Defining spotting: A Delphi Method study evaluating expert opinions on the characteristics and uses of spotting

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Objectives: The present study identifies the key characteristics and uses of spotting, particularly in terms of the following three prompts: (1) Why do dancers spot? ; (2) Successfully spotting is characterized by: ; (3) Successfully spotting is useful for: . Therefore, a Delphi Method survey was used to elicit expert opinions about spotting over iterative rounds with controlled feedback in order to evaluate the level of consensus.

Methods and Analysis: A three-round Delphi Method survey was distributed electronically to a selected group of 30 participants, consisting of dance scientists, ballet teachers, and professional ballet dancers. To gather opinions, the first round prompted participants to respond freely to the three prompts. These responses were then grouped into specific items. To rate agreement, the second round presented the original questions and the grouped items back to the participants, who were then instructed to rate agreement on the importance of each item on a 5-point Likert Scale. Items that were rated 4 or 5 (agree or strongly agree) by at least 70% of the participants were taken as those consensually important to the group. To rank importance in the third round, the original prompts were presented with the agreed-upon items in a Ranking-type Delphi. By using Best-Worst Scaling, a discrete choice technique, individual rankings were determined based on a series of sub-comparisons between smaller groups of items. Mean ranking of items as well as Kendal’s W, a coefficient of concordance, were analyzed to determine the most important items to the groups and the strength of agreement, respectively.

Conclusion: Mean rankings of the group determined that dancers spot “to orient themselves in space.” While the whole group and dance scientist sub-grouping found successfully spotting to be most characterized by “remaining oriented during and after the turn,” ballet teachers and dancers ranked “keeping a clear rhythm in the head movement” as the most important characteristic. The whole group found spotting to be most useful for “performing multiple turns.” While consensus in the group as a whole and sub-groups individually was very low, meaningful hypothesis can be formulated for future movement-based research on the function of spotting.