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.