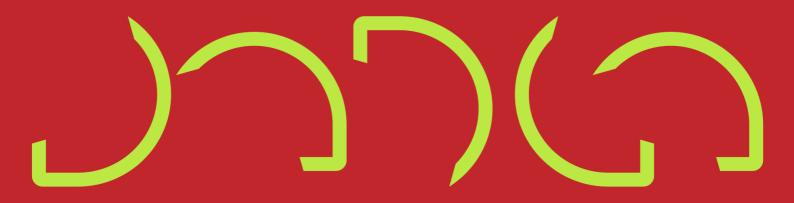


Perception of the dancers' sensations in online classical ballet classes in Brazil during the Covid-19 pandemic

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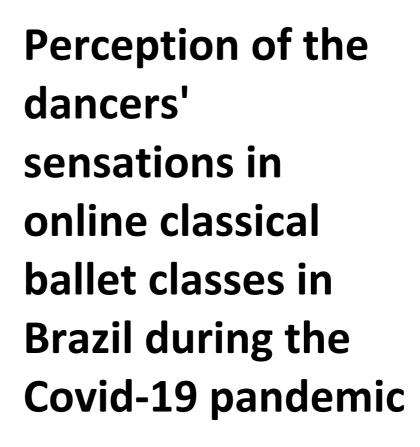
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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the education of many dancers and teachers worldwide. The abrupt transference from face-to-face to remote teaching through various online communication platforms impacted their ways of sensing. This research investigates the sensations of dancers from different parts of Brazil during their learning process in intermediate-advanced online ballet classes and their relationship with the construction of their corporeality. We carried out a qualitative study, with ethnographic and autoethnographic sources (observation, participation, interviews and videos). Dancers in remote ballet classes reported feeling challenges and opportunities concerning their perceptions of seeing, hearing, touching and feeling kinaesthetically. Most dancers considered positive benefits to their mental and physical health from socialising with their peers and from dancing and learning continuously. These classes challenged the dancers' sensoria and served as an extra resource for their knowledge of dance.

KEYWORDS sensations; teaching-learning; *ballet*; online classes; pandemic.



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1. Introduction

During the global Covid-19 pandemic, teachers and students from different areas had to adapt to remote dance teaching. With classical ballet classes, it was no different. Several dancers attend online ballet classes to maintain physical and mental health. These classes take place through online communication platforms, specifically video and audio calls through the internet. Some social media platforms, such as Google Meet and Zoom, have allowed the use of recorded and live classes. In addition to the use of various information technology resources to carry out classes, teachers and dancers from dance schools and conservatories, undergraduate dance courses and professional companies had also to adapt their spaces for personal use (their homes) transforming them into spaces for learning and working. Classical ballet classes, when performed in studios, usually occur in ample space for expansive movement, adequate flexible flooring to allow jumps and prevent injuries, and use of barre and mirrors. These are common elements in this modality which had to be adapted to the dancers' homes.

Considering these premises, the objective of this research was to investigate the sensations in the construction of the corporality of dancers in intermediate-advanced online ballet classes during the pandemic period in different parts of Brazil. The concept of corporeality involves the daily bodily experience, recognising the body as central to human experience and how social places are experienced, as explained by researchers in the field of dance anthropology Dóris Dornelles de Almeida and organizational culture Maria Thereza Flores-Pereira (2013).

Different from the classes usually held in on-site studios, in which dancers socialise with their colleagues and teachers in a single environment, in remote classes, there was a body distance and consequently drastic changes in the perceptions and experiences of the dancers' sensations. For Joseph Thibodeau and Ceyda Yolgörmez (2020), cultural constructions are susceptible to transformation through practices of meaning construction and defined by contextual relationships. The context of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected several dancers and teachers around the world (IADMS, 2020a; Marques, 2020). Studies by IADMS (2020b)

and Lyndsey Winship (2020) explain how the pandemic situation influenced the behaviour of dancers in their daily ballet classes. The pandemic created challenges and opportunities for teachers and dancers, requiring a careful adaptation of classical ballet classes to the remote model, as explained by Dornelles de Almeida (2020).

In this chaotic context of a global public health emergency, with unforeseen negative news every moment, various sensations of these dancers in remote classical ballet classes were sometimes potentiated, ignored or unbalanced. These dancers' sensations were also intertwined with emotional states with frequent mood swings and even loss of control in the face of routine situations, influencing their ways of feeling and learning in class, as explained by Farias (2022).

To understand the dancers' sensations in such a context, we used a qualitative research methodology, including the collection of ethnographic and self-ethnographic data. We conducted interviews with seven dancers and observation and participation in several online ballet classes (synchronous and asynchronous) taught by six teachers in different Brazilian locations for six months, during 2021 and 2022.

In this sense, we deepen knowledge about how dancers' corporeality is built in this new teaching model, to understand the changes in the relationship between body and space, the relationship between dancer and teacher, and the impact of dancers' sensations on their learning, especially of ballet, in a context of social isolation.

2. The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on ballet classes

When entering a ballet classroom, traditionally some elements are common: such as a barre (fixed to the wall or portable), mirrors on the walls and floor suitable for practice (usually made of wood or floating floor), as explained by Trajkova *et al* (2019). Each of these elements has a role in teaching-learning in classical ballet. The barre is an aid for the search for balance in the practice of exercises that are developed later in the second part of the class, the centre. The mirror provides visual feedback to the dancer of him/herself, through the reflection of his/her body image, being used to correct his/her alignment. The specialised floor with linoleum, or wood associated with the use of rosin, offers the necessary friction for practising exercises with pirouettes in the centre. The specialised floor also helps to absorb the dancer's body weight in the impact of jumps, which are exercises often done at the end of the ballet class. For example, performing a pirouette on a floor with suitable linoleum and performing the same movement on a smooth porcelain floor provoke different sensations and demand another level of control over the movement being performed. This information of perception of sensations when moving and positioning our body passes through receptors present in our joints, muscles and skin, called by Monteiro (2006) proprioception. Thus, it is important to understand that the difference in these environmental factors can alter performance, as it interferes with the perception of movements previously learned by dancers.

During the Covid-19 virus pandemic, there was an atypical situation in which, in order to have virtual teaching, the participants had to adapt to the spaces and times within the family environment in their homes. This environment, at the same time virtual and personal, changed the relationships between body and space present in ballet teaching. From this perspective, sensory issues in dance teaching-learning have become complex and challenging for several reasons. In this sense, Ladewing (2000) presents the importance of attention in the process of learning motor skills and how it is resignified through the advances of the individual in the learning stages. Therefore, as the individual advances in learning, he/she improves his/her movement "performance".

In the context of social isolation and ballet classes taught during this period, attention is easily lost due to factors such as the individual's emotional state and external interference from the environment in which the student participates in the class. There is a constant search of the brain for non-verbal information during the class in the remote context due to the issues of the teaching platforms (Sathler, 2021). Based on this premise we noticed in our research that there is an explosion of new sensations when dancers perceive the remote learning environment. A lot of sensory information is not able to be transmitted by the camera generating even greater mental fatigue for the teacher and student. Therefore, it is valid to investigate how these changes in the focus of attention and sensory perception, when distorted, become factors to be taken into consideration to improve performance and influence the process of memorisation and learning of the exercises proposed during classes.

In this period of staying at home and avoiding physical contact with other people as much as possible in preventing the spread of the Coronavirus, there was a resignification of the space in the house to dance, which brought benefits to the body and mind, as it helped to reduce anxiety levels during the period of social isolation (Lopes, 2020a; Rebs, 2021).

For this research, we used the terms selected by Sahin and Shelley (2020) from the classes as synchronous and asynchronous, to differentiate the types of teaching modalities investigated. In this context of remote classical ballet classes (synchronous or asynchronous), for example, the dancer and teacher lost physical contact through touch, and the transmission of music and speech often occurred in a distorted way due to the technological means of communication platforms. In this sense, the study by Paulette Cote-Laurence (2000) with five ballet teachers in Canada points out that understanding the rhythmic elements and controlling their synchronisation in the dancer's hearing perception facilitates learning in ballet classes. Therefore, if the dancer cannot hear the music, it hinders his ability to perceive the musical rhythm, a fundamental part of the teacher's description and demonstration of the exercise in the ballet class. Another issue to consider is the teacher's view of the student's body, which was limited to what the camera can capture. For example, ballet teacher Carlo Lopez said in an interview with Gia Kourlas (N.Y. Times, 2020) that he needs to work with the angle to capture the images when demonstrating the proposed exercise, and although it is limiting, his students must also strive to work in this direction (of finding angles with their cameras).

Considering the context of social isolation in which teaching can only take place remotely, dance companies around the world offered online dance classes through live video transmissions on social networks (Lansky, 2000). This teaching modality allowed access to teachers and dancers in different places (countries, states, cities) which would be widely inaccessible in face-to-face teaching. Many Brazilian dance companies, such as São Paulo Companhia de Dança, shared open online classes for free through lives on their *Instagram* profile (Lima, 2021). In other countries, for example, the NYC Community Ballet also offered online classes through the *Zoom app* (Lansky, 2020). This breadth of classes has allowed, and still allows, dancers with different experiences and dance education to share the same class and learn from within their homes.

This broad accessibility through free classes, with professionals with different experiences, often did not require any financial resources from the participant, allowing people to access many classes without the need for locomotion. On the other hand, some dancers and teachers had difficulties accessing online classes, because they needed a service contract with an internet provider with a stable connection to participate in classes or just view them. In this context of the pandemic, the ideas proposed by the Portuguese philosopher Boaventura dos Santos (2016) about the influence of neoliberal capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism and their impact on social inequalities were potentiated becoming more evident.

In this social environment, the relationships between the dancers and teachers in remote teaching reverberated in the quality of their physical and mental health. For Marques (2020), the obligation to have canvases inside our homes created a precariousness concerning work, art and life; becoming violence that generated hyper-individualism and consumerism. The "corporatisation" of our homes changed the "ways of understanding, experiencing and proposing dance classes and performances", making dancers and dance teachers become unbridled sellers and consumers of education and art (Marques, 2020, p.164). For this author, many dance professionals did not take advantage of the possibilities offered by the moments of dancing at home to humanise themselves. In addition, many dance professionals, instead of experiencing the sensation of breathing and pausing that

the initial isolation offered, continued systemic relationships within their homes; living in other times and spaces and even reformulating physical and virtual spaces using the time for the uninterrupted consumption and production of 'dance products' (Marques, 2020).

Considering the influence of the architectural environment on brain processes that have to do with stress, emotion and memory during remote classes during the pandemic, Silva and Marcílio (2020) carried out quantitative research with 635 people. Although it is not the focus of this research to study the environment of individuals' homes, changes in geographic space (leaving the studio and going indoors) were pointed out by the participants as a determining factor in the perception of their sensations and the development of their learning.

The relationships between the body and space were resignified, sometimes limited, by the space available at home. In this scenario, it was necessary to deal with the adaptation of objects in the room, or with the changes caused by the size of the environment (living room, bedroom, kitchen or balcony). This change of space for participation in ballet classes caused differences (reductions, or non-regular spaces) in the propositions of exercises by the teacher in online ballet classes. For example, due to a lack of adequate flooring and space for large movements, the traditional centre structure, or the use of diagonals to carry out large movements in space, were modified, and in most cases, they could even be excluded from the class. When we change environments, we resignify previously learned movement structures. In the case of classical ballet, the adaptation of the classroom to distance learning showed inequalities of resources, for example, not everyone had access to a barre, which is often used in class exercises. In many cases, the replacement of the barre with a chair, or a window flap provoked different sensations in the dancers' bodies. The presence of other elements that started to compose the remote class, such as external sounds: a conversation, an intercommunication with a family member or even a pet that approached, also interfered with the dancer's body state at that moment, as stated by Farias (2022).

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In addition, both the teacher and student found it difficult to perceive in this remote context, for example, facial expressions, significantly affecting processes of empathy during the class. According to Sathler (2021, p.3), "many teachers and students began to experience higher levels of fatigue and greater frustration with the ineffectiveness of their efforts after the massive migration to interact mostly by live video classes". From another perspective, Sathler (2021) explores how stress emotions impacted inattention in lectures in remote teaching given the difficulty of perceiving nonverbal signals from teachers in the virtual model.

The context of social isolation and ballet classes taught in this pandemic period made it difficult to focus attention due to the individual's sensory factors and external interference from the environment. Although Sathler (2021) researches remote classes in other disciplines that do not involve physical activity, for this author the difficulty of online classes involves issues with the teaching platforms, and the brain's constant search for non-verbal information during class.

Many sensory information cannot be transmitted by the camera, which generates even greater mental fatigue for the teacher and student. In this sense, Lopes (2020b) cites how the absence of touch can interfere with the learning process in classical ballet classes. In addition, the absence of moments of distraction that naturally occur in the face-to-face environment, such as the conversation before class, need to be considered and adapted in the virtual format, meaning that such mechanisms which are part of the learning must be created intentionally (Lopes, 2020b). In another article, Lopes (2020c) explores socialisation as an extremely important factor in the student-teacher and studentstudent relationship, as it significantly affects the teaching-learning process in ballet classes (Lopes, 2020c). In our study, vision, hearing, and touch are just some examples of senses that were affected and impact the learning acquired through the exercises proposed during the remote classes. Therefore, it is important to study the alterations in the perception of the dancers' sensations.

Other intrinsic factors to the family routine also influenced the practice of online ballet classes. At home, dancers are subject to these external factors, which modify their body states, taking the focus away from learning and practising ballet, and sometimes leading to a relaxation of the musculature, "cooling down" of the body, and favouring the injuries in these circumstances. For example, Lindsey Winship (2020), a professional dancer for a European ballet company, explains that when she was concentrating on the barre exercise at an online class with Tamara Rojo, she had her attention taken by her daughter asking for a cookie to watch television in the environment where she was participating on the class.

Focused on another perspective Luke Hopper, Andries Weidemann & Janet Karin (2018) investigate how the variable and individual body work and learn from the continuum of encoded movement outcomes that are required by the ballet technique. These authors analyse the variability inherent to the movement of classical ballet dancers and how they must adapt to the dynamic environment in which they move. Therefore, considering that in dance, all movements represent a result, these authors argue that there must be space for individualised, adaptive and variable movement within the scheme of ballet technique in class (Hopper; Weidemann; Karin, 2018).

Thinking about changes in undergraduate dance education and increased innovation in international cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic, Tuomeiciren Heyang and Rose Martin (2021) investigated three narratives by teachers from different countries. With university campuses closing, city lockdowns and border closures, the first narrative by a Chinese teacher addresses the shift from face-to-face classes to the use of videoconferencing. For this teacher, such a response from the remote teaching model due to the Covid-19 pandemic could be explored as an opportunity for innovation in international dance higher education, going beyond the origins, lineages or cultural agendas of dance. The second narrative by a Norwegian teacher explored new ways to engage internationally with the dance education community, through online congresses, as travel was not possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. The constraints of this pandemic context inhibited engagement in face-to-face academic activities, which in turn



highlighted existing inequalities and underrepresentation in academic engagement. The origins of the dominant voices in academia proved even more unequal, as the involvement of those in parts of the world considered neglected within dance education grew, and there was an active involvement of many to collaborate with those working in marginalised places, yet there still is a clear underrepresentation in academia of those from the Global South³. From this perspective, there is potential to engage many people through virtual platforms and promote social inclusion, as they offer access to online meetings from any location which has the internet. The third narrative by a Chinese teacher explored issues such as the quality of online teaching in dance, a bodily practice that required many adaptations to remote teaching. Although none of these researchers specifically explore sensations, all their arguments involve the exchange of knowledge through dance in a virtual way, which directly implies a different perception of sensations in this medium of interaction.

To facilitate sensory interaction in dance classes through the virtual environment, many teachers used their creativity. Despite not investigating classical ballet, but dance classes for choreographic composition, Li Zihao (2020) states that the model of online dance classes allowed him as a teacher to think 'out of the box'. In other words, Zihao mentions that creativity has brought beneficial options to this online model; such as sending recorded material after class, offering individualised feedback, and greater social interaction with the dancers. For example, "students commented that they felt more creative space when designing and choreographing dance online. They were able to see what others were doing, communicating in the chat room to motivate each other and share tips on how to use technology" (Zihao, 2020, p.15). The pandemic meant that dance was taught in a virtual space, and for teachers like Zihao (2020)

³ For the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1992) the colonial power structure was anchored in racial, ethnic, national and gender discrimination of European white elites to justify their domination over other peoples. According to Guarato (2022), in this articulation between the global North and South, hegemonic positions, of domination, and of subalternity are at stake, including in the field of dance.

teaching to online teaching and instruction in dance classes, modification and adaptation to space and technology have brought significant results.

3. Methodological aspects

Classical ballet is a Western and European technique, and the codification of body images that dancers learn corresponds "to specific cultural and social contexts that configure ways of understanding and experiencing dance", as Marulanda and Oliveira (2014, p. 1). According to these authors, there are several "metaphors referring to the body and movement present in the methodology of teaching classical ballet" (Marulanda; Oliveira, 2014, p.1), which when analysed through the methodological premises of the anthropology of dance, in particular through ethnographic resources, allows a poetic construction and a positioning of the researcher as a subject. Dancers experience classical ballet classes from multiple sensations that often overlap, as stated by Dornelles de Almeida (2021) in her study of professional ballet classes in London. To study the sensations in ballet classes focused on the dancers' corporeality, an effective methodological strategy involves the researcher positioning herself and living with the participants in the field (Dornelles de Almeida, 2021). Etnography is characterised by "long-term fieldwork, the recording of experiences in logbooks and the subsequent analysis of these data based on categories proposed by the researcher" (Marulanda; Oliveira, 2014, p.1).

According to Sylvie Fortin, ethnography is a study carried out considering the cultural dimension, the experience in the socioenvironmental context, observations and different points of view of those who are part of the researched field. The researcher is involved in the "construction of knowledge in the study of practice, which needs to observe what is done and listen" (Fortin, 2009, p. 82). Auto-ethnography, on the other hand, approaches autobiography and self-reports, and "is characterised by a writing of the "I" that allows the coming and going between personal experience and cultural dimensions in order to resonate the inner and most sensitive part of the self" (Fortin, 2009, p. 83). In this sense, the report of one's own experience with the environment in which it is researched is considered empirical material.

To better understand the teaching-learning processes of ballet in online classes, we use ethnographic data defined as "empirical data from a presence on the field, to answer the question that is imposed on the practice" (Fortin, 2009, p. 79). In addition, we collected auto-ethnographic data, in order to present "the expressions of personal experience, which aspire to go beyond the subject's own individual adventure" (Fortin, 2009 p. 84).

This coexistence and participation in several classes remotely aimed to recognise the look and sensations of the researchers, and to analyse what the participants expressed bodily and their statements in the interviews. In order to be unfamiliar with the culture of the classes, which is close to what we were used to, we sought to analyse each class as if it was the first. Each class has its characteristics and, in this context, it offers the meanings and social uses of this practice in different Brazilian locations (the researched classes took place in different cities, where teachers and dancers were located) and classical ballet learning contexts (paid and free group classes, short course, undergraduate dance course, amateur-professional school and school with a professional focus).

According to Lakatos and Marconi (2003, p.194), participant observation is the "real participation of the researcher with the community or group. The researcher incorporates him/herself into the group and merges with it. He/She stays as close as a group member who is studying and participates in normal activities." Observation is a data collection technique that serves to collect information using the bodily senses (sight, hearing, kinesthesia) to obtain certain aspects of reality and better understand the social practices of a group of participants (Lakatos; Marconi, 2003).

Based on this definition, one of the researchers chose to participate in these 'virtual' and face-to-face places from 'inside' the house in different classes and modalities of online adult ballet. This record of the personal experience lived in this teaching model, inspired by self-ethnographic studies, was recorded in a field diary after each class in the environment in which the dancers participating were experiencing the movements, social relationships and experiences on the teaching platforms. remote.

We consider it important to pause here to explain what types of classes we investigated. Sahin and Shelley (2020) define synchronous classes as occurring simultaneously with their transmission, and asynchronous classes as recorded classes, which are available for students to access at any time. In this research we found four teaching modalities that derive from these models used by the authors, organised in the following table:

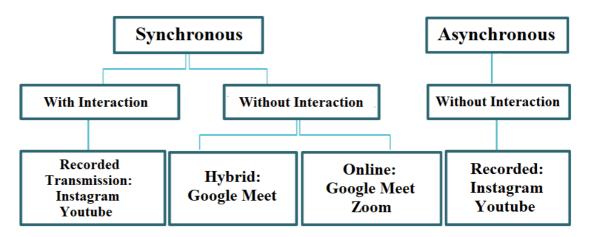


Table 1. Organisational chart created by the authors referring to remote teaching models in classical ballet classes investigated in this research (The authors, 2022).

In the first modality, we observe synchronous classes in which there are interaction with the teacher (observation and feedback to the students) and classes in which there are no interaction or it occurs in a minimally (through the exchange of messages and comments in the transmission, but without the teacher being able to see or listen to students). In the classes broadcast in live format through the *Instagram* and *Youtube* apps, dancers could see the class that took place in person at home and repeat it without interaction with the teacher.

In the second modality, we investigated the hybrid classes, which occurred in the face of the loosening of social isolation measures, due to the rise in the number of vaccinated people, in which the dancers were present in person and the others followed virtually, with the teacher interacting with both. In the third, we studied the completely virtual classes that took place mainly during lockdown times in several countries, where people were restricted from leaving their homes, given the high number of cases of hospitalizations due to Covid-19. Many virtual classes persisted after the relaxation of sanitary measures. In them, the teacher accompanied all the students virtually.

In the fourth modality we



examined the asynchronous classes, in which there were no interactions with the teacher (for example, the dancer left a comment or question in the comments of the video and the teacher responded later) so the student could access it at any time.

We developed research analyses based on ethnographic and self-ethnographic sources, during the end of the second semester of 2021 and beginning of 2022, from the intermediateadvanced adult classes of six teachers; 1) four private classes by teacher Ronaldo Mansur-MG, through the Google Meet and Zoom platform, with all dancers accessing the class online (each one from their home), 2) two classes of the course sponsored by the Aldir Blanc Law with teacher Marina Alves-MG, offered in a completely online format through Google Meet, 3) classes of the Classical Ballet class of the Bachelor's Degree in Dance at Universidade Federal de Viçosa-MG by Professor Dóris Dornelles, 4) four private classes by the teacher Denise Pacheco from Escola Maria Bailarina-RS, which offered classes in a hybrid format (semipresent, in which few dancers were in the dance studio and the others participated in the classes via video call broadcast) through the Google Meet platform, 5) two private classes by teacher Victória Milanez from Escola Ballet Concerto-RS, offered in the format of live transmission through the Instagram platform, and in person at the school with a maximum of six dancers in the studio, and 6) two classes are lessons recorded with Jurgita Dronina, dancer from the English National Ballet and José Alves dancer from Ballet Black (both from London-England) in the recorded class format available on Instagram. The selection of these recorded classes with the dancers Jurgita and José was to complement the auto-ethnographic source of research since with the pandemic of coronavirus dancers and teachers from various parts of the planet made their classical ballet classes available online. Classes ranged from one to two hours in duration. These classes focused more on the dancers' work on the barre exercises and some classes evolved towards the centre, through the application of varied exercises with a chance of repetition, and some pirouette exercises and small/medium jumps depending on the circumstances of each class.

The free availability of online classical ballet classes (live or recorded) was a social movement of empathy among dancers and teachers worldwide that helped professionals, amateurs and students to stay healthy physically and mentally. Several dancers from different parts of the country participated in this research (approximately thirty-five dancers). However, seven of these dancers collaborated with their perceptions about these classes selected through interviews: a dancer participating in the class of teacher Ronaldo Mansur, a dancer participating in the class of teachers Ronaldo Mansur and Dóris, a dancer participating in the seven dancers classes and the course by the teacher Marina and classes by teacher Dóris, a dancer participating in asynchronous classes and by teacher Dóris, a dancer participating in classes at Maria Bailarina school, and two dancers participating in the Ballet Concerto classes.

According to Lakatos and Marconi (2003, p.195), an interview is defined as "a meeting between two people, so that one of them obtains information about a certain subject, through a professional conversation". For Fortin (2009, p 80) in ethnographic research, the interview has the function of questioning "their interlocutors in order to better observe how the cultural context helps to understand artistic production and vice versa". The interviews were carried out through a meeting with the interviewees through *Google Meet*, based on the semi-structured interview script created by us. The questions elaborated were based on the dancers' perceptions about their sensations in contact with the resignification of the home environment and its necessary adaptations for remote teaching. We also seek to record how the dancers felt in these classes emotionally depending on the platform used, given the constant anxiety generated in society due to the context of social isolation.

It is important to highlight that this research involves human beings, and therefore, it has been registered in detail since June 18th 2021, at the National Health Council - National Research Ethics Commission - CONEP. The institutions selected for this research signed the term of acceptance and all the interviewees also signed the Term of Free and Informed Consent, which explained the objectives, methodological aspects and how the data and interviews of this research were stored and treated.

4. The perceptions of dancers' sensations in online ballet classes

From 2020 to mid-2022, dancers commonly used the virtual medium of the internet to stay in shape and socialise in ballet classes. Remote classes were considered the 'safest' way to 'be together' and not get contaminated by the coronavirus. The pandemic context mainly involved moments of lockdown, that is, periods when governments restricted people from leaving their homes only for activities essential to survival, following the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). These restrictions exerted a great influence on the dancers' sensations.

Observations and participation in classes and the dancers' speeches in the interviews indicated direct implications on their ways of feeling. One of the sensations that stood out the most was the absence of touch in virtual/remote classes, which removed one of the most important senses in the dancer's learning process: touch. For example, dancers Laíse and Isabela (interviews, 12/23/21; 12/28/21) explained that they missed touch a lot because in the face-to-face moment the teacher could say 'contract such a muscle' or 'pull the leg to back' and often the dancer did not understand the activation or the direction being indicated, so the teacher would touch the dancer to aid in proprioceptive understanding. For these dancers, in face-to-face classes when the teacher intervened through touch, placing the leg in the position, it provided a better understanding of the desired alignment. This demonstration on the dancer's body usually assists in muscle activation. On the other hand, the dancer Agda reported that she did not miss the touch because in face-to-face classes she does not like to be touched very much (interview, 12/01/21). Different from the other two dancers, this dancer prefers to understand the necessary activations of the muscles to perform the movement through the explanations and analogies used by the teacher.

In addition to learning issues with the lack of touch, there are other issues in virtual classes that are inherent to the absence of human contact. In this research, we observed that to alleviate the absence of some sensations, the dancers needed to actively act to keep this type of contact alive, considering the limitations of technology. For example, to minimise the absence of contact in the learning process, the teachers used metaphors or, in some cases, objects, to explain specific muscle activation and to develop the dancers' proprioception. As recorded in observation and participation in one of the classes, "when explaining the development of a passé derrière to an attitude derrière, the teacher used a paper to symbolise the force of a parable, which would be the necessary force to be made in the attitude derrière" (field diary, 10/20/21). In addition to using analogies that helped the dancers to understand the activation of force, this strategy helped to overcome the absence of the teacher's touch in class.

The difference between online and face-to-face classes and their influence on sensations involves not only physical contact but also human contact, eye contact, and everyday contact, explains Lopes (2020a). For example, in ten or fifteen minutes that dancers arrive earlier and talk about every day and play games in face-toface teaching matters and occur differently from the virtual environment (Lopes, 2020a). To make the virtual teaching environment relaxed, teachers and dancers have a joint responsibility to create spaces for new perceptions or ways of feeling.

In addition to the tactile sensation, vision was another category mentioned by several dancers, given the difficulty of visualising class participants on the screen during ballet classes. One of the dancers expressed how essential is that:

> the teacher needs a peripheral vision (various dimensions) to understand the student's body in those exercises, and these challenges the methodologies which were adapted to the online class. However, these challenges were minimal compared to other deeper issues of teaching; for example, how the teacher understands where the student comes from, and which body he/she is dealing with (Vinicius, interview, 12/06/21).

Considering the sense of vision, all interviewees commented on the difficulty of absorbing corrections directed to other colleagues (Agda, 12/01/21; Vinícius, 12/06/21; Laíse, 12/23/21; Josimáteus, 12/24/21; Isabela, 12/28/21; Marina, 01/01/21; Dante, 01/22/21). One of the dancers reports that in the online class 'if the correction was not directed at him, he would not pay attention', as it was impossible to see his colleague during the exercise (Josimáteus, interview, 12/24/21).

One issue considering corrections during synchronous online teaching is that the teacher does not have a full view of the student's body in 3D. However, the teacher can visualise, albeit in a small way, the bodies of all people (who were with the camera on) through a 2D screen transmitted in the virtual room. In face-to-face teaching, to observe all the students at the same time, the teacher would need to have a total view of the room at the same time, as reported by one of the dancers (Dante, interview, 01/22/22). In the format of virtual transmission of the recorded class, for example, there is no possibility to exchange communication with the teacher, and it is up to the student to self-correct.

The application of corrections, and the 'dictating' of the exercises to the students, in the experiences of the classes, was something that at times compromised the 'listening' to the music played (field diary, 10/04/21). This is because in the classes investigated, the teacher used the sound through the same microphone in which he spoke, making his voice stand out over the music, not allowing the dancers to hear it. Although the teacher's speech was rhythmic accompanying the music played, at times when the music 'skips', what was dictated by the teacher stood out from the dancers' experience of musicality. In the experience of one of the researchers participating in the classes, this interfered with her concentration because to keep track of the music she needed to focus on listening to it internally (field diary, 10/20/21). Another dancer reported dealing in the same way with 'skipping' the music and in times when the music slowed down and then accelerated (due to poor internet connection). Dante stated that he "ignored that the music stopped and continued [dancing] until the end [of the proposed exercise]" (interview, 01/22/22).

The dancer Marina S. had experience teaching and using computer sound to transmit the music but she says that the sound is still at the mercy of the quality of broadband of the data transmission. For this dancer, the experience was "a good exercise to work the [musical] tempo inside the head and try to follow the same rhythm" (Marina S., interview, 01/01/22). Although she previously had a good idea of musicality, she considered that the moments in which the transmission of the music presented a few problems it made difficult for her to learn.

Another dancer Vinícius (interview, 12/06/21) explains that he did not have deep experience with musicality, and felt that he had gained greater intimacy with listening, even using the communication platform remotely. For this dancer, even though all these issues still exist within online teaching, it is essential for a professional who knows how to guide the dancer within their musical limitations to perform the movement (Vinicius, interview, 12/06/21).

Both observations and participation in ballet classes and interviews with dancers Dante, Marina and Vinicius were similar to the findings of the study by Cote-Laurence (2000) in which rhythm in ballet classes is considered critical. The rhythm becomes a skill learned by the dancer in class and integrates the teacher's verbal description and movement demonstration. Therefore, to elaborate on the rhythm of the movements and understand the processing of rhythmic elements, we noticed that the surveyed dancers who had a prior notion felt at ease in remote classes when the music was distorted.

Considering the dancers' perception, another important factor to be explored is the practice of classical ballet in an adapted, transformed environment, which does not have the ideal infrastructure for these classes. The home environment does not have adequate flooring, vast space, mirror and barres, where there are several distractions, which makes this environment conducive to the emergence of injuries. In some field observations, it was noted that the instability of the barre substitute, for example, a chair, the wall, or another object, was a factor of great potential for injuries, when the dancer became unbalanced these substitutes did not offer the same safety of the fixed barre. In addition, in several classes we observed the dancers bumping into nearby objects when they were performing the class movements. Regarding the remote class held in the home environment, the floor was not conducive to cushioning the jumps meant that many types of exercises were replaced or excluded entirely so that the dancers did not receive extra impact on the joints. In this context, the presence of the teacher to guide what can be done or not, and offer help to students in an emergency was fundamental. Some dancers' interviews pointed out that these factors combined with the teacher's inability to observe the dancer's entire body, limited their power to correct movements and body alignment, favouring the occurrence of injuries.

The dancers in this research explored their sensations of touch, hearing and vision in remote teaching in other ways, with the construction of knowledge and the development of sensory skills in this teaching-learning format. Some of these skills were worked within the limitations that remote teaching provided, different from face-to-face teaching.

Another difficulty presented by the dancers was when the video screen froze frequently due to the poor quality of the internet connection and skipped parts of the exercise. When this happened, they could not ask the teacher to repeat something they did not understand, nor could follow the corrections (field diary, 09/22/21). Due to the restricted space, the participant researcher decided to observe the dancers to understand their approach to certain movements, especially regarding quality and expressiveness. The observation of the class also offered great learning, such as being able to see the corrections applied to other dancers. This helps the dancer to self-correct based on the feedback offered to her/his colleagues. One of the dancers expressed a similar feeling when she took classes on *Instagram* - in person and virtually. She comments on her experience with this teaching model:

For those who participated in person, I found the live format great [in which the dancer is in the room being recorded] because afterwards I can watch my entire class, look and correct myself. But when I had to watch the recorded online classes [in which the dancer is at his house participating after the virtual class occurred], (I thought it was kind of bad) it is as if you were watching the class (...) it's a recorded class in which there was no room for interaction (Marina, interview, 01/01/21).

Other dancer commented on his choice of not doing this modality because:

the class on *Instagram* is a broadcast, which does not have much of an exchange with the teacher, so I ended up not being interested because for me, as a student, I like to have the exchange with the teacher, to have the answer, the correction (Dante, interview 01/22/21).

In the asynchronous recorded classes available on platforms such as *Youtube* and *Instagram*, the dancer is completely alone, without feedback from the teacher, at a different time from which the class occurred. Therefore, for the participating researcher, it was very difficult to maintain a commitment to access classes at a given time without having the teacher and other dancers follow up in realtime as if she needed social validation, and the presence of a group of people motivated me to participate in the class. In the experience of the researchers and some dancers in this research, this teaching modality did not stimulate self-corrections and remained active during the class. The asynchronous recorded class did not offer motivation from the teacher in the form of exchange/dialogue at the same time on the virtual platform. In this type of class, the dancer can leave at any time without the validation of the teacher.

Ballerina Laíse explained how the absence of the teacher at that moment changed her learning in class:

A difficulty that is general and that everyone must have felt generates insecurity about whether you are doing the right exercise or not. Especially when I took a recorded class, I had to pay much more attention to what I was doing, to see if I was right or wrong because there was no teacher present to correct me (Interview, 12/23/21).

Although each of these teaching modalities has its particularities, a common issue must be observed: the space at home and the necessary adaptations which the dancers faced to follow these teaching modalities were very different from face-toface teaching. In addition, the dancer had the opportunity to experience different forms of teaching and learning that may complement each other. For example, paying more attention to the movement you are performing is a positive thing. This fact favours the development of the dancer's motor attention, and can in a way be beneficial for when he/she returns to the studio to take a ballet class in person. However, the dancers indicated, in general, missing the presence of colleagues and the teacher at the same time. However, some virtual communication platforms (recorded in this research through *Google Meet* and *Zoom*) facilitated the teachers and dancers to share and communicate in the same space at the same time.

One of the teachers participating in this research, Ronaldo Mansur, exemplified how the difference between the influence of a range of motion and the use of geographic space occurs in his classes. In this case, he commented on the difficulty that one of the dancers had to widely perform the movements in a restricted space, as follows:

> I was doing [class] in this little room on the vinyl floor and there is the bookshelf, therefore, automatically when I go to an *arabesque*, the arm of the *arabesque* itself – it is not even the leg - the arm goes lower, the look goes lower. When I did it in my parent's living room, which is a large place, he said at the time 'wow, it makes a big difference'. In addition to being a large place, it's a glass place so I could see everything outside. And then the arm goes high, the trunk grows more... it made a lot of difference (Agda, interview, 12/01/21).

In addition, the ballerina Isabela explained her perception of the influence of space on her range of motion when she mentioned that "I already knew that when I was going to do something backwards, in that place I would either not lift my leg very much or I had to go forward because I already knew my leg was going to hit the closet" (interview, 12/28/21).

The issue of space in the ballet class, in addition to influencing the range of movement, for another dancer affected her 'delivery' in carrying out the movement by being in the physical space 'alone'. Marina S. commented on her feelings: "when you are in a proper place, it allows you to go more to the whole, to go to the

end" (interview, 01/01/22). At home, for Marina S. there was a restriction because of space and because she was alone with her computer; so she missed the actual presence, of someone physically together.

One of the issues related to space in remote classes was the absence of the mirror, a fact that influenced both positively and negatively the performance of the movements of the dancers. During classes, many dancers reported feeling "difficulty watching their colleagues and the absence of a mirror made some feel more confident. Without mirror the dancers compared themselves less to their peers and did not judge themselves so much while doing the exercises, turning their attention to their own bodies" (field diary, 09/16/21). One of the dancers described his perception of the class:

I think the mirror helps a lot you to make a self-assessment and self-correction [...] depending on my proprioception, it is a journey that, sometimes I forget to activate the abdomen, sometimes I forget to relax the shoulders, or I have my arm down, so it depends more on the teacher's vision and feedback, and the use of the camera (Vinicius, interview, 12/06/21).

On the contrary, the fact that the dancer cannot observe his own alignment in the mirror can also be a positive thing. In our analysis of the interviews with the dancers and participation in the classes, we noticed that the absence of the mirror starts to demand very high proprioception from the dancer. As much as the teacher helps the dancer with the corrections, his/her view through the screen offers two dimensions of the movement performed, and the camera does not allow him/her to visualise the dancer's body as a whole.

For Oliveira *et al* (2021) the lack of feedback from the teacher appeared as one of the limitations of remote teaching. Factors such as the size of the screen on which the class is transmitted, the angle of the camera depending on how it was positioned, and ambient lighting are just a few examples of how the computer, monitor or cell phone can interfere with the teacher's and the dancer's perception in class and consequently influence their body learning.

In the case of online classical ballet teaching modalities, such as asynchronous recorded classes or in live/synchronous format, the teacher cannot observe participants in the class. In many cases, the dancers also do not have a mirror to help them with the corrections suggested by the teacher. These factors demand the proprioception and attention of the dancer even greater as a form of self-correction than in a face-to-face ballet class. Only one of the dancers, Laíse Almeida, commented that she had access to a mirror that reflected her whole body at home during the class. In this sense, she comments that "I think my alignment improved a lot, but it was more because of the mirror, of having this opportunity to observe myself" (Laíse, interview 12/23/21).

Three dancers (interview Marina, 01/01/21; Dante 01/22/21; Laíse 12/23/21) reported more difficulty in maintaining attention in online teaching because there were other events at home that occurred simultaneously with the class. As reported by Dante, when observing this behaviour in himself and his students in the classes he taught that:

one of the big differences for me is that the student does not focus because there is a universe around him in the house; the dishes to wash, food to clean, the messy sofa, and the interruptions. My attention I feel more relaxed at home because of the environment, and maybe the brain understands that there is a place to relax. You have to have a certain muscle tone for the class and the brain wants to relax (Dante, Interview, 01/22/21).

We consider relevant what Iverson Ladewing (2000, p. 63) stated, that "attention plays a very important role in the ability to retain relevant information, because it is through it, associated with control processes, that we keep information in long-term memory". Thus, it is necessary to be aware of possible interferences during the remote class, so that it does not harm its quality and the teaching-learning process of the students. Trying to be in a calm environment, and having an open conversation with the family to organise and have privacy at the time of class were some of the measures taken by the dancers to have as little interference as possible (Interview, Isabela 12/28/21; Agda 12/01/21).

Important issues differentiated the various teaching modalities experienced by the participants. Regarding the differences between face-to-face and remote teaching, we noticed that the relationship with space and the distance between teacher and dancers and the type of transmission modality were one of the aspects that most influenced their sensations. The distance and its influence on the dancers' learning modified their ways of feeling, for example, the absence of touch for corrections. In this way, this research indicates that the teaching of classical ballet online influences the sensations, and perception of information in the dancers' learning during the Coronavirus pandemic through different modalities of remote teaching. Remote teaching offers several teaching-learning possibilities, and all these forms contributed to the dancer having a more active posture in their learning process.

5. Final considerations

In this research, we based our theoretical-methodological perspective on ethnographic and self-ethnographic sources through participant observation, interviews with several dancers and participation in various modalities of remote ballet classes. This methodological approach allowed us to reflect on the main sensations dancers experienced in the remote teaching model of classical ballet and their relationship with teaching-learning during the Coronavirus pandemic in the midst of social isolation.

Several sensory issues of ballet teaching in the classroom differ from remote online teaching. For example, in our research, dancers reported that at face-to-face classes they could see the teacher in several dimensions, listen to the music in its entirety without interruptions, receive the teacher's touch to improve movement proprioception, play with their hands on the barre looking for balance, visually check their movement in the mirror, feel the texture and flexibility of the floor through their feet on the shoe, move with expansion in space. As a result, the dancers' learning underwent sensory changes that were beneficial in online classes. For example, in remote classes dancers stopped relying frequently on vision and instead focused on proprioceptive issues, they learned to feel and count the music so that when the internet failed the dancers could continue the sequence in its dynamics, they found sensory metaphors and used objects to perceive movement, and some dancers felt there was more space for dialogue with the teacher when classes were synchronous.

The limitation of the teacher's visualisation (or the lack of it in the modalities in which there is no interaction), the difference in the space-time, or the absence of the teachers (in recorded classes), provoked the dancers to be responsible for listening to their bodies. In addition to developing autonomy concerning the organisation of the space of the class, discipline in maintaining practice and reducing possible distractions (especially in asynchronous modalities), all of these were not easy tasks for dancers and teachers in this chaotic moment of the pandemic.

The synchronous modalities with interactions between students-students and students-teacher worked as a way to maintain physical and mental health. This modality enabled dancers to maintain physical activity and helped reduce the feeling of social isolation through socialisation. In the synchronous modalities, there were interactions between students-students and student-teacher; and the asynchronous modalities, showed a deficit in relation to socialisation and motivation. However, these modalities showed greater development of the dancers' self-correction, and in the asynchronous modalities it was possible to study the movements in greater detail and improve their quality in some cases.

The analysis of the sensations of dancers in ballet classes in remote teaching was complex because in this period of the pandemic there was social distance, the emergency and unpredictability that has been prolonged over the years, from March 2020 to approximately April 2022. The sensory relationships were intertwined with the dancers' emotions. For example, dancers indicated emotions of joy when taking group classes and seeing or meeting new dancers and teachers. In addition, the possibility of socialisation in remote classical ballet classes offered benefits regarding the dancers' emotions and helped in self-care rituals, and exchanges with their peers about dance and life experiences. The dancers also pointed out differences in the perceptions of their energy levels depending on the transmission platforms of the classes which were used. These differences caused moments of stress for the dancers. For example, dancers got stressed when they could not visually follow the class, or due to connection failures that prevented them from seeing the exercises and listening to the music. On the contrary, the dancers indicated positive the possibility of stopping a recorded class, repeating an exercise, and focusing on their bodily sensations.

At the same time that the disease spread, there was a high number of deaths from coronavirus, often affecting the families of these dancers and teachers. This social situation made it difficult to maintain an emotional balance during this period. Despite these circumstances, dancers and ballet teachers found ways to connect and keep the practice of this modality alive. During this period, there were even countless opportunities for classes, auditions, courses, free ballet shows offered by countless institutions and professionals from various countries, connecting people from many locations for teaching and exchange of learning without leaving their homes, expanding the possibilities of development in the practice of classical ballet.

The main contribution of this research was the focus on the construction of the dancer's sensorial corporeality in the learning process within this remote ballet teaching modality during the Coronavirus pandemic. From this research, important issues differentiated various teaching modalities through multiple platforms which were experienced by the dancers. Regarding the differences between face-to-face and remote teaching, we noticed that the topics about the private spaces of their homes with little infrastructure and the distance between teacher-student were one of the most highlighted points by the dancers that impacted their sensations. For example, the lack of sensation of the teacher's touch in the corrections influenced the dancer's learning. According to Batson (2009, p.40) "proprioception appears essential for dancers, both to prevent injury and improve technique and performance". However, in many classes investigated there was an integration of exercises to challenge proprioceptive acuity in the

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online ballet class. The pandemic made it possible for dance teachers to adapt the exercises to meet the evolving fitness requirements of dancers considering existing infrastructure limitations and increasing dancers' perception of proprioception in remote classes. In this sense, many dancers explained that they focused more attention on their proprioception in remote classes due to the lack of touch, and this provoked emotions of confidence and trust in themselves when performing the movements.

According to the findings of this research, the teaching of classical ballet online influenced the dancers' learning during the Coronavirus pandemic through different modalities of remote teaching-learning. Most dancers pointed out that all these forms of online classes provoked a more active posture, and the dancers became more agents in this learning process. There was the development of the dancers' autonomy in relation to the organisation of the class space, discipline in maintaining practice and seeking to eliminate possible distractions (mainly in asynchronous modalities). For example, the limitation of the teacher's visualisation, the lack of interaction with the teacher, the difference in space-time in which the students were, and the lack of touch stimulated the responsibility to listen to their own bodies. These facts increased the proprioception of many of these dancers.

Unlike Marques (2020), the findings of our research indicated that many of these online dance classes provided dancers and teachers with rich exchanges of sensory knowledge about their corporeality and their emotions. Online ballet classes presented some difficulties, for example, changes in sensory perception, such as changes from a prioritisation of vision over other senses, and the exclusion of many dancers because of internet accessibility. However, several dancers could dance together in several places on the planet sharing at the same time a free wide range of the art of dance. In this sense, the online ballet classes investigated brought benefits to dancers who were dancing together as a mechanism for maintaining mental and physical health.

In this context, we agree with Kourlas (2020) that this pandemic has taught us that we need to return to our bodies and it has created a new way of moving and dancing which has spilt over into the streets. We need to prepare dancers to advance in their future as dance practitioners, therefore we have a lot to discover with the inclusion of online pedagogy in dance practice. In other words, we need to venture out and explore in an innovative way, with creative means, how to use this platform for teaching and learning dance.

With the perspective of having a future focused on the development of education, and creating new opportunities for social inclusion, equality and growth of individuals, we consider important the discussion about mixed systems of classroom and online education. In this context, we suggest that online ballet classes serve as an extra resource for all knowledge developed in face-to-face learning. As Santos (2016, p.17) states, "all knowledge is incomplete", therefore, we consider that we can use both the face-to-face and remote models as embodied knowledge which can be beneficial when used as complementary to each other, expanding the sensory repertoire of the dancer.

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