

## COMPARING DANCE ARTIST AND DANCE COACH STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING DIGITAL AND AI TOOLS FOR INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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As a result of increased academic and student mobility and worldwide interconnection, the internationalization of higher education has emerged as a key issue in recent years. Li & Mahadi's (2024) study demonstrates the rapidly evolving role of digital technology as well as emphasizes inclusion and calls for innovative approaches in the field. Positive intercultural attitudes among educators provide a supportive learning environment that may enhance students' well-being (Basarkod et al., 2024) and consequently, may lead to better academic achievements. Digital technology, which enhances student engagement, inclusion, peer collaboration, and self-regulation, as well as supporting progress monitoring (Balica, n.d.; Panesi et al., 2020), appears as a useful tool. A significant portion of current research on internationalization is centered on Western nations and is primarily carried out by scholars from English-speaking areas (Huang & Chen, 2024). In contrast, this presentation approaches the topic from an Eastern European higher educational perspective, focusing on the technology-supported, intercultural education of international dance artist (DA, n = 11) and dance coach (DC, n = 17) students in certain theoretical classes at a very small but unique institution. Students were asked about how they perceived technology use in relation to their cultural knowledge sharing with their professor and peers. Dance artist and dance coach students gave similarly positive answers on Likert scales in an online questionnaire. Although it was expected that by using the Mann-Whitney U test, a significant difference would be detected in DC students' perception of the extent to which digital and AI-powered platforms (e.g., LMS, Miro, various Google apps and social media platforms, Copilot, Canva, etc.) used in certain theoretical classes help them share their background and culture-related knowledge with their educator more, this did not prove to be the case. No significant differences were detected ( $U = 93$ ;  $U$  Critical = 51;  $p = .05$ ). DC students' training is more theoretical involving instruction on teaching and learning. DA students focus more on practical training. However, no evidence of a stronger focus by DC students on student-teacher knowledge sharing was detected. DA and DC students' responses were not significantly dissimilar. Their similar scores might be explained by the fact that students admitted for DC training might have originally applied for admission to DA programs having similar mindsets to those of DA students. Some DA students might find using technology more challenging, however, AI-powered tools were similarly favoured by both groups of students for research and communicating results. Further investigation of the topic might lead to more tailor-made course methodology in dance university students' theoretical training in general, as well as developing life-long skills applicable both during and after their active dancer careers.

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