

## Flexible Learning for Dance Instruction in Higher Education Institutions at the National Capital Region, Philippines

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### Abstract

*This study addressed the lack of research on the use of flexible learning in dance in the Philippines. It investigated the experiences of dance teachers in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the National Capital Region (NCR) during the shift to flexible learning amid the pandemic, specifically from academic years 2020 to 2022. The study examined the different flexible learning approaches, methods and techniques used, and assessed their effectiveness in ensuring sustained effective delivery of dance instruction. It also examined the challenges encountered in using flexible learning. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were used to collect data which were analyzed using descriptive analysis. Findings revealed that flexible learning, consisting of synchronous and asynchronous delivery modes, was the only suitable method during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, its adoption caused a lot of pressures and challenges among teachers, particularly in preparing lessons and teaching materials, including the lack of familiarity with using the appropriate technologies. Recommended steps to improve the use of flexible learning were gathered to provide readiness to dance teachers and students during times of restricted activities like the pandemic.*

**Keywords:** dance instruction, flexible learning, pandemic

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education systems worldwide, compelling institutions to adapt to alternative modes of delivery. Flexible learning emerged as a response, though challenges on its implementation varied depending on the nature of the subject, availability of resources and personal circumstances of teachers. While teachers struggled with technological barriers, materials preparation, and student engagement, the practical difficulties they faced were highly contextual, particularly for subjects requiring physical presence like dance.

Teaching dance had a significant change following the COVID-19 pandemic

outbreak in 2020. Regulatory institutions required the adoption of flexible learning in all subjects. Consequently, dance teachers faced big challenges in translating studio-based, embodied instruction into digital formats. Teaching dance through screens became a unique problem, with the difficulty of replicating the energy of a studio environment. The loss of face-to-face interaction disrupted traditional pedagogies and needed urgent improvements in instructional strategies. Despite these challenges, there remains limited research on how flexible learning is used in dance teaching, particularly in the Philippine context. Therefore, this study addressed this gap.

Conducted in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines among Higher Education Institutions (HEI), this study assessed innovative teaching methods adopted in teaching dance during the pandemic. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. discuss the teaching approaches, methods and techniques in flexible learning adopted by HEI teachers in NCR before and during the pandemic;
2. assess the effectiveness of these teaching approaches, methods, and techniques;
3. examine the challenges encountered by HEI dance teachers in using flexible learning; and
4. recommend strategies for improving the use of flexible learning in dance classes in HEIs.

The results of this study can benefit students, parents, dance teachers, school administrators and other researchers in dance toward improvement of the quality of teaching in dance in HEIs.

Crises such as pandemics require teaching and learning processes to assume a different form to continue despite various constraints (Chang-Richards et. al., 2013; Henderson, 2012). In response to COVID-19, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) prescribed the use of flexible learning. As defined in CHED Memorandum Order No. 04 of 2020, flexible learning is a “pedagogical approach allowing flexible time, place, and audience, but not solely focused on the use of technology” (CHED, 2020). Flexible learning addresses the learners’ unique needs in terms of time, place, pace, and process. Lessons are delivered via online learning, with additional use of printed modules, storage devices, and learning packages. Online learning often involves synchronous, real-time sessions with time-based outcome assessment, and asynchronous, delayed-time activities, like pre-recorded video lectures and time-independent assessments.

In remote learning environments, students and teachers can be anywhere yet connected via digital tools (Singh & Thurman, 2019). This mode of learning, once considered supplementary, became a necessity rather than option during the pandemic, as it was essential for sustaining teaching and learning activities (Dhawan, 2020). However, questions arose about the possibility of teaching performance-based disciplines such as dance under online learning conditions (Lemoine & Richardson, 2020).

Universities offering Dance under the Bachelor of Performing Arts follow CHED's Order No. 25-17, which requires the program to cover mandatory course components in theory and criticism, aesthetics and semiotics, music, movement and choreography. They also study theoretical aspects of dance, like its history, aesthetics and signification, criticism, sociology and anthropology of dance, anatomy and kinesiology, movement notation, music, theatrical designs (costumes, sets, lighting and make-up) and dance production. They are developed in both theoretical and practical expertise in dance.(Villaruz, 2017). In addition to various teaching styles, dance classes can be structured in various ways, ranging from classes devoted exclusively to skill acquisition to classes aimed at developing personal and interpersonal skills. The class structure is determined by the teacher's expertise and pedagogical approaches. It also depends on the characteristics of both the teacher and the students. Dance educators have varied strengths, abilities, values, personalities, and constraints that influence how they teach, just as students also differ in ability, talent, personality, and learning styles (Mainwaring & Krasnow, 2010).

Upon learning that classes will soon be shifting to online instruction, dance teachers expressed concern over issues such as lack of space, safety risks, insufficient training, and limited technological resources (Li et al., 2022). Students were equally impacted by the move, and many universities struggled to provide enough infrastructure or resources to facilitate online teaching. The change from studio-based to digital teaching posed challenges to dance education, where modeling and physical contact are central to effectively teaching dance (Simamora, 2020).

Achieving engagement and performance in virtual settings become challenging to achieve, though some innovative approaches emerged (Gingrasso, 2020). Nonetheless, the challenges in tertiary-level dance education continued, highlighting the importance of an in-person engaged atmosphere in studios in teaching dance (Papp-Danka & Lanszki, 2020). Heyang and Martin (2021) captured a dance teacher's initial worries about shifting to online teaching. Concerned about how a hands-on subject like dance could be effectively taught online while maintaining educational standards, the teacher sought guidance by contacting department heads of other Chinese universities, only to find that uncertainty was the prevailing feeling among them. Many expressed reluctance, doubting that online platforms can provide the needed feedback in dance, something that can only be achieved through face-to-face observation. The shift to online teaching, however, was unavoidable, despite these challenges.

## **Dance and Technology**

Dance students rely heavily on observations—closely watching their teachers' movements and play-demonstrations. This visual learning is followed by imitation and repetition, with real-time corrections provided by the teacher. Based on this, traditional classes have involved minimal use of technology in the past. As noted by Calvert et al. (2005), dance is among the last subjects to embrace technology applications into teaching.

As one of the oldest forms of performing arts, dance has been slow to adopt modern technology, firmly believing that it should be taught in a bricks-and-

mortar setting. Li et al. (2022) observed that performing arts education, including dance, has relied on face-to-face settings, following the “sage on the stage” and “learn from the master” models of instruction.

The possible contribution of technology to the improvement of dance teaching has been increasingly recognized. Researchers have advocated for the use of technology in dance education, as the majority of students nowadays are digital natives familiar with the most cutting-edge digital tools (Li et al. 2018). Technologies such as mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), blogs, and learning platforms have been shown to improve teaching effectiveness, student engagement, quality of instructional resources, and interactions between instructors and students.

Specifically, in tertiary dance education, the use of digital tools in dance teaching and learning is emerging globally, as it meets many universities’ strategic plans to enhance teaching, learning and student engagement (Li et al, 2018). The growing literature on the acceptance of artistic performance through social media is also noted (Hong et al., 2020). As such, digital tools can push dance education to an unknown territory—a space where technology, creativity, and embodiment intertwine (Li et al., 2022; Schmid & McGreevy-Nicholas, 2021).

### **Assessment of Dance Classes**

Assessment and feedback which are essential components of dance education may be restricted by online teaching. Dance teachers do physical corrections, such as adjusting a student's alignment, which are impossible to do in a virtual setting. Morgan (2020) explains that “Dance is inherently more intimate than other academic disciplines. Tactile feedback from one another is a critical component of the process. With the restrictions of physical/social distancing, we lose a fundamental part of our discipline, our practice.”

Feedback, especially when used within the framework of formative assessment, or assessment for learning (AfL), helps students identify specific areas for improvement. According to Harlen et al (2006), a good deal of attention is now given on using assessment not just to measure learning, but to enhance it through guidance and reflection. In contrast, summative assessment or assessment of learning, is used to evaluate what pupils know or can do at certain times in order to report achievement and progress.

Effective learning does not follow a one-size-fits-all model. Students interact with new information in diverse ways, and they have different learning styles. This diversity places a clear responsibility to teachers to recognize and adapt to individual differences, providing support for students to learn. During the pandemic, teachers had to work double in monitoring and assessing student progress remotely. Torrance (2007) said that “teachers’ ability to individualize dance education and feedback is prerequisite for working with assessment for learning.” Individualized learning means addressing different student needs, from learning difficulties and different physical capacities, while fostering each student’s unique potential.

## **Challenges in using Flexible Learning**

Studies from other countries have identified challenges related to the implementation of flexible learning in dance education. Kurtz (2022) enumerated environmental issues such as lack of available space, distractions in the home, and differing degrees and rigor of training, all of which are new limitations for college-level dance students.

Vitharana (2021) examined the challenges encountered by dance teachers in teaching online. These include limited IT knowledge, lack of access to digital equipment, and challenges from students who are more technologically adept. Some institutions limited access to online teaching tools to a small number of teachers. Additionally, many teachers lacked facilities for preparing lessons electronically at home. The number of students in one class exceeded the capacity of the available equipment. Training on how to use digital tools was also inadequate.

The same study by Vitharana (2021) found that teachers lacked confidence in their ability to implement online class strategies. This was attributed to 80% of the teachers who responded that they had no experience teaching online classes.

## **Flexible Learning Theory**

Gearheart (n.d.) citing George and Luke (1995), stated that the term “anytime, anyplace” is common when discussing online learning. However, to fully reflect the inclusive nature of flexible learning, the phrase should be changed to “anytime, anyplace, for everyone”. The term flexible learning has a dual meaning. It is commonly used in place of distance education, especially in international contexts, and it is also a learning theory. This theory challenges traditional delivery models designed for the industrial age, emphasizing approaches suited to the information age, where learner-centered, adaptive methods are prioritized (George & Luke, 1995).

Flexible learning theory places learner educational needs and choices as the center of educational decision-making. It signifies a shift from formal, didactic, whole-class instruction towards a more individualized or group managed learning, supported by structured resource materials. Gearheart (n.d.) states that “flexibility and access are important to the success of education in the information age. In order to provide flexible learning, an instructor must consider the issues facing online education such as pedagogy, learner needs and characteristics, interaction and communication between and among instructors, learner and content, outcomes, and assessment”.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, with interviews as the main source of data. Data were gathered from teachers of four higher education institutions (HEIs) offering Bachelor of Performing Arts majors in Dance located at the National Capital

Region (NCR), Philippines. Due to the observance of health protocols such as physical distancing during the pandemic, most of the data gathering activities were conducted virtually through Zoom, emails, and Facebook Messenger.

**Table 1**

*Respondent Institutions and Profiles*

<b>Respondents' Institution</b>	<b>Degree Program</b>	<b>Number and Characteristics</b>
University of the Philippines Diliman	Bachelor of Music, Major in Dance	3 female respondents
De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde	Bachelor of Performing Arts, Major in Dance	1 female respondent 1 male respondent
Guang Ming College	Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance Program	1 female respondent 2 male respondents
Asian Institute of Maritime Studies	Bachelor of Performing Arts, Dance Program	1 female respondent 2 male respondents

The University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD) dance program is based at the College of Music and under the Bachelor of Music program. It is a five-year course of study with a wider coverage providing a well-rounded preparation including General (GE) courses for a career in dance. UPD's Bachelor of Music major in Dance includes classes in composition, history of dance, anatomy, dance semiotic and pedagogy. De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde's Bachelor of Performing Arts Major in Dance was first offered in 1994. The program was initially set up in partnership with Ballet Philippines (BP) to directly provide BP dancers with a college degree while they worked as full-time members of the company. Since then, the dance program has established itself as a leading dance program with graduates going to prominent dance here and abroad. Guang Ming College (GMC)'s dance program aims to cultivate Filipino dance artists and scholars through a comprehensive curriculum in dance performance. It focuses on Asian, ballet and contemporary dance. The program blends a combination of theory and practice. Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) dance program aims to produce graduates who are highly skilled practitioners of their specific technique, genre, and style and who are competent in the theory, history, literature and production of the dance. The program was established in February 2020 with six students during the Academic Year of 2020-2021.

The study used purposeful sampling, selecting only a limited number of participants who are able to serve as primary data sources due to the nature of research design and aims and objectives (Dudovskiy, 2018). The study focused on teachers handling dance classes under the Bachelor of Performing Arts during school years 2020 to 2022, which is a period covered when the government ordered the closure of all schools, including dance studios and schools. A total of 11 teachers served as research respondents.

Among them, five respondents are male and six are female. Two respondents are 25 to 30 years old, three respondents were 31 to 35 years old, and one

respondent was 36 to 40 years old. The rest are above 40 years old. Five respondents had less than five years of teaching experience, three respondents had 6 to 10 years of teaching experience, and the remaining three respondents had over 10 years of teaching experience.

All the respondents were academically qualified to teach dance, with at least a degree course in dance or related fields. One respondent holds a Diploma in Creative Musical and Theater Arts, five respondents hold bachelor's degree in Dance, while one respondent has a master's degree in Sports Studies, and one is continuing a master's degree in Anthropology. The rest of the three respondents are pursuing their Ph.D. degrees. The respondents also occupy different positions as faculty. Four respondents are part-time lecturers, two respondents are senior lecturers, one respondent is the Program Coordinator in Dance in their HEI, one respondent works under the Office of Student Affairs as Student Activity and Company Coordinator, two respondents are Department Chairs, and one respondent acts as the Executive Director for the Office of the President in their HEI.

All respondents qualified for the study having taught dance both prior and during the pandemic and experienced transition to flexible learning.

### **Framework of Analysis**

Primary data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire which included both survey and open-and closed-ended questions. The instrument was reviewed and validated by a fellow dance teacher and a field study adviser to ensure validity. It was designed to collect data on innovative teaching strategies used by dance teachers, in addition to the background information of the respondents. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale to get insights and perceptions on the effectiveness of the innovations used. Scales used represented teachers' satisfaction with achieving their objectives of their dance classes. Prior to the use of the scale, teacher respondents were asked to clearly define and reflect on the goals of their dance classes. Five responses were used and numerical values to the responses were assigned.

To gather more nuanced responses, the questionnaire included several open-ended questions aimed at collecting first-hand descriptions of the teaching methods, challenges encountered, online tools and strategies used. The questionnaire also surveyed the innovations adopted by the dance teachers. It gathered insights from respondents as to which of these innovations are worth adopting and effective.

To supplement the questionnaire data, in-depth interviews were conducted for clarification and deeper insight. The questionnaires were sent through email to the respondents ahead of time allowing them ample time to study the questions before the actual interview. The respondents were informed about the study's purpose and asked for their consent to record interviews, which took no more than 45 to 60 minutes.

The study gathered and analyzed three kinds of data: document research

data, survey data, and interview data. First, document research data consisted of background information relevant to the study, which was analyzed to contextualize and support findings. Second, survey data were gathered through a questionnaire with both close-ended and open-ended questions.. Close-ended questions required respondents to choose from a list of choices. Responses to these questions were tabulated and frequency counts were derived to determine preferences and assess factors, such as technology-related concerns that affected teaching innovations. Open-ended questions allowed participants to freely describe their experiences. Responses were analyzed, tallied and contextualized. Finally, interview data were also collected through semi-structured interviews, carried out using an interview schedule, to clarify and expand on the responses previously provided.

After accomplishing all the interviews, data analysis was undertaken. Interview transcripts were reviewed, and initial observations on emerging challenges were noted. The challenges were then grouped into thematic categories, which included: technical difficulties (e.g., internet issues, software constraints, distorted sound), loss of physical feedback (e.g., inability to correct posture, lack of tactile guidance, spatial limitations), pedagogical shifts (e.g., adapted teaching methods, use of pre-recorded demonstrations, modified lesson plans), student engagement challenges (e.g., engagement strategies, distractions, lack of motivation), and emotional impact (e.g., frustration, burnout, adaptation resilience). Each identified theme was thoroughly checked if aligned with the raw data to ensure accuracy. In some instances, verbatim quotes were selected from the interviews to illustrate these problems. Findings were linked to literature and aligned with the study's research questions. The findings were shared to participants for validation.

To interpret patterns, tendencies, and accounts and to understand their societal implications, this study used qualitative data analysis. Ary et.al. (2010) state that qualitative data analysis involves attempts to comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesize information, explore relationships, theorize about causes and consequences of relationships, and reconnect new knowledge to existing knowledge. Meanwhile Bogdan and Biklen (2006) emphasize that "analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what you will tell to others". Before the respondents agreed to participate in the study, they were given the content and purpose of the survey, allowing them to make an informed judgment about their involvement. The data collection procedures and the overall research objectives were explained to ensure that the participants understood their rights and that the study results will not negatively impact their work. Their right to be informed of the results of the study was honored. To maintain ethical integrity, respondents were assured that their identities and answers will remain confidential. They were also informed of their right to withdraw their participation anytime during the interview.

## **Result and Discussion**

The teaching approaches, methods and techniques in flexible learning adopted



by the HEI dance teachers in NCR before and during the pandemic were mainly affected by instructional delivery practices and support provided by their universities. Each of the four HEIs have different terminologies for their modes of instructional delivery. De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) referred to it as Benilde Online Learning Term (BOLT). Guang Ming College used the term “online learning”, the University of the Philippines called it “remote learning”, and Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) termed it Remote Virtual Learning (RVL).

All 11 teacher-respondents shifted from teacher-centered to student-centered learning during the flexible learning set-up, acknowledging that this approach better addressed the needs and conditions of their students. There is an overall agreement among respondents that student-centered learning, rooted in the philosophy that the student is at the heart of the learning process, was the best teaching approach. The shift requires more thorough lesson planning and readiness for the teacher. According to Gilbert (2005), dance teachers must not only master dance content including dance techniques, choreographic principles and processes, somatic practices, dance history, cultures, and philosophy, but also demonstrate a solid understanding of learning and child development theories, pedagogical methods, and classroom management strategies.

During the pandemic, all the teacher-respondents delivered their classes online with options of synchronous and asynchronous classes. Synchronous classes require both students and the dance teachers to be logged in simultaneously, allowing real-time virtual interaction. In contrast, asynchronous classes involve students accessing pre-designed lessons either in video format or through readings provided by the teacher, which were typically available all throughout the semester. In some HEIs, a required number of synchronous and asynchronous meetings were mandated, while other HEIs allowed their teachers to decide when they want to conduct synchronous or asynchronous classes. Teachers with fixed scheduling requirements encountered challenges, particularly with synchronous meetings due to reliable or unstable internet connectivity affecting both the teachers and the students.

In this study, three teacher-respondents (27.3%) preferred real-time synchronous classes to ensure that the students accurately followed the movements, styles, and postures. The remaining eight of-respondents (72.7%) combined synchronous and asynchronous sessions. However, there were challenges faced, and all the teacher-respondents had to adjust their movement exercises or break down their lessons. According to one respondent (*Assistant Professor and Department Chair, Female, 47 years old*), she had to go to the bare minimum in delivering her movement classes. The content of her online sessions was often shaped by how students felt on a given day. This was likely due to the lack of motivation and engagement from the students as she observed during the interview. She emphasized that the online format was more about coping and prioritizing the well-being of their students.

In both online and offline teaching, students remain the central focus in the classroom. Effective teaching outcomes are more likely when educators understand the students and perform hands-on or heuristic approaches

suited to the actual learning conditions. Hence, an in-depth understanding of the students is an indispensable part of lesson preparation and delivery.

One of the useful tools in flexible teaching is the Learning Management System (LMS), a software application designed to manage, document, track, and report learning activities. The majority of LMSs are web-based, allowing for "anytime, anywhere, at any pace" access to learning content and management. Some LMSs can also assist teachers in the delivery and management of instructor-led synchronous and asynchronous online instruction. An LMS is essentially a strategic solution for organizing, delivering, and administering most learning activities, such as online, virtual classroom, and instructor-led courses. In this study, respondents came from different HEIs, each using different LMS platforms to support online teaching. Online instruction was mainly conducted through Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Classroom, BigSky and even Facebook Messenger.

Dance teacher-respondents from De La Salle College of St. Benilde reported using BigSky Benilde as the institution's official integrated learning platform. BigSky is an LMS that allows students and faculty to learn and teach virtually whether online or mobile devices. Prior to the pandemic, the College had already been using BigSky, but not all the teachers were using it according to the teacher-respondent from College of St. Benilde. However, its full-scale adoption occurred during the peak of COVID-19 pandemic, following the implementation of flexible learning imposed by CHED. By then, teachers and students were provided workshops to better understand and utilize BigSky as their LMS.

BigSky offers a central location where teachers and students can meet and communicate. It supports the creation and organization of learning modules, hosts various online learning resources, and facilitates communication, course delivery, and student evaluation. BigSky provides access to students' class schedule, grades, assessments, and attendance records. It also includes features for tracking the academic calendar, events and activities, viewing course outlines, accessing multimedia resources (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, articles, images, and videos) and engaging in communication through chat messaging, email, evaluations and surveys.

The Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) used Microsoft Teams, which is not a traditional LMS. AIMS chose Microsoft Teams as its organizing platform because of its collaboration features, allowing students and teachers to interact effectively in a virtual setting. The platform allows users to engage in real-time chat, create channels, schedule and attend meetings, and share learning resources.

Meanwhile, in Guang Ming College, students and teachers use the Google Classroom as their LMS. Google Classroom is most popular due to its user-friendly interface. Aside from Google Classroom, Facebook Messenger is used by two teacher-respondents to communicate with their students. While Facebook Messenger is not a conventional teaching tool, it offers numerous advantages. Its features support the easy sharing of multimedia content such as videos, audios, texts and images created by either teacher or the students.

Furthermore, most students in the participating HEIs own a smartphone which is always turned on. Students respond instantaneously to mobile phone alerts; thus, texting and instant messaging are quickly responded to.

At the University of the Philippines Diliman, many teachers opted to use the Google Classroom instead of using the university's official LMS, the University Virtual Learning Environment (UVLE). According to a teacher-respondent who tried to use UVLE during the first semester of 2020, the platform is difficult to manage and navigate, prompting a shift to Google Classroom. The University of the Philippines teachers use Zoom as their platform for conducting synchronous classes or meetings. Zoom has been used in various disciplines at universities due to its fairly good audio and video quality, screen sharing option, and interactive features. These attributes make Zoom a top choice for online lectures, webinars, virtual conferences, and more. In the general education course "Visual and Performing Arts—Introduction to Dance Studies," Zoom was adopted due to its proven effectiveness in tertiary teaching (Rixon et al., 2021) and for its positive impact on student satisfaction (Sayem et al., 2017).

Astaiza et al. (2021) showed that Zoom was an effective tool for teaching dance in higher education during the pandemic. Not only did Zoom allow the development of an agile and responsive curriculum to meet the diverse needs of the students, but it also greatly stimulated students' creativity and collaboration skills, leading to greater satisfaction with the course. Consistent with previous studies, Nie and Hu (2018) found that the use of online tools such as Zoom significantly increased students' satisfaction about the course.

Google Classroom is an online tool that has been widely employed as a virtual classroom in performing arts education during the COVID-19 pandemic. This platform helped educators overcome time and place constraints. Using this platform, performing arts students could record and upload performances, such as dance, at their convenience, and teachers could review and respond flexibly. It could also support video submission, enabling the sharing of performances like dance routines.

Teaching strategies are how teachers communicate the dance content to the students, and these strategies rely on the use of appropriate teaching materials. In the context of online dance education, preparing teaching materials requires additional preparations in terms of hardware and software, and contents. According to the respondents, the determination of teaching strategies such as learning activities and the preparation of teaching materials are the main focus of preparations for online teaching.

Effective online teaching is the result of meticulous instructional design and planning, which has been researched for decades. However, the sudden adoption of flexible learning has placed more pressure on dance teachers, who were required to upload their course packs, modules, and academic toolkits to their preferred LMS prior to the commencement of the semester. Teachers were forced to pre-plan their movement exercises even before the semester started. A teacher-respondent shared that he had to record instructional materials of himself executing the exercises. This was difficult and challenging since dance

is skill-based, where learning is typically interactive and allows expression and creativity. A few of the teacher-respondents reported having to slow down or break down the exercises just to accommodate the students facing space limitations or unreliable internet connectivity.

Technology is vital in the online teaching of dance. Not only should the technology be available but should also be reliable. Online teaching demands dependable gadgets to support seamless communication and performance. This is especially critical in dance education, where technical issues such as lag or malfunction during movement demonstrations can hinder learning. The goal of the use of technology is to enhance dance teaching and learning experience. Results show that the most commonly used gadgets among teacher-respondents are laptops and cameras. These gadgets are staples when teaching dance online. In the case when an extra screen was needed, seven respondents used mobile phones. Four of the respondents connected their laptop to their TV screens to benefit from the larger view. For better listening and improved mobility during instruction, three teacher-respondents used Bluetooth or cordless earphones. Three of the respondents, on the other hand, preferred to use a speaker for audio output. For playing the audio, two teacher-respondents used their iPad and one used a tablet. Other teacher-respondents played their music through the 'share computer audio', a feature in Zoom which was a good solution to the problem of on-going lag or delay of music.

However, some teachers experienced unclear voice audio when using this feature and they cannot hear themselves well when talking. To address this, teachers enhanced their audio setup by using a lapel microphone, ensuring that their voice remained audible even when they were far from the laptop during demonstration. Additional equipment such as a wide-angle lens allowed the camera to capture a wider view, and external lighting enhanced the video quality of movement demonstrations. An interesting solution from a teacher-respondent was the use of an external camera, which can produce a wider and multiple frames. The respondent suggested using a sports camera such as the GoPro. A GoPro uses an extremely wide lens that increases the amount of scenery captured in the frame, making it easy to frame the shot. GoPro may be used independently, but extra capability and adaptability can be added by pairing them with Android and iOS applications. Users have complete control over their GoPro camera because of the built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. While GoPros can significantly improve visual coverage, their high cost remains a limitation for some teachers.

Gadgets are essential tools in digital technology which have helped the teacher-respondents to resolve restrictions in distance, space, and time present in virtual dance classes. These restrictions were experienced by the respondents in different extents and intensities. However, while technology offers significant support, dance teachers must keep in mind that incorporating technology is not an end in itself, but rather a means to enhance the quality of dance teaching and learning. The physical aspect of dance training can never be replaced by technology and its possibilities. Nonetheless, technology is an important tool that promotes active learning, critical thinking, and evidence-based assessment. With the restrictions brought by online learning, traditional final exams and

culminating performances were often replaced with video submissions, as mentioned by most teacher-respondents. Students were required to record themselves performing as their final examination. This shift addressed the spatial and physical limitations of remote instruction but also introduced new challenges.

Teachers traditionally correct students in class by physically guiding or holding specific areas of the body. In an online class, this cannot be practiced anymore. Corrections were done through verbal feedback, which may sometimes be delayed or lack immediate context. This can reduce the effectiveness of the feedback since the student may forget or misinterpret the meaning of the correction when it is not physically reinforced. According to a teacher-respondent (*Part-time Lecturer, Male, 29 years old*), viewing their dance on camera allowed pupils to study their own bodies in motion and reflect on their technique. Teachers can use playback features, such as pause and slow motion, to be able to properly evaluate if the student is doing the movement exercise properly. Skills such as posture, turnout, extension, balance, flexibility, and strength may improve using video assessment. This assessment tool was notable because of its emphasis on enhancing communication between dance teacher and student. It showed how video might be used to bridge the gap between the teachers' comments and students' execution in online dance classes. When students view their own performance, they can better understand movement words like turnout, pull-up, extension, lengthening, and alignment. This visual reinforcement allowed students to better digest the feedback more effectively, leading to more accurate self-correction and improved technique.

Another interesting assessment tool used by a teacher-respondent (*Part-time Lecturer, Male, 29 years old*) was reflective journal-writing throughout the semester to support students' learning processes and further document their individual growth and development. By reading the journals, the teacher-respondent was able to determine if the student fully understood the lessons in class and has reflected on the corrections from previous classes.

Despite these innovative approaches, dance teachers faced varying degrees of issues while implementing flexible learning during the pandemic. Difficulties encountered were related to inadequate equipment and facilities, issues with performance assessment, student discipline and motivation, delivery of instruction, and unstable internet connectivity.

*Inadequate equipment and facilities.* Essential facilities including a danceable floor, mirrors, ballet barres, music/stereo system, and other specialized tools that can facilitate learning dance were not available in online learning. Students were often forced to practice dance in limited spaces such as living rooms or bedrooms, which were not designed for physical activity. Moreover, the areas where students practiced dance often have flooring like tile and carpet, which were not suited for dancing. As a result, many of the teachers had to adjust their exercise to prevent their students from having injuries.

*Difficulty in conducting performance assessment.* Performance assessment is an integral part of the dance learning process. It provides students with guidance

to develop technically and artistically while ensuring that learning outcomes are met. For assessment to be effective, it must be clearly aligned with learning objectives and serve as tool for evaluating both teaching practices and student performance. However, conducting performance assessments online presented several challenges. One major issue reported by teacher-respondents was that several students disabled their cameras during synchronous sessions, displaying profile images instead. As a result, the teacher could no longer observe the student whose cameras were turned off and could not get enough information to assess attention and understanding. Without being able to view students' movements, teachers were unable to adequately assess each student's pace and preparation. The lack of visual feedback also hindered teachers from identifying who were having difficulties with specific movements. Instructors relied heavily on hands-on corrections in traditional dance learning settings. Teachers view these corrections as positively offering students direct, embodied feedback. Teacher-respondents amplified the struggles to correct the students' body alignment and technique since there was no direct contact with them during online learning. Many found it impossible to teach dance without physically guiding or touching students as these physical cues help students to understand correct physicality.

Providing feedback in an online class was difficult for teachers who have spent most of their careers in face-to-face environments. In traditional settings, dance teachers provide direct, instant feedback during movement instruction, through demonstration or physical adjustments. This challenging issue has led to teachers to rethink their teaching approaches and redefine best practices for offering corrections without touch.

The body is the medium of communication in dance, and without visually seeing it, meaningful interaction becomes difficult. Teacher-respondents who conducted classes using Zoom and other teleconferencing apps found it difficult to view the full range of students' movement due to screen restrictions. A teacher-respondent complained how difficult it was to provide accurate corrections because the virtual format only allowed a two-dimensional view of the student's body. This is in contrast with traditional face-to-face classes that enable the teachers to observe the student's body in a three-dimensional view. One of the primary components of dance training is musicality. Musicality is how dancers hear, interpret, and dance to the music. A challenge identified by the teachers is how to determine if the students were using their musicality to move to the music. Persistent latency issues (lag/delay) and poor internet connectivity whether from the teacher's or the student's end made it very challenging to give students timely feedback on their musicality.

Because of the physical barriers involved in the online set up, the artistic side of dance was compromised. Teacher-respondents expressed that they were unable to see the natural form of self-expression, the authentic body movement, and the spirit of their students when conducting online dance classes. Several respondents even remarked that students appeared mechanical or robotic on screen.

*Difficulty in instilling student discipline and motivation.* Discipline is a very

important characteristic that a dance student should acquire. Discipline includes consistent habits such as coming to class 15-30 minutes early to warm-up and wearing appropriate attire, which are crucial to prevent injuries. There were a couple of times that some teacher-respondents would catch their student attending in improper attire or even seemingly having to have just woken up. Motivation, a necessary prerequisite to learning, was also significantly impacted. Students' motivation to achieve their academic goals declined during the temporary closures of schools and home confinement. This was confirmed by teacher-respondents who had difficulty in motivating their students to actively participate in their dance classes.

Students have different reasons for their reluctance to switch on their cameras during synchronous classes. Among the reasons were low bandwidth and poor connectivity, the desire to maintain privacy about home life and spaces, distractions in the home, or simply lack of interest. With cameras off, the teachers were unable to see if the students were engaged, following instructions, or participating in the movement exercises. In response, many teacher-respondents implemented strategies to encourage accountability and foster participation. At the beginning of the semester, they would impose the rule that since the class involved movement and required visual assessment, cameras should be turned-on. In some cases, teacher respondents would request students with turned off cameras to log out to give space for those students who have their cameras on. One teacher recounted a particularly frustrating instance where only half of a 26-student class had their cameras on. However, some teachers used a student-centered approach by making pedagogical decisions based on what is best for the student's learning and not the instructor's teaching.

*Lack of capability of teachers.* The transition from traditional learning to online learning not only disrupted the flow of learning but also how the teacher-respondents delivered their movement classes. Many reported feeling unprepared for online classes, as most of the HEIs did not formally prepare their teachers for this mode of program delivery. An exception was DLS-CSB, especially their College, the School of Design and Arts, which provided their teachers with seminars for script writing, video production, use of BIGSKY (the official LMS of CSB) and crash courses on video creation for students and their faculty. In contrast, other HEIs had to rely on their teachers' skills and initiative in adapting to this new paradigm shift. The University of the Philippines had to conduct workshops or webinars on how to navigate the preferred LMS. According to a teacher respondent, UP Diliman especially the Arts Cluster including College of Arts and Letters, College of Music and College of Human Kinetics organized workshops for teachers on navigating the UVLE, Zoom and Google Classroom. In addition, the College of Music, where the teacher-respondent is teaching, prepared the teachers by offering workshops and checking if the teachers are equipped to conduct classes online. They even checked the kind of laptop, microphones, and lighting equipment for conducting online classes.

The findings emphasize the necessity of increasing teachers' flexibility through further professional development programs so that they are more equipped to adjust to changes in program delivery, in both asynchronous and synchronous

formats. One of the most significant pedagogical challenges is lack of digital competencies, especially when teachers are unfamiliar with use of online-based tools. This gap, coupled with the lack of experience in distance learning, expectedly resulted in increased workloads with the preparation of teaching materials and difficulties in delivering new content. The teacher-respondents generally felt that they need additional training in many areas to best support the teaching and learning process. In this study, most of the participants indicated a desire for immediate and informal workshops or practical training that would share tips and techniques for online teaching.

*Poor internet connectivity.* A teacher-respondent (*Senior Lecturer 1, Female, 46 years old*) wished she was good at troubleshooting when a technical issue occurs during her online classes. She emphasized the emotional toll brought about by sudden disruptions in connectivity. Teachers should not only teach their classes, but should be equipped and prepared when these circumstances occur to prevent frustrations and technostress.

Although the majority of respondents reported having relatively stable internet connections, several had to switch providers due to consistent slowdowns or interruptions. There were issues with their internet provider such as internet loss due to maintenance work. There were moments when the internet was very unstable that prompted class cancellations, and some teachers would have two different internet providers to serve as back-up systems. It was acknowledged that internet reliability is an uncontrollable and costly factor in online learning. Teacher respondents identified activities they found effective and helpful in delivering their class content in an online learning setup. Table 2 shows their responses on the perceived effectiveness of each activity used in their dance classes during the pandemic.

Uploading course materials was perceived effective by most (45.4%). For the respondents, uploading course materials helped them to be organized and provided students with ease of navigation in the online learning environment. Linking to online resources was also perceived effective by 63.6% of the respondents. However, some teacher respondents had doubts that their students might not access these materials unless there was a specific task or requirement linked to them. Online individual learning activities had the same results, as perceived effective by 63.6% of respondents. For the online group learning activities, 54.5% found them effective in promoting collaboration and peer interaction. One respondent did not include this activity in her course, believing group work to be non-essential. Holding synchronous classes is the most important activity according to the teacher respondents. Teachers emphasized that real-time interaction enabled them to monitor students' application of movement techniques. This is why some teacher respondents required students to turn on their cameras. Despite technical issues and connectivity challenges, more than half or 54.5% of respondents found synchronous classes as effective. In contrast, asynchronous classes received mixed feedback. While 27.3% found them ineffective, citing the difficulty of learning dance without live instruction, more than half (54.5%) of the respondents still believed it was effective since students can study their lessons on their own time and pace. Only 18.2% found asynchronous classes very effective. For the last activity, which is recorded



lectures, the results were positive, with 63.6% finding it effective and 36.4% rating it very effective. Teacher respondents believed that these recorded lectures gave students an opportunity to review materials at their own pace, offering the convenience of replaying and closely observing the details of each movement.

**Table 2**

*Teacher-respondents' Assessment of Learning Activity Effectiveness*

Learning Activity	Respondents' assessment of learning activities (N=11)			
	Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Effective	Very Effective
Uploading course materials	0	2 (18.2%)	5 (45.4%)	4 (36.4%)
Creating links to online resources	0	1 (9.1%)	7 (63.6%)	3 (27.3%)
Online individual learning activities	0	1 (9.1%)	7 (63.6%)	3 (27.3%)
Online group learning activities	0	2 (18.2%)	6 (54.5%)	2 (18.2%)
Synchronous classes	0	1 (9.1%)	6 (54.5%)	4 (36.4%)
Asynchronous classes	0	3 (27.3%)	6 (54.5%)	2 (18.2%)
Recorded lectures	0		7 (63.6%)	4 (36.4%)

The ability of teachers to take notes and record their dance classes is a progressive development for dance education. Teaching resources are now easy to document and preserve, unlike in the pre-pandemic setup where teachers relied on minimal tools such as phone and speakers. This offers a good opportunity for dance teachers to preserve their class content through recorded videos, music, pictures, PowerPoint presentations, course packs with learning outcomes and goals of the course and other instructional materials. These resources can now be obtained quickly and conveniently.

Finally, the survey on the teachers' satisfaction with achieving course objectives through flexible learning showed that the teachers agreed they achieved their class objectives by adopting flexible learning. Based on their responses to the question using a 5-point Likert Scale (1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-neither agree nor disagree, 4-disagree, 5 strongly disagree), ten of eleven respondents chose 2 or agree, indicating that they believed they had achieved their class objectives. One respondent chose 3 (neither agree nor disagree). While most respondents believed that their objectives were met, they also acknowledge that there is still room for improvement to enhance the effectiveness of their

teaching.

### Conclusion

Prior to the pandemic, the teachers included in this study were able to effectively achieve the goals of dance teaching because they are equipped with strong educational backgrounds and experience in dance instruction. However, during the pandemic, they faced difficulties in achieving the same goals because they lacked experience in dance instruction using flexible learning.

Despite these difficulties, most of the teachers in this study used student-centered approaches while adopting new methodologies for flexible learning environments. Throughout this shift, these dance teachers had to overcome many challenges, including inadequate equipment and facilities, difficulties in conducting performance assessment, issues in instilling student discipline and motivation, lack of digital capability of teachers, and unreliable internet connectivity.

The teachers utilized a variety of learning activities and instructional strategies to support flexible learning, including uploading course materials, linking to online resources, facilitating online individual and group learning activities, conducting synchronous and asynchronous classes, and providing recorded lectures. These strategies were as effective in facilitating student learning and helped improve the overall teaching experience.

Each HEI represented in the study provided distinct platforms and tools to support online delivery, which conform with the CHED guidelines. The platforms used, such as BigSky Benilde, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and UVLE, enabled a variety of content delivery modes. Moreover, the use of technological tools like laptops, phones, televisions, bluetooth devices, speakers, lighting equipment, lapel, wide-angle lenses and tablets proved helpful in addressing several logistical challenges in online dance instruction.

Despite these innovations, the teachers still faced various challenges, including difficulties with the lack of studio space and proper flooring and limitations in assessing students' musicality, technique, artistic expression, and discipline. Students' lack of motivation and engagement was another challenge to face aside from the teachers' difficulties in transitioning to online and lack of training in an online environment.

Learning activities that are effective to support flexible learning include uploading course materials, creating links to online resources, facilitating online individual and group learning activities, conducting synchronous classes and asynchronous classes, and recording videos for better learning.

### Recommendations

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect education systems, online teaching and learning must be sustained. Higher Education Institutions should consider how to improve the delivery of online dance instruction. The

researchers also call for the proactive participation of school administrators, government agencies, and policymakers to provide the dance teachers with the needed technological and pedagogical support. Based on the results of the study, the researchers suggest the following:

1. Given that current teaching methods rely on technology, dance teachers must be provided with sufficient training on the use of appropriate technologies, especially software which they can use in teaching.
2. Teachers should be assisted in using gadgets and equipment, useful in teaching dance. This study recommends familiarity in the use of laptops, web cameras and mobile phones, among others. Furthermore, institutions must support the acquisition of reliable, high-quality equipment necessary for conducting effective online dance classes.
3. Teachers should be required to practice activities that contribute to effectiveness in teaching dance. These include uploading course materials, linking to online resources, facilitating individual and group learning activities, conducting synchronous and asynchronous classes, and providing recorded lectures.
4. While Zoom was found to be the most effective and widely used platform among HEIs involved in this study, a more specialized learning management system that is designed and dedicated for dance teaching is preferred. It is recommended for HEIs to collaborate on a future research endeavor with appropriate IT experts to develop a learning platform most suited to dance teaching.

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