Participation in online classes conducted by teachers in the videoconference mode.
- Studying and outlining the theoretical and methodical materials posted on Moodle platforms and in Telegram channels.
- Practically studying the methodology of program movements, learning combinations, and etudes posted on Mover.uz sites.

The educational process was organized online. It involved:

- Searching for educational information on YouTube.
- Independent completion of creative tasks as part of self-education. This included composing etudes and combinations in all specialized disciplines.
- Online consultations with teachers of specific subjects.
- Sharing completed creative assignments on Telegram channels and the educational platform Moodle.

However, the online forms of education, which excluded direct interaction between the teacher and student in the choreographic class, were not effective for junior students to practice choreographic material. When the teacher explained new material and students performed independent creative works, there were difficulties due to both objective and subjective reasons. This article is about finding the reasons for these difficulties.

One issue was the systematic non-compliance with the schedule for students to perform their independent works. Each student was supposed to send a video file of their completed practical assignment on each new topic (combination, etude) to the teacher for verification once a week, according to the calendar-thematic plan and class schedule.

However, in the first month, the increased load on the network showed that internet providers in Uzbekistan were not technically prepared to provide the required volume and quality of services. Video files sent by students from some regions of the country were sent for several days due to low internet speed. Sometimes they were not sent at all, sometimes they were delivered with significant technical distortions, or they were not available for viewing at all.

At the same time, the amount of megawatts (MW) consumed by students increased significantly. It is no secret that the internet in Uzbekistan is one of the most expensive in the world. Students sent their independent works only when they could afford to pay for the internet. In this regard, some students were out of sight of the teachers for several days. Therefore, it was not possible to maintain the dynamics and rhythm of learning according to the academic schedule.

Student choreographers faced another kind of difficulty: the absence of a function of simultaneous music playback and video recording in the phone. The phone was usually used to video record dance sequences. To play back music, it was necessary to find another recording device — a phone, tablet, laptop — which in some cases was problematic.

The living conditions in many houses and apartments were not suitable for dance training, which created challenges for practical exercises. To perform dance movements with the required range, amplitude, and dynamics, a free area of at least 6-7 square meters is needed. However, in many places, there was not enough space for

this.

Another issue was the lack of a choreographer's dance bar — a stick that dancers should hold when performing exercises. Instead, students used furniture, interior door handles, and vineyard bars, which limited their ability to execute the exercises to their full potential. One solution was to record the combination on the staircase landing of the entrance, where there was more space than in the apartment, using the stair railing as a ballet machine.

When explaining new teaching material in choreography, the teacher demonstrates the dance movement practically and verbally explains the method of execution. However, in the videoconference mode, these two actions could not be performed simultaneously. The demonstration of the movement required sufficient space, but when the teacher moved away from the broadcasting device to perform the movement, the audibility was significantly reduced. Students were unable to connect what they saw with what they heard in the moment.

Students' independent learning of new practice material posted on educational platforms was also not easy or accessible. To access the material, the student had to go to the Moodle platform, find the topic of the lesson, and download the material posted by the teacher. After reading the description of the methodology for executing a particular movement, the student had to follow a link to Mover.uz, where they could watch a video of the movement being performed. The student had to understand what they saw, combine it with what they read, memorize it, execute it, and practice it.

The teacher saw the results of the students' independent work in the Zoom conference mode. When studying movements in this way, mistakes inevitably occurred, and it was quite difficult to eliminate them in the video-conference mode. Sometimes, the teacher and the student could not understand each other. The student, while correcting some mistakes, made other mistakes. As a result, after several unsuccessful attempts, the instructor had to agree with what had worked out, hoping to eliminate the shortcomings after returning to traditional forms of teaching. In traditional teaching, the student's work is corrected directly in the process of the student repeating the movement shown by the instructor. The instructor may hand-correct the level of body tilt, the angle of head turn, the height of the raised leg, the roundness of the arm, and so on. The importance of correction at the time of instruction is due to the muscle memory of the individual. An incorrectly performed exercise will be fixed in the muscle memory, and it will be very difficult to correct it in the future.

One of the reasons for these errors is that students find it difficult to understand the theoretical description of how to perform movements. Movement is a process of constantly changing body positions and the harmonious coordination of all its parts. The technique of movement execution describes the movement of each part of the body in detail for each fraction of a musical measure. It includes the trajectory of the arm or

leg, their initial and final positions, and the position and movement of the body and head at each moment of the movement. The description of parts of the legs and arms is also detailed: the top of the leg is described from the thigh to the knee, the bottom of the leg from the knee to the foot, instep, heel, toes, and half-toes. The same goes for the arms: hand, elbow, grouping of fingers, and more. There are many nuances in the position of the head: tilt, angle of rotation, and direction of gaze. Sometimes it's difficult to find the right words to accurately describe the trajectory of arms, legs, body positions, the nature of the dance element, mood, manner, and style.

It's quite difficult to describe movements in a way that is understandable to everyone, and it's even more difficult for students who don't have practical experience to understand the movement from a description. While reading the text, the student must imagine their body parts in the described position, then observe the trajectory and direction, transfer them to another position, and so on. Sometimes it's hard to visualize and imagine what the author meant by the description. How can you determine the height of a leg raised by  $35^\circ$  or  $100^\circ$ ? And there are many such moments in choreography. Understanding the described movement requires knowledge of the subject and choreographic practice, which students in their first two years of study don't yet have.

Since it's easier to watch and repeat movements than to understand their descriptions, it seems logical that students could use materials posted on YouTube channel sites to practice dance vocabulary. However, most of the dance video clips posted there are not educational, but entertaining and entertaining. They can be used mainly to get familiar with the character and manner of dance movements, but not for studying the methodology of their execution. Besides, not all dance performances are of high artistic level and suitable for teaching.

When we switched to distance learning, there were no training videos. To this day, there are no training video lessons with detailed explanations and practical demonstrations of the material for each year of study in accordance with the curriculum. The material is presented in fragments and incompletely.

Not only the study of new material, but also the performance of independent practical works – creative assignments – proved to be a challenge for many second-year students. The quality of the creative assignments in the subject "Methodology of teaching folk and stage dance" left much to be desired. Exercise combinations and dance etudes were characterized by a limited vocabulary, a lack of compositional logic, and a violation of the principle "from simple to complex". There was a mix of dance movements from different nations, inconsistency in the duration of musical and choreographic parts, and musical and rhythmic nuances were not reflected in the choreography.

Let's look at the factors that determine a successful result when working on a



creative task. The most important condition for the independent composition of any choreographic form is the availability of specialized knowledge. Ideally, by the end of the training period, the student should have an understanding of the form-forming principles of dance, the relationship between the choreographic text, music, and drawing, methods of developing and complicating basic movements, the laws of dramaturgy and audience perception, rules and techniques for using perspective and contrast construction.

The student must master the art of foreshortening, understand the dance vocabulary of different nations, be able to link the development of choreographic images with the development of musical form, and so on.

The availability of basic knowledge is the first and most important factor underlying the creative process of any composition. The ability to apply this knowledge in practice, that is, the ability to combine movements into a single harmonious dance composition using a certain amount of imagination, is the second factor that determines the success of the creative process of composing a dance.

The second-year students had studied special subjects for three semesters and had some experience of choreographic practice. By the beginning of the transition to online learning, they had accumulated some practical material and knowledge that they could use. However, as practice has shown, knowledge alone is not enough; it is necessary to have developed competencies, that is, the ability to put the available knowledge into practice.

In creative universities, independent learning and creative work are an essential part of the educational process. They help to effectively develop the skills and abilities required for future teachers and choreographers. During the second year, students begin to work with movement and create independent combinations. This is the stage where they develop their pedagogical and creative skills. The teacher's role is crucial at this point, but online learning can make it harder to implement properly.

One reason for the students' lack of creativity might be the complexity of the task. However, this is not entirely true. Creating a choreographic form can be the goal of a difficult training project or an ordinary educational one. The difference between these two types of projects lies in the level of complexity and the need for a creative approach.

In the current circumstances, the task of finding a unique solution to a creative problem was not set. Instead, the focus was on creating a standard training project based on the program material. The students had freedom to choose the material for their compositions. They could use any familiar dance material they wanted and create combinations of it. The level of complexity depended on their own imagination and ambitions.

Some students were not able to use even a simple template for combining the

available movements. This was not due to a lack of creativity or divergent thinking, which is the ability to break away from familiar associations and create new ones. It was more about reproductive thinking, which is a type of thinking that simply reproduces what has been seen before. Even for students who were new to folk and stage dance and had never faced a creative task before, the complexity of the assignment couldn't be the main reason for their failure or unsatisfactory performance.

One of the main reasons for the creative failure was the mismatch between the applicant's performance training and the pedagogical focus of the university education. Most students who enter choreographic universities are familiar with the performing aspect of choreography and don't have a clear idea of the specifics of professional pedagogical activity. This activity is much more complex and multifaceted than they thought when they chose their profession. In higher education, students start to understand the differences between the main types of professional activity a choreographer can do: performing, teaching, staging, and creative.

As we all know, the development of skills and professional abilities is most effectively achieved through systematic, purposeful practice. However, in the context of distance learning, the lack of traditional practical classes for a long time prevented second-year students from developing the necessary professional competencies on time. These include the ability to apply theoretical and methodological knowledge in practical staging activities, as well as personal qualities such as figurative and plastic thinking, creative imagination, professional vision, and artistic taste, which are essential for a choreographer.

It is important to acknowledge the subjective reasons for the poor quality of some students' independent work. These include educational and social infantilism and personal immaturity. In the context of isolation, when students are left to their own devices, pedagogical control is weakened, and the opportunity for help and correction is limited. This makes it difficult for students to develop personal and professional ambitions, reflection, self-analysis, self-organization, the ability to self-learn, self-develop, and self-improve — all qualities that distance learning is aimed at and ultimately contribute to successful mastery of the profession. In the situation of isolation, when students are left to their own devices, the level of pedagogical control is reduced, and the possibilities for help and correction are limited, exceptional qualities such as personal and professional ambition, reflection, introspection, self-organization, the ability to study, develop, and improve on their own become particularly important. These are the individuals for whom the distance learning format is designed and upon whom the successful mastery of the profession ultimately rests.

This is evidenced by the fact that the same students next year in the traditional form of education, demonstrated completely different result of creativity. Their third-year works were characterized by a decent artistic and pedagogical level and did not

require significant correction. They demonstrated imagination, sense of proportion, knowledge of compositional laws, mastery of the method of combining, and more. However, it was not easy to establish criteria for evaluating the intermediate and final control in these conditions.

The same students, the next year, with a traditional form of training, showed a completely different result in an independent composition. Their work in the third year was distinguished by a high artistic and pedagogical level and did not require significant proof. We observed the presence of fantasy and a sense of proportion, knowledge of compositional laws, the ability to combine different elements, and so on. However, it was very difficult to develop criteria for evaluating intermediate and final control in the current conditions.

In addition to the quality of the completed works, the student's attitude to independent learning, activity, fulfillment, responsibility, and aspiration to master professional competencies were also taken into account.

To sum up, we can conclude that distance learning in choreography significantly limits the opportunities for teaching practical material to junior students, resulting in reduced effectiveness and quality of education.

To ensure high-quality training, each type of activity has developed its own methods and technologies for effectively developing professional competencies. In choreography, the traditional and dominant method of teaching special disciplines is practical and involves direct visual transmission (broadcasting) of dance material from the teacher to the student. The teacher shows, and the student repeats. Of course, the emergence of new technologies, forms, and methods of knowledge transfer is a logical and progressive process. However, in some fields of study, these technologies can only be an addition to the main traditional tools and teaching methods.

Given the possibility of returning to distance learning in the future, choreography teachers will need to identify and develop:

- Effective methods for conducting practical classes online.
- Methods for presenting new practical material and providing feedback.
- Appropriate types and forms of students' independent work for each course and department.
- Criteria for evaluating and forms of control.
- Methods to help students develop professional self-awareness and reflection, activate motivational factors, and foster a conscious attitude towards teaching a profession.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to create a full video course of training lessons with detailed explanations and practical demonstrations of material for each year of study, in line with the curriculum.



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