Specifics of Forming an Individual Approach in the Choreographers' Training During the Pandemic

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Abstract

The article is devoted to studying the educational process of individualization of student-choreographers. The study aims to establish the main elements of successful individual approach implementation in teaching choreography during the pandemic. To achieve the goal, the following tasks were performed, in particular, to highlight the problems and their solutions in teaching choreography during a pandemic and to identify changes in the student's and teachers' attitudes toward the quality of choreographers' training. Research methods are based on general scientific methods of cognition, in particular analysis and synthesis, generalization, and descriptive methods. The main method is an experiment in the form of a survey involving questionnaires. The survey results are displayed in tabular and graphical form. The results processing required qualitative and quantitative approaches. The hypothesis is that forms of practice-oriented and variable individual learning require the use of digital technologies in distance education. It ultimately leads to an increase in the education quality level. The result of the study is the discovery of opportunities to improve the teaching practice of choreographic disciplines during a pandemic.

Keywords: choreographic education, educational process, higher education, individual approach, online education, educational software, teaching material

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century has become revolutionary in the educational process development. It is due to the pandemic caused by Covid-19, which has formed the prerequisites for using new technologies in educational processes for students of any specialty. Choreography is no exception. Higher education institutions have gained experience organizing online learning using e-learning platforms over the past three years. These platforms have been successfully implemented in European higher education institutions and tested in the world's leading universities (Apostolos et al., 1996; Zur Muehlen et al., 2005).

Choreography is a specific art form that often needs to deviate from the traditional template training and move to variability and flexibility, in other words, individual approaches. The individuality and uniqueness of dance allow conveying its aesthetic value. Therefore, choreography is one of those specialties that require a complete deviation from the template training and the development of individualized.

However, educational approaches to forming creative skills have several methodological obstacles, which cause problems in codification, motivation, communication, and other problems within higher education institutions.

In the distance learning process, specialists faced the problem of reducing creativity due to the excessive formalization of teaching methods and technologies (Huang & Liu, 2021). This problem has caused concern among choreography teachers, which requires active development and implementation of new technologies in teaching choreography (Aleynikova & Roshchin, 2021).

In the context of distance education, individual approaches to the training of choreography students need to be reformed. The knowledge acquisition process should be aimed at developing skills in dance movements, dance construction, and composition that reflect the richness of this art form. It is about creating a new approach to building choreographic strategies (Wynne-Jones, 2021) and revising dance movements, techniques, and dance composition rules (DeLahunta & Shaw, 2008). Such approaches will allow to control of knowledge acquisition and expand the

teachers' capabilities in a group and individual approach, create an opportunity for each person to convey the nuances of movement formation and explore the practical possibility of implementing the idea of a new movement in dance.

An individual approach in the pedagogy of the choreographic direction involves independent learning, which involves the creation of new curricula focused on self-education. It creates the prerequisites for the formation of collective responsibility for learning outcomes and allows for the establishment of communication links between the teacher and the student. The use of special software Poser (Curious Labs), Motion Builder (Alias), and 3dsMax (AutoCad) will allow us to realize this idea in practice and implement it in further educational processes.

Such programs offer the possibility of using human figure animation and allow formalizing the dance. Accordingly, there is a need to adapt such software to the educational goals of higher education institutions that teach choreographic art. Using software such as TroikaTronix, Viewpoints AI, SpiderRobot, and Eyesweb allows controlling the dance movements and significantly help organize distance education training.

The global coronavirus pandemic has radically changed the educational process of European higher education institutions and created the prerequisites for the evolution of the methodology of teaching artistic disciplines based on individual approaches. In this context, it is necessary to create a set of quality cases for the possibility of distance teaching, considering the individual approach. It requires changes in the minds of all participants in the educational process and correction of the teaching methodology of choreography in higher education institutions (Van Dinther et al., 2011; Mishra et al., 2020).

The study aims at developing methodologies for applying an individual approach to teaching choreography in distance learning. The following tasks should be performed to determine this methodology's effectiveness:

- 1. To establish the main elements, approaches, and methodologies for implementing an individual approach in the training of choreographers.
- 2. Determine the software use intensity in teaching choreography during the pandemic and its dynamics.
- 3. Identify the key problems that arise in the individual training of choreographers

2. Literature Review

The methodology of teaching choreography is an issue that is widely covered in the scientific literature. At the same time, the development of methods for teaching choreography in distance learning is not so fully described. However, the history of such research began long before the pandemic conditions. The first attempts to develop such a methodology were developed by M. Cunningham (1969). He introduced into choreographic education animated figures and sticks, which allowed for conveying choreographic performances with a computer program. This idea was positively supported by other choreographers and began to be used in practice. In particular, in America, the Labanotation dance recording system was widely used (Newlove, 1993). Using this system, an interface for transferring dance movements was developed. The introduction of this technology allowed us to work effectively in remote conditions, and also allowed to transmit dance compositions effectively, and coordinate all actors in this process (Gibbons, 2015). The issue of distance choreographic education has acquired a new stage of research in recent years when all higher education institutions were forced to work remotely (Dou et al., 2021; Widana et al., 2021).

The main difficulty choreographers faced was forming an individual approach, where it was essential to transfer choreographic experience from teacher to student. Many studies have been devoted to the problems of individual and variable learning (Aleinikova & Roschin, 2021; Cleland et al., 2020). Such studies show the practice of forming a strategy for formalizing dance movements and ways of transmitting information in quarantine. Using digital technologies, teachers began an experiment, during which they found solutions that were worked out and transferred to other higher education institutions. In addition to teaching the basic material, the teacher must find an opportunity to correct the student's work and convey his experience and vision in a specific educational situation. It is even more difficult with distance technologies to use a control and evaluation system of the teacher's performance (Laban, 1963).

Actualization of the creative process occurs through active involvement in the professional training of teachers and the use of proven educational materials. Numerous publications reflect the problems of assessing the quality of choreographic training of future choreographers-teachers.

It is also important to consider innovative approaches in pedagogy as an important part of the modern educational process (Osmanbegovic & Suljic, 2012). For example, some researchers believe that using innovative approaches in

the training of choreography students should correlate with the learning quality, which in turn is an essential aspect of implementing an individual approach (Duff et al., 2004; Day & Harrison, 2007).

Some researchers show that the influence of the teacher's personality is important for choreographic education, which can convey a unique dance style and develop new, possibly not previously used teaching technologies and adapt them to the conditions of distance work. In such conditions, a special connection between the teacher and the student is formed, the content of the dance develops, and motivation and emotional content are formed, which together are essential elements in the construction of the composition (Kim, 2020 & Svetsky et al., 2020).

Some studies consider the features of an individual approach in future art education (Mikulowski & Pilski, 2017) and choreographic education (Talpă, 2020; Fdili Alaoui et al., 2013). A separate part of such studies is devoted to the study of artistic communication. These are the connections between the actor and the viewer when the viewer perceives the dance and feels the emotional content, understanding the uniqueness and individual approach of the choreographer in conveying a certain artistic image.

Along with this, modern changes dictate the need to develop methodological tools for distance learning (Carino, 2019), providing several advantages in experience sharing (Lvova & Bakhlova, 2021). In general, a promising area of modern research in the field of dance education is projects that allow for effective interaction between teachers and students and allow for the effective development of dance art within a higher education institution (Leijen et al., 2009; Dania et al., 2011; Sööt & Leijen, 2012).

3. Materials and Methods

The study involves an integrated approach that considers the features of an individual approach in teaching student-choreographers during a pandemic. General scientific methods of cognition are also used, which include analysis, synthesis, observation, and description. These methods create the possibility of revealing the theoretical foundations of the choreography development, taking into account quarantine restrictions in a pandemic. Scientific and theoretical developments in the teaching of choreography involve the use of additional methods. In particular, these are tabular and graphical representation methods, comparison, and systematization. Statistical research is carried out based on a survey, which is carried out by questionnaires. At the beginning of the study, a hypothesis was proposed, which had to be confirmed by statistical data collection. The pedagogical experiment was carried out taking into account the presence of students' thorough theoretical foundations and previous practical experience in the choreographic activity. It is of particular importance since introducing new technologies in education requires taking into account the social and communicative component, which is particularly important in training specialists in choreography. For the research experiment, several European universities that provide artistic world were involved:

- Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (Lutsk, Volyn region, Ukraine) - G1 (group),

- Ivan Franko National University of Lviv (Lviv, Ukraine) G3 (group),
- Academy of Humanities and Economics in Lodz (Lodz, Poland) G2 (group).

Students of the specialty 024 "Choreography" were selected for the survey. The information was collected during 2019-2020. The experiment involved 36 people - 30 students, including ten students from each educational institution, six teachers, and two teachers from each educational institution. The object of the study was choreography disciplines.

Data collection was conducted from January 2019 to June 2020 during one academic semester. It should be noted that during the pandemic, the educational process in the listed educational institutions was carried out remotely. As a result, it led to changes in educational material construction and the use of new approaches to the construction of practical classes.

The research was conducted in 3 stages. In the first and second stages, a survey was conducted on the effectiveness of new online methods of teaching choreography. According to the study results, the fundamental problems that arise in the education process were identified.

Data collection and evaluation were carried out in the 3rd stage of the study. All respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the experiment regarding privacy and anonymity.

The study results allow for summarizing information on the effectiveness of technology in higher education institutions in teaching choreography.

4. Results

Teaching choreography during a pandemic requires using a set of methods, tools, instruments, and methodologies that are effective in the context of distance education. First of all, this involves the use of digital platforms and specialized software. It is especially important that choreography training takes place continuously, as this guarantees a higher level of qualification by students. With the use of digital education, choreography teachers can constantly contact and communicate with their students. The use of digital technologies makes it possible to synchronize and harmonize cooperation between the teacher and the student without the need to visit the educational institution. Such methods are even more effective in blended learning when the student receives theoretical or basic information and has the opportunity to consolidate it practically in the educational institution. As a result, teachers can use individual approaches in dance art and facilitate the organization of creative activities during blended or distance learning. The use of digital technologies also allows for regular monitoring and evaluation of student performance.

At the 1st stage of project implementation, the goal, tasks and main components of the educational strategy were determined. The main components of the educational process in the conditions of distance learning are an increase in the volume of mixed learning, strengthening the partnership between the teacher and the student, reorganization of the educational process, changing the principles of management of educational institutions, transfer of management of an educational institution to a virtual plane. Online education has become a priority direction for the development of higher education (Armstrong et al., 2011; Harasim, 2000).



Figure 1. Teaching and Learning Principles during the Pandemic

The use of innovations in the development strategy of educational institutions that provide education in choreographic fields allows for modernizing the education system and transferring the management system of the educational institution to the virtual space. It involves the creation of a set of educational materials, as well as an increase in the share of individual approaches that can be flexible if needed. All this takes place against the background of constant teacher work with students using special software. In the context of the pandemic, universities were forced to invest in digital technologies and turn to designers to form a framework for administrative and management activities and effective management of distance learning (Kitchenham et al., 2009; Chow & Cao, 2008).

In software development, the focus is on creating quality learning materials and plans. They should not become an ordinary routine but a creative process that can be implemented in the conditions of distance education. Educational institutions have prepared new teaching and illustrative materials that focus on the individual educational needs of choreography students. Educational institutions in the learning process use synchronous (Zoom) and asynchronous learning platforms (Canvas & Blackboard, D2L), each of which has several advantages that students and teachers use. The pandemic has become the driving force that has improved the learning process by introducing remote communication into practice (Slipchuk et al., 2021). For example, it is convenient for teachers to present theoretical material using Internet technologies, while practical classes focus on developing, improving, and implementing

practical solutions. It allows choosing an individual learning trajectory and focusing on those materials that will allow each student to achieve the goal (Diachenko et al., 2021; Kadir et al., 2021).

At the 1st stage of the project implementation, educational materials were prepared, and specialists organized training on improving digital literacy for students and teachers. Such lessons improved students' skills in learning platforms, working with software, navigating educational materials, and quickly finding the necessary answers to questions. At this stage, preliminary surveys were conducted to determine how fluent students were in using the software. In particular, students had to answer whether they use some programs in education and in practice. If so, they should specify which ones.

Software	G 1	G 1		G 2		G 3	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Improvisational Technologies	27%	63%	32%	68%	14%	86%	
Web3D	40%	60%	28%	72%	18%	82%	
Synchronous Objects	32%	68%	15%	85%	30%	70%	
Tour Jete Pirouette	12%	88%	23%	77%	23%	77%	
TKB Project	25%	75%	44%	56%	28%	72%	
Eyesweb	38%	62%	45%	55%	30%	70%	

Table 1. Use of Different Software in the Process of Teaching Choreography Students

Source: author's development

According to the study, it can be concluded that students of Polish educational institutions, in particular the Academy of Humanities and Economics in Łódź, have the best indicator in the use of digital technologies, as in pre-pandemic practice they used software for choreographic education. However, it is worth noting that not all students are willing to work with the software. Only 30% of respondents are satisfied with the use of the software.

 Table 2. Difficulties of Students-Choreographers in the Process of Distance Learning

N⁰	Difficulties and shortcomings	Group	Significant	Insignificant	Not observed
1	1 It is difficult to acquire and practice practical skills (dance movements)	G1	45%	55%	0
		G2	35%	62%	3%
		G3	40%	60%	0
2.	2. It is difficult to collaborate and		30%	60%	10%
	communicate online	G2	25%	70%	5%
		G3	15%	75%	10%
3.	3. The software is hard to work with	G1	10%	80%	10%
		G2	20%	77%	3%
		G3	10%	85%	5%
4.	4. Psychological and personal problems	G1	45%	45%	10%
		G2	50%	47%	3%
		G3	50%	30%	20%
5.	5. The need to spend extra time to		20%	75%	5%
	download completed tasks	G2	32%	60%	8%
		G3	18%	52%	30%
6.	6. Lack of individual approach	G1	65%	32%	3%
	G2	50%	47%	3%	
		G3	70%	30%	7%
7.	Financial difficulties, lack of	G1	10%	60%	30%
necessar	necessary equipment	G2	0%	20%	80%
		G3	3%	72%	25%

Source: author's development

The second stage involved an active learning process. It was monitored according to the students' requests. Regular consultations with technical specialists and interviews with teachers were held. In the process, the topics and content of online courses were diversified. Educational platforms and programs were selected, which allowed to realize the creative idea of each student-choreographer. During the educational process, students were surveyed about their worries, fears, and concerns due to limited communication through distance learning.

According to the study, it can be concluded that psychological problems are one of the biggest problems of distance learning. 45% of respondents consider them significant. It is natural since the introduction of quarantine restrictions led to all students staying at home, depriving each other of free space. Students had no opportunity for personal communication outside the home, which further complicated the psychological state of young people.

Communication problems (20% - significant problems) and depersonalization of the educational process (60% - significant problems) are also important.

Ukrainian students noted that the main problems include needing more technical and material opportunities for distance or blended learning. In particular, 10% of respondents noted that the main problem of distance education is the Internet connection in their locality. In addition, many students needed the opportunity to gain knowledge, creating an inequality problem.

Software	G 1		G 2		G 3	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Improvisational Technologies	45%	55%	48%	52%	25%	75%
Web3D	49%	51%	47%	53%	40%	60%
Synchronous Objects	50%	50%	30%	70%	75%	25%
Tour Jete Pirouette	32%	68%	37%	63%	53%	47%
TKB Project	50%	50%	24%	76%	20%	80%
Eyesweb	70%	30%	25%	75%	20%	80%

Source: author's development

Table 4. Difficulties and Disadvantages of Individual Learning

N⁰	Disadvantages and difficulties	Group	Significant	Insignificant	Not observed
		G1	25%	75%	0
1	1 It is difficult to acquire and practice practical skills (dance movements)	G2	25%	72%	0%
		G3	30%	70%	0
		G1	25%	70%	5%
2. It is difficult to co communicate online	It is difficult to collaborate and	G2	15%	80%	5%
	communicate online	G3	10%	80%	10%
3. The software is hard to work with		G1	5%	75%	20%
	The software is hard to work with	G2	10%	80%	10%
	G3	10%	75%	15%	
		G1	30%	40%	30%
4.	4. Psychological and personal problems		40%	40%	20%
		G3	35%	40%	25%
		G1	13%	67%	20%
5. The need to spend extra time download completed tasks	The need to spend extra time to	G2	20%	60%	20%
	download completed tasks	G3	15%	50%	35%
		G1	50%	38%	12%
6.	Lack of individual approach	G2	20%	70%	10%
		G3	30%	45%	25%
7.	Financial difficulties, lack of necessary equipment	G1	0%	50%	50%
		G2	0%	15%	85%
		G3	0%	55%	45%

Source: author's development

According to the 3rd stage results, an increase in the total number of respondents who began to use the software more actively by 23% is worth noting. Thus, the possibility of obtaining dance education under quarantine depends on students' technical capabilities and digital skills. Students also answered the question about the difficulties they faced in the learning process, particularly when implementing an individual approach in the conditions of distance work.

At the final stage, it was noted that students' attitudes to the educational process had changed. First of all, it should be noted the solution to technical problems associated with the lack of Internet or equipment that can be used in the distance education process. In general, the problem has been solved, and the importance of the problem has decreased by 10%. Over time, students also adapted to the psychological pressure associated with limited communication. In addition, in the conditions of self-education, 13% of respondents saw an opportunity to implement creative plans.

5. Discussion

Many studies have shown that the dance education development at the beginning of the 21st century is characterized by the growth of students who wish to relate their lives to dance (Bigus et al., 2021; Wahyuni & Widyaningsih, 2021). It is because dance education is supported by universities that develop it and promote positive changes in the educational process. The modern educational process involves the use of an individual approach, which increases students' motivation to receive such education, as it stops being standardized and outdated. Modern challenges and threats to humanity require reforms in the education at the highest quality. The solution to this problem required, first of all, the solution of technical and technological support for students.

Choreographic education is considered a unique cultural process that determines the specifics of the creative artistic potential of society, which distinguishes it from other areas of educational activity (Irchen, 2015). Giguere (2019), in his study, noted that choreography is an important part of art, as creative thinking allows one to realize individual creative potential. The author explores the context of modern dance education, which provides a practical orientation of education and the acquisition of choreographic skills, which is the basis for developing a modern dance course. Providing quality education to choreography students lies in the possibility of using digital technologies in online teaching. In general, 13% of respondents noted an upbeat assessment of the special software.

6. Conclusion

Today, an individual approach to the professional training of students of higher educational institutions, who acquire the specialty of choreographer, is of particular importance. In addition, in distance education, an individual approach can be provided with the help of unique online educational platforms, software for training choreography, digitalization of learning processes.

Online learning has become the basis for maintaining institutional stability. Implementation of distance learning is possible in a combination of group and individual approaches, which is especially important for art education, where creativity is a sign of professionalism. This in turn becomes centralized and takes into account institutional planning and industry standards combined with the interests of each student. An individual approach to learning can be organized with the help of software and educational platforms.

During the crisis, students faced difficulties in using the software at the beginning of the pandemic. Still, over time, the problem disappeared for 23% of students. The teaching process also needed modernization and the formation of new methodological, technical, and technological tools and teacher training. The integration of online education should occur within the teaching of choreographic disciplines and the educational institution as a whole, extending to management processes.

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