

## Comprehensive Report on Early COVID Impact

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic that started on the Spring of 2020 posed a considerable challenge for college students and educators. The lockdown that took place after Spring Recess of that year demanded urgent adjustments in instruction as well as instructional methods. The sudden shift, from in-person to online teaching, required the immediate use of asynchronous learning to guarantee effective communication between students, faculty and the administration. While new initiatives emerged as possible solutions to the crisis, the issue of whether they actually allowed students to accomplish their educational expectations became an important question. This study summarizes the results of a research work which main purpose was to measure the degree to which students felt cared about during instruction before and after the pandemic, before and after online teaching. The results are evident as it becomes clear that, despite qualitative accounts of feeling cared about, online teaching does quantitatively decrease the perception students have about been cared about by their professor. Both, the quantitative and qualitative data sets have been important in understanding the broad general points of my research as well as the details and depth associated with two very different instructional methods and sets of circumstances.

**Keywords:** Social presence, Cues-filtered-out theory, Trust-building techniques, Verbal-immediacy, Reflective practitioner

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### Introduction

Given the new set of circumstances derived from the World pandemic, I had to come up with very important decisions about how to deliver dance and arts instruction. I decided to teach asynchronously; a type of class that allows the instructor to facilitate information-sharing outside the constraints of time and place. This meant teaching through instructional materials that students would learn from on their own time. The students' response was encouraging since they were all used to my "learner-centered" approach, which allows students to "assume responsibility for their own learning" (Blumberg, 2017). Besides, they were all still in a process of chaotic re-adjustment that would have never made synchronous online teaching a viable alternative at this point.

This process was at first purely intuitive, as I was already well experienced in using Blogger, a publishing service that allows multi-user blogs with time-stamped entries, as a "pedagogical tool" (Ikpeze, 2015). I had

developed the habit of blogging class content and students' work to build student-teacher relationship through virtual spaces. The nature of embodied learning, in which, if the students are not present, they cannot experience what was like to be in class, makes it inconvenient for some students. I am referring to students who at one-point need to be absent, e.g. student-athletes who have to leave campus to compete, who need to at least know what was taught. Thus, blogging has become a way for me to give those students who could not make it to class, a place to make up for what they missed. It has also become a way to document not only instruction, but the students' work, which once published make them feel proud of their accomplishments. It allowed them the possibility of commenting on each other's work as well as on class issues. It became, as I perfected my blogging practice, a form of text-book on which to access definitions, links, videos and pictures.

Given the nature of the COVID 19 pandemic, I continued planning instruction through my blogs as I referred students to the blog entry for that day and as I integrated the academic and the experiential parts of my classes. Then, for a class to witness each other's work, students would have to post their exercise responses, their content answers and their recorded assignments on the university's Blackboard, specifically on their own course's Discussion Board. The latter is a feature that allows participants to carry on discussions online. At any time of the day or night, with no need for the participants to be logged into the site at the same time, students were able to complete their assignments.

This combination seemed ideal since the blog still allowed me to keep ownership of my teaching material in an aesthetically pleasing way, while Blackboard's tools officially archived the students' work following the university's standards and protocol. I knew this was not a perfect choice because an important part of the experiential aspect of the arts and dance-learning was going to be missing. The interactive human contact that attracts our students from all fields of knowledge to our Teaching & Learning and Dance Program respectively was no longer going to be available. However, I felt this was a chance for me to model "problem-solving skills" and "leadership adaptability in a high stress situation" (McCain, 2005; Murphy, 2015; Kokemuller, n.d.). At that point, the students and I had already established a sense of connection which would help us to overcome these sudden changes together as a team.

## **Method**

As a reflective practitioner, constantly evaluating the effectiveness of my teaching methodology, content delivery and practice, I used self-study as a methodological tool for self-assessment (Ikpeze, 2016). Therefore, I immediately tried to access a way to measure how online instruction would affect my students' learning in order to know if the quality of my teaching practices had been affected by asynchronous instruction. I realized I needed both quantitative data to get me the numbers to prove the broad general points of my research as well as qualitative data to provide myself with the details and the depth needed to understand their full implications. After searching for the best available tool, I found the document "Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching: Culminating Findings," which derived from the 2013 "Measures of Effective Teaching

(MET) Projects Three-Year Study.” According to the project’s findings, measures of validity and content-knowledge should show that teachers who perform better on that measure are generally more effective in improving student outcomes. The test for “validity,” central to the (MET) project’s analyses, measures high-quality classroom observations, well-designed student-perception surveys, and teachers’ prior records of student-achievement-gains on state tests. I decided that the (2013) student-perception survey (SPS), as a measure of how effective my asynchronous teaching methods had been during the COVID-19 pandemic, was the most applicable to this study. I needed to collect, quantify and measure data based on my instructional approach and how my methodology affected students’ perception of their learning. This process of self-study would in turn enable me to “recognize, articulate and reconstruct” my own pedagogic practices (Ikpeze, 2016).

Originally tailored for grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-12, the surveys helped assess teachers’ content knowledge, pedagogy, and relationship-building skills. They allowed students to assess their classroom experience with each teacher across the 7 dimensions listed below. Thus, the ‘Seven Cs’ Surveys, administered through Cambridge Education, measured “what teachers do and “what students experience” (Student Perception Surveys, 2012). The SPS’ Seven C’s, became the ideal tool to measure the degree to which my instructional methods had been effective. The Seven Cs’ are: 1. Caring about students (Encouragement and emotional support); 2. Captivating students (Learning seems interesting and relevant); 3. Confering with students (Students sense that their ideas are respected); 4. Clarifying lessons (Success seems feasible); 5. Consolidating knowledge (Ideas get connected and integrated); 6. Challenging students (Press for effort, perseverance, and rigor) and 7. Controlling behavior (Culture of cooperation and peer support).

Because items designed to address ages 6-12 of the Student Survey could be easily adapted to the kind of survey needed to measure college students’ experience, I decided to use the Seven C Items for that particular age group with my college students. In this survey, for each item, students have the option of selecting from choices such as: “Totally True”, “Mostly True”, “Somewhat True”, “Mostly Untrue” or “Totally Untrue” to evaluate both, “what teachers do and what students experience.” The list of items included in the Seven Cs’ survey were adapted to the higher education setting as it was also posted on Discussion Board towards the end of the semester. Within the Seven Cs’ Survey for Higher Education, out of indicators such as: I. Care, II. Captivate, III. Confer, IV. Clarify, V. Consolidate, VI. Challenge and VII. Control, I decided to research domain I, “Care.”

## Results

“Care” is the dimension students value more than teachers do (Weimer, 2013). Teachers tend to place their focus on instructional aspects of their educational role such as: standards, organization and clear, stimulating and effective instruction. However, although students agree that these aspects of instruction are important, they care as much about the personal aspects of teaching. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, given the large amount of data collected, focusing on the domain “Care” has made it easier to understand and explain the process and results of the study. Students want teachers who “welcome their questions, who acknowledge their

input, and who are available” (Weimer, 2013). Thus, establishing rapport with individual students and the class as a whole is the best way to show one cares for them. Research on “verbal immediacy,” for instance, has identified a number of behaviors that convey caring to students, which I am aware of and intuitively practice in my own studio. Strategies such as: using personal examples, asking questions and encouraging students to talk, using humor in class, addressing students by name, etc., are the most characteristic aspects of my instructional style. However, despite my own personal assessment; I was curious to see the results of the survey. This study documented only some of the quantitative data on domain “Care” across the 8 courses that I teach. Below, I share the data on DAN 291 (Dance/Movement Therapy), the first course from which I was able to collect information.

### **DAN 291 / Dance Movement Therapy**

The 13 students who took the survey earned 3-units at the end of the semester. Although DAN 291 is listed as a lecture-style course, it is also experiential since dance/movement therapy requires for students to learn by doing. Fortunately, by the time the pandemic erupted, the class had arrived at a point where almost all the methodologies of the field of Dance/Movement Therapy (DMT) had been covered. However, some methodologies were still to be discussed; thus, after Spring Recess, when our campus closed, I tried to keep the order we had already established in the class. The class usually began with a circular formation in which students had the opportunity of checking-in or express how they felt. We continued with a discussion about the methodology for that day. Then, we applied the methodology through an experiential exercise in which students role-played the interactions between therapists and clients. In closing, they discussed their experience with the whole class before they wrote their reflections on their journals.

The adaptation to online instruction took a certain degree of ingenuity. The check-in had to be now shared in writing. The methodology had to be explained through a video. The experiential part of it had to be devised by having students imagine a scenario in which they were their own client. Their final reflections along with the rest of the elements covered in class had to be posted on our Discussion Board. What was left to complete for the rest of the semester was the organization and scheduling of the students’ presentations. Therefore, the task was to keep track of who was going to present when; which mode of presentation were they going to use, with whom they would partner to create a team and how were the rest of students going to respond to the presentations.

Students came up with their own very creative ways of presenting online. Some used power point, some used YouTube, some used a combination of both. Along with their oral/recorded presentations they had to also find a case study that illustrated the role of DMT in the treatment of the specific population they chose to present on. The case study had to also document the specific diagnosis they focused on as a group. The presentation was also accompanied by a summary which they would provide to the rest of the class as a reminder of the main points they discussed. The evaluation of the different parts of their presentations were documented in a rubric that was sent to them via email, via blog as well as via Blackboard. The rest of the students proved their

attendance by commenting on their classmates' presentations and answering content questions articulated by the presenters. Below, I share some of the quantitative data on "Care" for the DAN 291 (Dance Movement Therapy) class before and after Spring Recess.

*Data: Before Spring Recess*

- I. Caring about students (Encouragement and emotional support)
  - a. My professor in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me.
    1. Totally True: 13 students / 100%
  - b. My professor really tries to understand how students feel about things.
    1. Totally True: 12 students / 92.3 %
    2. Mostly True: 1 student / 7.6 %
  - c. My professor seems to know if something is bothering me.
    1. Totally True: 6 students / 46.2 %
    2. Mostly True: 5 students / 38.5 %
    3. Somewhat: 2 students / 15.4 %

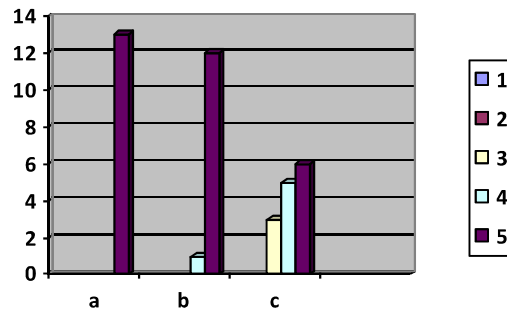
**Survey and Chart Analysis for the Care Domain before Spring Recess**

Prior to the pandemic when instruction took place face-to-face, students of Dance Movement Therapy answered question "a" unanimously (100 %) by checking the "totally-true" option (with a numerical value of 5), to say that I "made them feel that I really cared about them." For question "b" twelve students or 92.3 % of those who completed the survey felt "I really tried to understand how they felt about things" by checking the "totally-true" choice. One student felt it was "mostly-true" (the second best choice with a numerical value of 4) to say that I "really tried to understand how they felt about things." When it comes to question "c", (knowing if something was bothering them), only 84.7 % of students (6 checked "totally-true" and 5 checked "mostly-true"), felt I knew. Two students or 15.4 % of those who took the survey checked the "somewhat-true" choice (which numerical value is 3) to say "I somewhat knew if something was bothering them." When the three items are averaged in the rank of "totally true and "mostly true" my score for caring is 92.3 % or the equivalent of 12 students within that 13 student sample; not counting the two students who checked the choice "somewhat-true." No student checked choices "mostly- untrue" (with a numerical value of 2) or "totally-untrue" (with a numerical value of 1). To evaluate my general performance in reference to the three questions related to the domain "Care" the average of students who felt it was "totally true" that I cared for them was 79.5 %. Please, see the chart bellow along with a further discussion.

**I. Domain: Care – Chart / Before Spring Recess**

Y axis: Number of Students who answered the specific question.

X axis: 3 questions (a, b, c) and the 5 Choices (1 - 5) per question.



## Discussion

The triple bar chart shown above provides three pieces of information for each category. The bars are color-coded to represent each piece of information. When looking at the chart, one can observe that for question “a” (e.g. my professor in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me), the bar reflects the 13 students (Y axis) that checked “totally-true.” For question “b” (e.g. my professor really tries to understand how students feel about things) the bar reflects 12 students checked the “totally-true” choice and one checked “mostly-true.” For question “c” (e.g. my professor seems to know if something is bothering me), the bars show 6 students checked “totally-true,” 5 checked choice “mostly-true” and 2 checked “somewhat-true.”

When analyzing the chart, one can see that most students expressed that “I make them feel that I really care about them.” They also feel “I really try to understand how they feel about things.” However, although most students think that “I seem to know if something is bothering them,” some felt “I somewhat knew,” which implies I knew only sometimes. The bars describe a descending order from questions “a” to “c” as the bars also increase in number, from one bar for question “a” to two bars for question “b,” to three bars for question “c”. One can assume that this is due to the need for an increasing level of engagement with students as one navigates the complexities of: a) making them feel one cares for them, b) having them perceive one is really trying to understand how they feel about things, and c) knowing if something is bothering them. The latter requires a level of perceptive abilities that are more challenging to develop when one is in charge of a whole class. It means that more work needs to be done for me to develop acute perceptive skills during the delivery of instruction in real time and face-to-face classes.

*Data: After Spring Recess – Online*

- I. **Caring** about students (Encouragement and emotional support)
  - a. My professor in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me.
    - Totally True: 10 students – 76.9 %
    - Mostly True: 3 students – 23.07 %

b. My professor really tries to understand how students feel about things.

Totally True: 11 students / 84.9 %

Mostly True: 1 student / 7.6 %

Somewhat: 1 student / 7.6

c. My professor seems to know if something is bothering me.

Totally True: 5 / 38.4 %

Mostly True: 4 / 30.7 %

Somewhat: 1 / 7.6 %

Mostly Untrue: 3 / 23.07 %

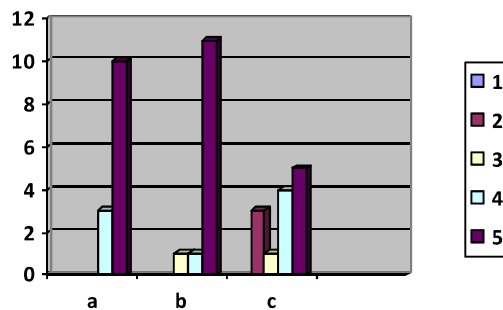
### Survey and Chart Analysis for the Care Domain after Spring Recess

After the pandemic, when instruction took place asynchronously, 76.9 % or 10 students of Dance Movement Therapy answered question “a”; they checked the “totally-true” option (with a numerical value of 5), to say that I “made them feel that I really cared about them.” 23.07 % or 3 students checked “mostly true” to say that “I made them feel that I really care about them.” For question “b” eleven students or 84.9 % of those who completed the survey felt “I really tried to understand how they felt about things” by checking the “totally-true” choice. One student or 7.6 % felt it was “mostly-true” that I “really tried to understand how they felt about things,” (the second best choice with a numerical value of 4). Another student (7.6 %) answered that the statement was somewhat true (with a numerical value of 3). When it comes to question “c”, (knowing if something was bothering them), only 38.4 % or 5 students checked “totally-true,” (30.7 %) or four students checked “mostly-true,” (7.6 %) or one student checked “somewhat true” and (23.07 %) or three students checked “Mostly Untrue). When evaluating my general performance in reference to the three questions related to the domain “Care” during asynchronous instruction the average of students who felt it was “totally true” that I cared for them was 66.7 %. Please, see the chart bellow along with a further discussion.

#### I. Domain: Care / Chart - After Spring Recess

Y axis: Number of Students who answered the specific question.

X axis: 3 questions (I, II, II) and the 5 Choices (1 - 5) per question.



## Discussion

The triple bar chart shown above provides three pieces of information for each category. The bars are color-coded representing each piece of information. When looking at the chart, one can observe that for question “a” (e.g. my professor in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me), the bar reflects that 10 students (Y axis) checked “totally-true,” while 3 students checked the “mostly-true” choice. For question “b” (e.g. my professor really tries to understand how students feel about things) the bar reflects 11 students checked the “totally-true choice,” one student checked the “mostly-true choice” and one student the “somewhat-true” choice. For question “c” (e.g. my professor seems to know if something is bothering me), the bars show 5 students checked the “totally-true choice,” 5 students checked choice “mostly-true” and 2 students checked “somewhat-true.”

When analyzing the chart, one can see that while most students still expressed that “I make them feel that I really care about them;” the response to whether this item is “totally true” or “mostly true” was not unanimous as it was before Spring Recess. In terms of whether “I really try to understand how they feel about things,” compared to our face-to-face interaction prior to Spring Recess, 1 student felt that I “mostly knew” and 1 felt “I somewhat knew.” Although most students think that “I seem to know if something is bothering them,” the bars show a more diversified data than the data referring to the period before Spring Recess. One student felt “I somewhat knew if something was bothering them” while 3 students thought that was “mostly untrue.” This implies that I knew only sometimes, which makes sense since we did not see each other and we were quarantined in our own respective homes during online instruction.

In general, the bars describe a descending order from questions “a” to “c” as the bars also increase in number, from two bars for question “a”, to three bars for question “b”, to four bars for “c”. One can assume that this is due to the need for an increasing level of engagement with students as one navigates the complexities of expressing “Care” while a) making them feel one cares for them while teaching online, b) having them perceive one is really trying to understand how they feel about things while explaining the assignments online, and c) knowing if something is bothering them as they complete or not, their online assignments. Different from face-to-face instruction, when only one item seemed critical (e.g. knowing if something is bothering them), after Spring Recess all items related to “Care” seem to have become critical. The most critical of all being “knowing if something is bothering them.”

It feels it is difficult to know if something is bothering a student when one is not in their presence or vice versa. Unless they express it in well-articulated written language, there is no way to show the student that one knows how he/she feels. However, it seems still possible to show that one cares about them. Based on the quantitative data observed above, a working hypothesis derives, which is that students’ perception of being “cared about” by the professor, in this case me, when teaching takes place online, decreases. For item “a” (my professor in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me), the data decreases by 0.1 %; for item “b” (my professor



really tries to understand how students feel about things), it decreases by 7.4 %. And for item “c” (my professor seems to know if something is bothering me) it decreases by 14.9 %. In general, the students’ perception of being cared for by me decreased 12.8 %.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

#### *DAN 291 / Dance Movement Therapy*

The informal feedback seen bellow, is the result of a whole semester of teaching, however, students are responding mainly to our interactions during the lockdown period. Out of the 25 students in the class, I was able to collect qualitative data on 7 of them who spontaneously offered their response to their experience in the course. This class did not write a reflection at the end of the semester. Thus, the information collected is based on personal emails they sent me. I noticed the word “thank you” was used 6 times out of 7. The words “caring” and “cares”, in reference to my performance, were used in 2 different emails. The word “enjoyed” was used twice in two different emails. This data was added to the overall Qualitative Analysis of Other courses, which I have documented in the following section.

1. Thank you for so caring about me. I am in China now and stay in hotel for forced quarantine right now. Here is my work for your video link. I know it is a little bit late so you can deduct some points for this. Thank u for your video since I really feel depressed and anxiety in a couple of weeks since this is my last semester and I have 7 courses to finish in this semester. But with the situation like now I didn’t do well in this class. I really appreciate your session of Check-in because I can express my bad mood in somewhere like writing a diary. Thank you and also thanks for your class. Please take care and stay safe too. L.G.
2. How are you? How is your family, I hope everyone is well? Thank you once again for a great semester. S.M.
3. Thank you so much! I appreciate your response. Thank you for a great semester and have an awesome summer. Stay safe and healthy! S.R.
4. Thank you so much for this semester. I enjoyed getting to know you and will take the lessons I learned in this class into the future. Hope all is well. E.R.
5. Thank you for everything this semester, although the school year ended up being a lot different than anticipated, I really enjoyed your class and I look forward to definitely taking your classes in the future. It means a lot to have a professor like you who really cares about his students & their well-being. C.R.
6. Wonderful. Thank you for a meaningful and great semester! M.S.
7. Sorry for consuming a lot of your time with the questions but I really appreciate you being patient with me, this helped relieve a lot of stress. I hope you enjoy the rest of your day! T.W.

#### *DAN 102 / Stretching Body Work (Laboratory)*

Before Spring Recess, this one-unit class was basically teaching a stretching routine with the objective of allowing students to learn it, practice it and integrate it into their daily lives. The class met once a week from

9:05 AM to 9:55 AM; which means that their improvement depended really on their own self-motivation and discipline. It takes place in a dance studio at the University of Miami's Wellness Center, where our Dance Program is hosted. The 1 hour and 15 minutes' lesson has four sections: Warm Up, Alignment, Stretching and Relaxation. I led the routine and executed the stretches as I guided them verbally. Integrated into the stretches were breathing, focus and concentration techniques.

After Spring Recess, due to the pandemic, I tried to keep the same order of instruction. Thus, in their blog entry for the day, they had a video that modeled the warm up, one section on illustrated alignment, a 20-minute video routine that exemplified the main yoga poses, which ended in relaxation, and a question about a specific muscle group and how it was affected by stretching. I ended a short video accompanied by a question on how stretching benefits one's health. In this last video section, I tried to include either an interview with a practitioner, an office/work setting where stretching was beneficial, or a mini-lesson on the importance of stretching. These materials all tried to create consensus so that they felt inspired to continue their own practice at home.

Besides answering the questions about the video, which counted as their attendance; they had to write a brief reflection on how they felt during the practice of their routine for that day. I made sure I responded to every single one of their posted reflections. The final assignment was to perform their routine, as they called each pose by its name; then, record it and post it on our Blackboard's Discussion Board. Bellow, I share some excerpts of the final reflections some students wrote when they posted their last assignment. For the sake of my students' privacy, I am only using their initials to identify those who wrote the comments. The comments are numbered in a continuum in order to keep track of the total number.

8. Thank you so much for everything, you have been a kind, empathetic, charismatic, compassionate, and overall, amazing professor. I wish you well, and I will be attaching my survey soon. R.M.
9. Overall, though, the most useful mantra I think I've taken from the course is the importance of being happy and having that reference point of relaxation to bring you down to Earth. This is something I've already started to utilize every day, and will continue to do in conjunction with a more robust, albeit short, morning routine to stretch and meditate. Thanks again Professor! N.G
10. Going through the daily stretches and focusing on my body has helped me shift my focus to the things that are in my control rather than worrying about the things that I cannot control. Despite the interruption, thank you for a great semester. I enjoyed your class! M.D.
11. This class has had a tremendous impact in my ability to regulate stress and anxiety on an everyday basis. The routines that I have learned this semester will help me continue to have the ability to reduce my stress levels through my adult life. In addition, I have noticed how much more flexible I am now, compared to the beginning of the year. Thank you for a great semester, I greatly enjoyed this class and miss meeting for class in person! S.S.
12. For me this semester has been especially hard to self-regulate my stress and anxiety as having to do a lot of my work at home was extremely hard since it's hard to stay focused. Also, not being able to learn from a teacher face to face was difficult for me as I always have a lot of questions and for me it's harder to learn virtually. However, this class was actually enjoyable for me as I realized I needed to

find those moments throughout the day for myself and even to just reflect and be in tune with my body. Being in quarantine makes it hard sometimes to be motivated but I found that lately I have been wanting to stay active and have seen a huge progress in the ways that I handle my stress and anxiety. Thank you for an incredible semester. A.P.

13. While the end of the semester has been stressful, I have been able to regulate my stress by redirecting my energy into productive things like working out, yoga and crafts like crochet and baking. This class has provided me with a tool to regulate my stress and anxiety through yoga, breathing and stressing. It genuinely has helped me tremendously. J.P.
14. It was great being in your class. Despite the circumstances, it was clear that you really cared about your students and your wellbeing. Thank you for a great semester. M.A

*DAN 130 / Orientation to Dance (Laboratory)*

This class takes place twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 11:00 AM to 12: 15 PM. I have been able to collect and share some of the voluntary feedback students expressed to me via email when the semester ended. Some of the comments are particularly useful since they address my performance, in terms of “Care,” before and after Spring Recess Although this class counts for only 2 units, it is an important part of our curriculum since it introduces the students to the rest of the program. Thus, although it is listed as a laboratory class, I also bring to the students’ attention aspects of dance they may not be familiar with such as dance and politics, dance and anthropology, dance and philosophy, dance and religion, dance as art, dance as history, dance as therapy, etc.

Every single class they not only discuss relevant issues related to dance but they also dance them. As the instructor of this class, I feel it is a fair combination that makes the subject fun and at the same time meaningful. Most of our students think of dance as merely a form of entertainment until they take this course. See below some of the final reflections students wrote when they posted their last assignment. As I did with the previous set of comments, for the sake of my students’ privacy, I only used their initials to identify who wrote them. I have edited their reflections so that only the parts that pertain to “Care” are shown.

15. I really enjoyed this class!!! Thank you so much. L.M.
16. Thank you, professor! You are one of the best professors that I ever met! M.Z.
17. I really enjoy learning with you for the entire semester, and we actually learned a lot from both before and after the spring break. Thank you so much for your encouragement and caring!!! Have a nice day and stay safe!!! Y.G,
18. Thank you for everything you have done in this class. It was a pleasure, even though half of it was online. You still made it fun, engaging, and I was able to learn a lot. A.J.
19. I'm so sorry for the last minute submission, it has been hectic at home. However, thank you for this past semester. You were an incredible professor in class and online as well! I wish you the best! K.S.

20. I really enjoy learning with you for the entire semester, and we actually learned a lot from both before and after the spring break. Thank you so much for your encouragement and caring!!! Have a nice day and stay safe!!! C.G.

*DAN 190 / Improvisation (Laboratory)*

Dance Improvisation is a 2-units course that takes place twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 3:30 PM to 4:45 PM. It is a difficult class to teach because most of our students have never taken dance before. Dance Improvisation is the kind of subject that is the most fun, creative and productive when students have acquired enough movement vocabulary to simply let go and enjoy dancing. However, as a program, we welcome all our students knowing that for some students our classes will be their last chance to ever explore dance before they graduate. Thus, the class is really a mixture of conditioning their bodies to be able to move creatively, providing an environment in which they feel safe to take creative risks and working on their performance confidence so that they are able to produce an ensemble piece and a solo piece before the end of the semester.

What made this Spring semester particularly challenging after the Recess was planning a dance lesson that was to take place at home without my direct input, without my face-to-face encouragement and without the level of accountability and reliability that comes with presence. When the initial adaptations were made and communicated to students, I was up-front about the class functioning under an honor system. I expressed to them my assumption that they would make the time to follow all the instructions documented in the blog for that day and post their video-recorded work on the Discussion Board's thread for that day as well.

Most of the students in this class were international students, thus, writing instructions was a meticulous process that entailed the careful and simple articulation of the tasks in order to avoid confusion. Every blog post had its corresponding thread on our Discussion Board, accompanied by an explanatory email. The three had to be consistently coherent in order to avoid adding to the stress and anxiety that students were already experiencing.

Their online lessons followed a predictable routine. The first part of the class was a body- isolations warm-up demonstrated though a video. Then followed a section that brought attention to their alignment, which they had already become familiar with during class. Added was a routine that facilitated body movement in a creative, pedestrian-like way, also demonstrated through a video. The core of the instruction was based on specific improvisational ideas that stimulated their movement production illustrated by a video. Their explorations at home were accompanied by music, recorded and posted on Discussion Board.

Finally, they were exposed to examples of improvisational solo dancers and speakers whom illustrated dance improvisation and hopefully inspired them. Every step of the way, they were to reflect on their experience and answer questions that guided their thought process. Because of the adaptations made as a result of the pandemic, their final dance was going to be a solo recorded at home and posted on Discussion Board. To bring closure to the semester, they had the choice of writing a self-reflective paper or write a review about a dance improvisation

performance. Bellow, I share a mixture of their reflections, taken from their papers, and their personal feedback, sent to me via email. Some of the phrasing may sound unusual since many of my international students know English as a second language.

21. I am really thankful for the experience that I gain from dance improvisation by Professor Morejón. He did very well in teaching and was very patient with us so that we learned a lot from him, not only dance movements, but also a positive attitude towards difficulties in life. Y.M.
22. To conclude, Dance Improvisation was a great course and taught me so many different things, that a regular lecture class cannot provide. It was a course filled with interaction, wisdom, and soulfulness. It was a great way for me to become more in touch with my body and my emotions. It showed me how to move my body in a way that embodies inner thoughts and feelings. Dance Improv. broke me out of my comfort zone, which I never thought I would get out of a class. I'm so glad I had the opportunity to take this course and learn so much! Thank you Jorge! L.T.
23. I am glad I had the DAN 190-54 class with my classmates and professor Morejón, I learned from them. I use this paper to review what I learned from this class in the past semester and say thanks to all the people who I studied with. Q.S.
24. I miss our studio class so much; that was the best time I had. I learned lots of techniques in this class. The teacher is patient and excellent, and classmates are kind. There is no judgment in class. Furthermore, I am very interested in dancing now, and I will continue to learn. Dance is never right or wrong and I think dance is the best and most effective way to communicate. Dance can express emotions that dancers cannot express in words. Y.W.
25. It has been a pleasure meeting you and taking your class, you are truly and inspiring and such a positive person, we need more people like you in this world, truly. E.A.
26. My work is a testament to your incredible teaching. I am so proud of how much I have developed both personally and dancing-wise due to our classes. I will carry forward my newly acquired mindset and dance habits for the rest of my life! Have an amazing summer! R.B.
27. I have completed this survey. Thank you for always being patient with us! F.D.
28. Thank you for teaching me. I am so glad to meet you. You are the best. Having a nice vacation. Please be safe! C.J
29. After I finished DAN190 this semester, and after a lot of interesting training in the classroom, I think dance is gender-neutral. Women can dance, as do men. People have confirmed this in ballet performances a long time ago. Men can have different wonderful performances in dance. So I am very grateful that I can take such a different and wonderful dance class this semester. Thank you, professor. J.S.
30. Thank you so much for keeping us engaged and learning! I always enjoy having you as a professor and I appreciate how approachable you are. Stay healthy! R.S.
31. Thank you for your patient teaching. I have learned a lot this semester. Thank you very much for your teaching and have a wonderful and most importantly, safe summer vacation! See you next semester. J.Y.

*DAN 211 / Modern Dance – Level Two (Laboratory)*

Modern Dance II is a 3-units course that requires of all my skills as a facilitator for it to work. It is a class that attracts students who have danced before, mostly females, and a large number of male students who never danced prior to taking the class. Thus, the differences in levels of abilities is extreme. In addition, the class attracts a great number of student-athletes for whom the class represents a challenge in terms of having to accomplished physical tasks that fall outside the realm of their usual training. A large number of international students also take the class because it allows them to experience what is like to be in a class where verbal language is not an issue. For these reasons, my methodology is very eclectic. Instead of teaching complicated techniques of various styles as most teachers would do, I use creative exercises while I also acknowledge the main innovations made by the pioneers of Modern Dance.

This methodology has proven to be effective as every semester more students register to take it. This semester alone there were 39 students moving in the largest studio of the Wellness Center ready to experience dance in a very unique way. The class began with body isolations warm-up, the exercise on alignment, an exercise on developing dance skills in relation to a specific tenant of modern dance and a creative exercise. Throughout the process, I stopped to ask for their feedback on how they felt and what they discovered during the exercise. This allowed them to connect their body experience with their thinking process. At the same time, it allowed me to create consensus about the importance of dance education. It was also a way to validate their individual experiences as those who are more resistant to body movement began to feel this class is a serious attempt at making dance part of their way of living.

The creative exercise's main objective is to provide students with new movement vocabulary to be used for their solo and their ensemble work. Every class they completed a new phrase for their solos or their ensemble pieces. By a process of accumulation, they were expected to have their pieces done towards the end of the semester when they would perform them for each other. This process was unfortunately thwarted by the pandemic but it is usually a festive, self-assuring and collectively rewarding celebration. The comments at the end of the semester often attest to the value of embodied learning through creative dance.

Instruction online completely changed the dynamics of the class as I was now forced to plan lessons that somewhat communicated modern dance through videos and written exercises. I was successful in explaining to them their new tasks through the use of our blog, our Discussion Board and emails. Every class, they watched a video about a specific modern dance choreographer, their technique and the repercussion of their work for modern dance. They also responded to a number of questions that accompanied each section. To end, they would create a four movement phrase at home. Every three classes they would have an eight movement phrase of their own that they were able to memorize and post on Blackboard. Every three classes, I introduced a new choreographer. We covered a total of four choreographers who were some of the most prominent American Modern dancers.

They only performed their solos at home. Given the circumstance's they were not able to perform their ensembles pieces. Both are conceptually important. The solos give them an opportunity to express themselves in their own unique way, while confronting their own stage fright. The ensemble work demands for them to adjust to the group's choreography as they bond with each other in a very special way. Their solos were recorded and posted on their Discussion Board hoping they would all have a chance to witness each other's dance pieces. They ended the course by writing a self-reflective essay in which they revisited their overall embodied experience. Below, I share some of the responses that best describe their perception of my performance as the facilitator of the class in regards to the "Care" domain.

32. Thank you for everything that you have taught me this year. You have been a great role model in my life, and I wish the best for you, professor. I hope that we can cross paths again someday. B.E.
33. Thank you for allowing me to stay in your class and I appreciate all the new things you were able to teach me even through this awful pandemic. K.M.
34. I am thankful for a great class despite the circumstances that we were all faced with. S.N.
35. Thank you, professor for your work and dedication on what could have been a disaster but you still managed to turn it around and made it a success. P.A.
36. Thank you for all of your feedback. I read all your emails, but I will only answer this one so that I don't bombard your email account once again! I really enjoyed all the work we did. I can tell you put a lot of effort into it. It was definitely not what I envisioned, but none of us did, so we had to adapt to the circumstances. And I learned a lot. Thank you for being such a great teacher and for caring so much for your students. I always enjoy your classes so much, and I can tell how passionate you are about dance and teaching. Your classes are interesting, and you always leave filled with hope, positivity, and happiness. I looked forward to going to all of your classes always. It was like a fun break for me from all the stress of the day. Like always it was an honor to have you as a teacher, and I hope to take more classes with you in the future. I hope everyone gets to have you while at UM because you truly are the definition of a great and caring teacher! Thank you for your endless patience and understanding with my technological problems. I appreciate all the help you gave me. A.Ca.
37. Thank you so much for your support and warm feedback! The most important thing I have taken out of your class is being confident while dancing and not caring what anyone else thinks. That is the best way for me to improve! J.C.
38. I thoroughly enjoyed creating this piece, and I have actually been dancing in these past couple of days (it's been so freeing). Your class brought me back to my love of dance, and I am so appreciative of that! I will be sure to keep in touch. Thank you so much for an amazing semester. I wish you all the best! A.C.
39. Thank you for your comments and encouragement. I will keep dancing in my life! X.H.
40. Thank you very much for everything you taught me during TAL 324, DAN 285, and DAN 211. I am sure that everything I learned in these courses will help me achieve my dream of becoming a teacher and changing the education system in Panama, being sure that all students get the education that they deserve through different methods and practices. I.I.
41. Thank you Professor! Your class is very inspiring! S.L.

42. Thank you so much for providing me the safe space to explore my dancing interests. I don't really know what else to say besides how much gratitude I have towards you and your teaching style. Keeping being awesome thanks for the lessons, techniques, and generosity. A.L.
43. Thank you so much for being so supportive and so sweet as both a teacher and a very good friend! Your presence is very special to me, because as an education major student, I am observing our professors all the time. Not in a bad way, I am just observing how to develop a special bond with students. I see these bonds within you and us. You actually care about every one of us and offer help as a dear friend, and you are literally like "I'm here". J.R.

*DAN 385 / Methods of Teaching Dance K- 12 (Lecture)*

This 3-units course introduces students to the art of teaching dance. A great part of the work assigned to the group had already being completed since part of the course included the actual teaching of a lesson. Thus, by the time we went on Spring break, students had already learned about the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Dance Curriculum, about mission and vision statements, about how to develop their own teaching philosophy, about how to write a lesson plan with goals and objectives, about how to implement the student-centered approach using creative dance and movement methodologies, about the various educational theories and about how to write an Action Plan taking into account behavior modification strategies. They even had to create a flyer advertising their hypothetical future class, making sure they included all the relevant information needed by parents and children to register. Thus, before recess, they had already signed up for their teaching schedule. Two students were going to teach a dance class, every time we met, with a duration of 30 min. each. Part of the assignment was to have their lesson plans ready by the time they had to teach their lessons to the whole class.

Because students were asked not to return to campus, we had to immediately readjust the manner in which they were going to teach their lessons from home. I sent them a rubric for their teaching-lesson and a rubric for their lesson plan, specifying those aspects of both, lesson and lesson plan, that I was going to pay attention to and evaluate. They were going to record their lessons and post them on Discussion Board while the rest of the class watched them and gave them feedback in writing. Most of them taught from their hotel room in China during quarantine; others, here in the US, taught from whatever available spot they could find at home. The various dance styles they chose to teach were very interesting and their responses encouraging. From Hip Hop to Jazz Dance, from Latin Ballroom to integrating Math and Dance; they managed to turn their isolation into creative pedagogy.

Because the semester was extended and because we did not know how many students were going to be able to teach according to our pre-arranged schedule, every class, I posted a complementary video on our blog for them to write their comments and post them on Blackboard. The videos covered diverse topics that ranged from planning a dance class for children with disabilities to conceptualizing the logistics of a dance school. The videos generated vivid discussions that they also posted on Discussion Board. The videos also served to keep students engaged in case some students were not able to teach that day, as it happened sometimes. The videos



along with the lessons created consensus, stimulated communication and illustrated the possibilities of the field of Dance Education.

Finally, they were asked to find a journal article related to Dance Education and write an essay through which they could express their reaction to the topic based on their own teaching experience. This essay was published on our blog for all students to read and post their opinions of our Discussion Board. Bellow, I share some of the responses that best describe their perception of my performance as facilitator in regards to the “Care” domain.

44. Jorge provided a great example as to what it really means to be a professor; he was more like a mentor than a teacher during our DAN385 class. Despite my hesitations on the first day, I realized that our dance class was a community and I always felt *included* even though I may have not known as much about dance as my peers. S.W.
45. I would definitely recommend this class to anyone I know who is going down the same path that I am. I don't know what I would have done without the knowledge I gained from it. A.L.
46. Thus, I am so glad that I took this class. I met a great professor and experienced the area of dance education. The whole experience let me know that knowledge of education can be applied to different areas. Teachers should do their best to meet the needs of all the students. I will continue to take dance classes. Dance classes give me a feeling of *relaxation* that other classes could not give. Q.D.
47. I have loved having you as a professor for both semesters this year! I hope to take many more classes with you in the future. I hope you are staying well and happy! E.C.
48. Thank you so much for making this semester and course *memorable!* S.F.
49. Professor Jorge, thank you so much for helping me with the writing. As a second language learner, I am also trying to practice my writing skills as much as I can and I am really appreciative for absorbing corrections and suggestions. I am so glad that I can learn from you for the entire semester. Thank you so much for your *encouragements* and advices!!! Y.G.
50. Thank you for another great semester, and thank you for a great last semester! I won't be moving too far away because I'll be going to PT school at UM starting later this month, but I will really miss having a dance class mixed into my days! K.L.
51. I am okay right now. I am still in pain but looking forward to when I am able to come back to Miami, where I am sure our paths will cross again. Thank you for your *trust, support, understanding*—I am so glad that I reached out. G.M.
52. I really enjoyed this class with you and although it was cut short, I look forward to your Modern dance 2 class in the fall which I am enrolled in! It is crazy to think it will be fifth semester in one of your classes and my fifth class with you as my professor! L.S.
53. Thank you so much for the past three semesters! I honestly never thought I would have taken as many dance/education classes but you are the best! I've taken a lot from your classes and I am going to miss you! Thank you for everything, I hope all is well. O.S.
54. Thank you so much for a great semester, I am sad it got cut short. Stay healthy! C.T

*TAL 324 / Education in Arts*

This 3-units class takes place on the other side of campus, in the School of Education. Different from dance classes, which take place at the Wellness Center, in this class the majority of students, if not all, tend to be American. Their feedback is at times more in tune with what they plan to do with the knowledge they have acquired in class when they graduate. Many of them are seniors for whom TAL 324 is the last chance to take a class that stimulates their creativity. The class welcomes everyone as it poses no demands on students' artistic abilities.

We have no special budget for art materials and because of it, my approach to art-making is very frugal. It teaches students that the arts can become part of children's lives even when no resources are available. We create art installations with found objects and ready-mades; we make sound art with objects and body parts; we arrange music ensembles with diverse instruments; we put together picture collages with old magazine clippings, we elaborated stories, comedy sketches, dances and songs. The class is a festive display of arts related ideas; all in function, not only of exposing students to their creative capacities, but also of illustrating how the arts can be used to teach/learn other subjects. Gradually, we learn how to integrate the arts, the sciences and the humanities in order to facilitate a more inclusive learning environment.

By the time the quarantine was implemented, students were ready to teach their mini-lessons. Their 20 minutes' lessons provided us with a way to measure how much they learned throughout the semester. It also allowed students to demonstrate how to use the arts to teach any subject. Therefore, the transition from face-to-face to online learning, was a smooth process of adapting the lessons they had been planning on teaching to be taught from home. The main difficulty for some students was the recording and posting aspect of the process. However, they were all successful in completing the assignment and motivating their classmates to enrich their experience with their positive feedbacks. Below, I share some of the responses that best describe students' perception of my performance as facilitator.

55. Thank you for everything this semester, you have taught me so much and I wish we had all gotten more time in the classroom with you. You were so kind and thoughtful! I hope you have a safe and healthy summer. Hope to see you again sometime soon. R.B.
56. Thank you so much for being so open and encouraging throughout the semester! I have thoroughly enjoyed this class and am sad it is almost over. M.C.
57. I really enjoyed your class! You're a great professor. Thank you so much. A.C.
58. I thoroughly enjoyed this course- thank you for a great semester! C.D.
59. I really love the blog that you utilize for the class. I have never seen a class operate in this fashion, but it really gives every student an opportunity to shine. Keep killing it; from the bottom of my heart you are truly one of the best professors I have had at UM. The energy you put off while teaching inspires every single student in the class. L.D.
60. Thank you so much for the past two semesters. I have really enjoyed both of your classes and I honestly think everyone should be required to take one of your classes before they graduate because

you bring a beautiful perspective to how people can look at life and education. I hope you and your family are staying safe! I will really miss getting to be a part of your class. Thank you! V.F.

61. Have a great summer and again thank you for a great semester! I loved this class. Stay safe and healthy! A.F.
62. I wanted to thank you again for allowing me an extension on my teaching lesson it meant so much that you could help me out. I wasn't sure where to submit my final paper so I am emailing it to you. I wanted to thank you again for a wonderful semester and I hope I will see you around campus once this is all over :) S.F.
63. I hope you are well! I wanted to reach out and thank you so much for such an incredible class this semester. I am so bummed that it was cut short and put online because of how excited I was to take it but I really feel like this has molded both how I teach others and how I see and understand learning as a whole. I am so grateful that you were willing to bend the rules and let me in this section because it was one of the best parts of my semester this semester. E.G.
64. Thank you so much for an amazing semester! So sad it ended so soon, but happy I got to be in your classroom! You have taught me a lot and I hope to be in some of your other classes! Stay safe and again thank you for being an amazing teacher! B.J.
65. It has been a wonderful and meaningful experience taking this class despite the last few weeks' disruptions from COVID-19. As a graduating senior and soon to be working professional I will definitely use the knowledge and understanding I have gained from this course in my career. I will be working as a project coordinator for a renewable energy company and will be managing a diverse team of people ranging from engineers, electricians and accountants. That being said, the ability to approach this with the understanding of how to teach and engage a group will be crucial to the potential success of my projects and team. Thank you again for a great class and semester! Stay safe & well! K.K.
66. Thank you for such a great semester (x 2!) I learned a lot from you as a person as well as the subject material in both teaching and dance movement therapy that I'm sure I will carry with me throughout my professional career. Wish we had the opportunity to say goodbye in person. F.M.
67. I hope it isn't late, thank you for a great semester in spite of the virus. It has been a pleasure learning from you. F.M.
68. Thank you for everything this semester. I really enjoyed your class! J.H.
69. I am being completely honest when I say this, you have been a beacon of joy and perseverance throughout this semester and especially during these trying times. I have never met a professor so passionate for each and every one of his/her students. I have gotten so much more out of your class than I ever would have thought even with the online transition, mainly from the latent lessons learned from your teaching style. You truly have exemplified what it means to love what you do and do what you love, a phrase I too wish to implement in my career in the future. Thank you for an incredible experience and a challenging yet unique semester. I hope to keep in touch, and once again please stay safe. S.Q.

70. I would also like to thank you for everything you have taught me this semester and also thank you for making the switch to online classes very smooth and easy for me. I hope you are staying safe and healthy. M.R.
71. I hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy during this unfortunate time. I want to thank you for such an amazing semester. I really enjoyed and looked forward to our class meetings. Your class made my last semester very special and I will never forget that. K.R.
72. Thank you very much for teaching me this semester, I really enjoyed your class and how you taught in ways that were creative and that I had never done before. N.S.
73. Personally, I want to thank you for providing an amazing learning experience and for teaching how you teach. I truly found it to be very beneficial to my learning. Thank you again. Stay safe. J.T
74. I wanted to thank you for all the classes I was fortunate enough to take with you throughout my time at UM. I knew you'd be great when Stephanie recommended you for Orientation of Dance! But I never expected a professor to make learning such a fun and calming experience for me. For that, I will always be grateful. I hope to make it back to UM soon and to stop by and say hello! You truly made my college experience better and I hope you know how much light, comfort, and wisdom you bring to your students. Once again, thank you so much for everything. K.W.

## Discussion

When reading the 74 comments, a reflection of the approximately 1/3 of all the students I taught during Spring semester, one can see that they are significantly positive. Students did not make a distinction, in terms of perception, between the way they felt “cared” for by me before Spring Recess and after. Their feedback provides a magnified look into the heart of how students feel in regards to their sense of safety, belonging, connectedness, and confidence. When reading the students’ feedback, it occurred to me that one way of analyzing the qualitative data set was to pay attention to those words and phrases that seemed to appear the most.

The one phrase students repeated throughout, across courses, was “thank you,” which they mentioned 70 times. In retrospect, I remember using “thank you” also every time I sent students an email or when I posted a message on Discussion Board. Although most people may think that saying “thank you” is just a social convention, psychology professor Sonja Lyubomirsky recommends to make gratitude a daily practice. Gratitude, in turn, brings healing properties into students’ lives. Therefore, the use of “thank you,” both by me and in return by my students, or vice versa, eased the effects of social isolation as well as online learning. By contributing to a state of camaraderie, empathy and gratitude, we were able to transcend the mere act of teaching and learning, off and online, to create a real bond. Psychology professor Robert Emmons says that when “you express a feeling, you amplify it;” which means that “when you express gratitude, you become more grateful” (Lesowitz et al., 2014). Whether verbally or in writing, I realize that my students and I were inadvertently engaged in the practice of

gratitude.” By saying “thank you,” according to Lyubomirsky and Emmons, we were lowering our risks of being depressed.

The next set of words that were also repeated many times were “joy, enjoy, enjoyed, enjoyable,” mentioned 16 times. Jonathan Halls, an author interested in cognitive psychology and neuroscience applied to adult learning, explains how exciting and enjoyable learning causes a dopamine release that stimulates memory building. He advises that we need to reduce stress and anxiety by creating an “enjoyable learning environment” (Halls, 2014). Thus, when students express that the class was enjoyable, they mean that, despite the stress caused by the pandemic, the quarantine and the sudden, online, distant learning, they felt “relaxed, calmed, supported,” which are also words mention in my students’ feedback. This means that we were able to create an “effective learning experience” online, even when it seemed almost impossible we could (Halls, 2014).

Words such as “caring” and “cares,” along with “understanding, encouraging, patient, kind and thoughtful,” in reference to how students perceived me during teaching, can be read all over the comments. Educators Dave Opalewski and Anna Unkovich say that “the students’ perceptions of teacher’s perception as to whether the student can be successful is more powerful than the student’s own perception of whether or not he/she can be successful” (Opalewski & Unkovich, 2011). Every single email message I sent to my students expressed my absolute confidence in their ability to succeed. I agree with Opalewski and Unkovich in that the role of a teacher is to put students in a position where they can experience success. During the quarantine and the sudden online teaching, reassuring students who were kept at a hotel in China, or students who were back in their home countries with intermittent access to the internet, about their certain success in the course, no matter what adaptations we needed to make, became my outmost expression of “care.”

Students’ description of our classes as “a wonderful and meaningful experience [...] despite the last few weeks’ disruptions due to COVID-19,” along with their allusion to the class as a “community,” responds to my “consensus decision-making” approach to teaching (Sartor & Young Brown, 2014). I have always used consensus decision-making as part my teaching practice. It helps students to value what we are learning beyond their most immediate and pressing concern about letter grades. It helps to raise their level of consciousness by making their education a meaningful source of life-long knowledge. Because consensus decision-making is a “dynamic and democratic approach to creating a true learning community,” challenges like COVID-19 became an opportunity to practice problem-solving skills collectively. The acceptance and validation of each one of my student’s points of view and ways of operating in the world, as they faced the pandemic, allowed us to make wiser decisions in terms of how to proceed with instruction, evaluation and assessment of the material that was still to be learned online.

## **Conclusion**

The 7Cs survey revealed that students’ perception about how much I cared for them. For the sample group

documented here, (Dance Movement Therapy), I conclude that the social isolation caused by the quarantine, which could have caused students a certain degree of depression, and consequently, a lack of motivation to continue learning, was counteracted by our ongoing interactions via email and Discussion Board. This web of responses to each other's work and needs, created by my students themselves and facilitated by me, allowed them to feel significant to each other, connected to the group, and valued by the entire class. The daily reminder about their progress stimulated them to try harder as they also emulated each other's work. I realize that keeping the same instructional order and routine as much as possible; laying out the instructions in as many ways as possible and not making assumptions about students understanding of instructions enhanced their perception of "Care." I came to understand that although diversity of learning styles may not be served by online instruction of any kind, when educators demonstrate that they care, students not only learn better and enjoy learning, but feel more capable of being successful.

## Recommendations

The following set of concrete recommendations are geared towards improving a purposeful relationship with one's own students. Expressing care by exercising the following behaviors could make a big difference in terms of the quality of student/teacher relationship that could be implemented.

- 1) Create a safe environment (e.g. learning students' names through playful exercises, circle at the beginning of class to check-in about how they feel, circle at the end of class to bring closure to the meeting) where acceptance, inclusion and interpersonal relationships make students feel they are welcomed and cared for.
- 2) Develop accessible attitudes between students and instructors (e.g. making eye contact, smiling frequently, asking how they are doing), to understand how students feel about the issues that could be affecting them in challenging ways.
- 3) Establish open communication (e.g. through texts, emails, phone calls, office hours) for students to feel able to let the instructor know if something is bothering them or for the instructor to be able to perceive if the student needs help.
- 4) Make gratitude a daily practice through expressions such as "thank you," (e.g. by modeling the behaviors students will emulate) knowing that when one expresses gratitude, one becomes more grateful as well.
- 5) Reduce stress and anxiety among the students (e.g. assessment that is playful, in an integrated manner, periodically and in different modalities such as verbal and project oriented) by creating an enjoyable learning environment in which students feel relaxed, calmed and supported.
- 6) Create an effective learning experience online (e.g. applying the theory of multiple intelligences by providing alternative opportunities to acquire knowledge) through blogging, emailing, posting on platforms and any other possible and necessary means of communication.
- 7) Let students know (e.g. make it a habit to notice when they are succeeding) verbally and in writing that they can be successful periodically and consistently based on their academic progress and behavioral achievements.

- 8) Treat the class as a community of learners (e.g. mention when the student-athletes win, celebrate when there is a birthday, notice when students are successful in extra-curricular activities, recognize their academic achievements in class) through the application of the consensus decision-making approach to teaching.
- 9) Be a reflective practitioner not only in terms of questioning your own teaching practices and methodologies (e.g. become a researcher of your own teaching practice by questioning the validity of your own methodologies), but also in terms collecting the necessary data to evaluate your own performance.
- 10) Keep the same instructional order and routine; (e.g. be organized, plan your lessons, make yourself accountable and reliable by being consistent with your teaching style) laying out the instructions in as many ways as possible both in face to face instruction and online teaching.

Such recommendations are not only possible when one is using a face-to-face, offline model of instruction, but during online teaching as well. However, more work needs to be done in terms of developing online strategies to enhance the students' perception of being cared for by the professor. In this regard, the instructor's written feedback and personal emails, could inform the ways in which online instruction could allow professors to be perceived as caring educators.

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