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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

The role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools.

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H18/09/24

A Research Report submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

We welcome the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and its technological advancement with open arms. Well, we do not have much of a choice because whether we like it or not, it plans to stay. With this digital progression, South African educational bodies migrate its educational framework to the 'paperless classroom': a teaching and learning transition from pen and paper to blended learning (technologically enhanced) systems (Shonfeld & Meishar-Tal 2017:185).

Emerging conversations around 4IR have one wondering what this educational shift will result in, especially around our human connection and interaction. I question the implications of the paperless classroom and its technologies on a learner's interpersonal aptitudes and how it will achieve the development of a holistic learner. The research warns that the paperless classroom may put a higher value on hard (technical) skills over soft (interpersonal) skills, which may result in learners' limited ability to foster positive relations, communication and collaborative effort (Elmore, 2014).

Using a summative evaluation through an analytic approach, I present the possibilities of introducing Drama in Education as a relevant and dynamic educational strategy in the paperless classroom, alongside the voices of practitioners, researchers and educational specialists. Although the research is not conducted practically, it proposes that when specific Drama in Education strategies are successfully implemented by educators, they may further motivate a soft skills enhancing curriculum. This may foster a beneficial hard-soft skill balance in the learner.

The research is catalyzed by the observation of a leading paperless primary school, in their Blended Learning Facility and focuses on their endeavors to create an alternative educational experience. I investigate the school's paperless model, identify possible gaps and recommend Drama in Education as a mediating learning instrument. Finally, in the commitment to hone in on a holistic individual in an ever-changing educational environment, this transformational approach to education is recommended to core educational bodies in South Africa for consideration.

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

School of the Arts (Drama for Life)

I, **Moratoa Trinity Mokoena (nee Ramusi) (545383)** am a student registered for **Master of Art by Coursework and Research Report in the field of Applied Drama: theatre in Education, Communities and Social Contexts (Full-Time)** in the year **2018.**

I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I confirm that ALL the work submitted for examination for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or work in my writing.
- I confirm that this Research Report is my own work and I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.
- I declare that I have not previously submitted it either fully or partially for any degree or university award.

_____ _____

M. T. MOKOENA **DATE**

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I was born into a family that lives, breathes and speaks education and mostly, excellence. To my parents Mr Mothibi and Maureen Ramusi and my siblings Selaelo and his wife Precious, Masters in crime and Motlagabo, thank you for supporting my love for the arts, encouraging me and seeing me through all the educational milestones of my life.

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INTRODUCTION

The past, present and future classroom

2005: My teacher is in front of the classroom, the green chalkboard is behind her as she faces us, my eyes gleam from my wooden desk and reclining plastic chair. Cue in the painful elbow collision as my classmate is left handed and I, right. We share laughs, sharpeners and folded papers with secret admirer names written on them. Chit chat here, mumbling there and paper spit balls flying across the room. “Shh! pen on paper is the only sound I should be hearing in this classroom!” my teacher reprimands. Books, reams of paper in the corner, crayons, glue, scissors. Ouch! Darn paper cut.

2017: “Good Morning Grade 11s, please take out your tablets.” Beeps, clicks and taps are heard as I struggle with the remote. “Please be patient with me while this smartboard loads. Can someone please turn down the volume on that thing?” A momentary lapse and shuffle, then suddenly, load shedding strikes. How am I supposed to teach without my interactive slides? “Can we all focus and log into the learning portal. I will try my best to guide you all through this without them. But first, breathe in and out.” I calm myself down. “Eish ma’am, my battery is flat.” There we go again.

2030: I have a few guesses, hopes and predictions but I will let nature and mostly, technology take its course.

The abovementioned accounts are a snippet of my journey in the classroom of the past and the recent present as both the learner and the educator. The journey from paper to paperless technologies, meet at a junction where the educator becomes the learner, the learner becomes the educator, the computer becomes the educator and the educator... (the cycle gets unpredictable, so I will stop here) is now in constant learning, re-learning, unlearning or re-directing. This results in

an introspective moment for every educator: what kind of learning (note, not teaching) am I providing in the cultivation of a 2030 learner?

The rapid evolution of the digital era has influenced the curriculum in schools by digressing from traditional mechanisms of teaching. The "paperless classroom" is a global concept utilised by a growing number of countries such as South Korea, Dubai and China. In the educational context, the term 'paperless' implies that educational learning material will no longer be in the form of paper (note or textbooks) but, will rather be disseminated from computers, smartboards, cellular phone devices and tablets (Shonfeld & Meishar-Tal 2017:185). It is through these reflections as a learner and educator, as well as the rapid evolution of the digital era that I arrived at this research.

It is necessary to clarify the difference between e-learning and the paperless classroom on the onset. The former, according to the Oxford Dictionary means "learning that is conducted via electronic media, typically on the internet" which can be done outside of the schooling environment ("E-learning", 2019). Although e-learning platforms encourage interaction through group work and discussion, this research is solely focused on the learner and educator experience of technology in the traditional classroom space, by means of the paperless format.

The South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) has rolled out the paperless classroom concept, with an estimated budget of R17 billion, with the hopes of ensuring that every primary and high school by "the end of the financial year of 2017/18, will be fully equipped with ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) systems for learning purposes" (Pilane, 2015). Moreover, the Department sought to provide all learners with devices (tablets and computers) and educators with relevant training that would assist in integrating curriculum-based ICT systems in their teaching. In 2015 Gauteng MEC for Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, began the initiative to issue tablets to Grade 12 learners in 375 public schools, announcing:

> As of tomorrow, your teacher will never give you an exercise that you have to write in an exercise book… If you want to see a chalkboard and duster you must go to a museum. You must not come to our school (Wilmot, 2017).

The common thread among researchers with regard to curriculum based ICT systems is that they all acknowledge that we cannot run away from, or avoid the rapid technological advancements. Miri Shonfeld and Hagit Meishar-Tal, add that over the last ten years, the internet and ICT tools have enhanced the amount of accessible information, the ease of communication and the learning methods using digital devices (2017: 86). This begins to address the requirement for educators to be able to facilitate technology in their teaching and move towards a digitised direction in their output of knowledge (Shah, 2014).

Kobus van Wyk is quoted as follows:

> With close to 400 000 teachers in South Africa, it should be clear that the training (perhaps we should call it up-skilling) of teachers is a massive task. It will be an expensive and a labour intensive exercise. But unless it is done in tandem with the roll-out of technology devices in schools, there will be minimal return on the technology investment (Alfreds, 2015).

In an online article, *The 10 skills you need to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, Alex Gray (2016) states that creativity, critical thinking, problem solving and people management will be some of the 10 skills that are needed to compete with automated products and robotics. He then stresses that "change won't wait for us: business leaders, educators and governments all need to be proactive in up-skilling and retraining people so everyone can benefit from the Fourth Industrial Revolution" (Gray, 2016). According to News24 Wire (2016), digital education will also require adequately trained educators capable of delivering content matched to new learning techniques. Now, paying close attention to all these thoughts, comments and opinions, one is propelled to ponder about what this 'different' educational format might bring. Also, is it at all different? Whose responsibility is it to navigate a smooth transition?

Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga's response at the "Big Switch On"[1] Paperless Classrooms Programme was closely linked to Gray's call for educator upskilling in the Fourth Industrial Revolution as she stated:

> We must admit that the transformation of our education system into 21st century learning environments that provide our learners with the skills they need to succeed in today's information age economy, is long overdue (News24 Wire, 2016).

The paperless classroom roll-out in South Africa, although steady in its progress, has been one filled with mixed emotions. Whilst some educators have leapt in excitement for the implementation of advanced international systems, others have crept in the horror of inconvenience, lack of preparation, theft and class disruption. Lawrence Craven (2017) reports that amongst many benefits, technology is making constant attempts at improving the learning experience. Having considered traditional pedagogical classroom structure and notions of the active depositing of knowledge by the educator (Freire 2009:58), the paperless models sought to change the didactic education narrative.

With the plans to shift the South African primary school education system from textbook to digital, there are increasing conversations around re-imagining the role of the educator, the self-empowered learner and their relationship with each other and technology. Whilst digital skills will be in high demand, I envisage that nearly all jobs will also require much stronger social and collaboration skills, as well as unique human traits that go beyond mastering machines. In so addressing my research, I will now introduce my case study.

[1] A pilot project spearheaded by the Gauteng Department of Education in modernising public education, in response to new education imperatives for quality education (The Tembisan: 2015).

The research involved the observation of a growing paperless and blended school, *School X* which is an independent primary school that has integrated technology in their teaching and learning format. I identified and selected the school as it currently presented the most successful paperless classroom model in South Africa, at primary school level. Detailed on their website, *School X*'s model is based on "offering a uniquely individualised educational opportunity by focusing on each scholar's need in the classroom through the use of online learning" (*School X,* 2016). The school consists of a Blended Learning Facility (BLF) or learning labs for online learning and traditional classrooms (in the sense of desks, chairs, a whiteboard mounted in front of the class and the use of paper). Yet, both classroom environments are deemed to be containers for "unique, effective, non-traditional teaching methods" (*School X,* 2016).

My paper explores various 'buzz' words throughout, namely, paperless classroom, Fourth Industrial Revolution, curriculum, soft skills, hard skills and Drama in Education. How all these integrate, communicate or even exist amidst each other, I am yet to discover through questioning, analysis and discussion. These concepts in my research are part and parcel of our evolving educational context. What is more, this research is a call to acknowledge the future educational domain and also encourages a focus on human interaction and essential personal development.

ACRONYMS AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms will be core in the research report as they encompass the underpinning concepts around the context and field of my research interest. In their diversity, these terms form a great connection in my conversations around a technologically evolving educational context.

BLF- Blended Learning Facility
DBE- The (South African) Department of Basic Education
IEB- Independent Examinations Board

Blended Learning: Mackenzie Kasper defines blended learning as a "disruptive pedagogy that shifts the control in the classroom from the teacher to the student. It necessitates that students have some control over the content, the pace at which they learn, and the place or time when they learn" (2018:56-57). In the blended classroom, the educator's role is shifted from traditional instructor and dictator, to facilitator and mentor, as they navigate a technologically driven learning format. The term 'blended' denotes that the approach to the curriculum is in combination of traditional teaching and technology in the classroom.

Curriculum: As defined by Brennen, the curriculum "consists of learning which, to the extent that it is appropriate and possible, link assessment, intervention, and evaluation skills to practice principles, and include the underlying social and behavioural science theory" (1978:26). This curriculum is tailored by departmental or independent educational bodies in the interest of the learner and his/her knowledge outcome for each year. In South African public schools, the curriculum programme is called the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which is framed to cater for the needs of learners. In South African private schools, their learning curriculum is facilitated by the Independent Examinations Board. The curriculum governs what each learner will learn and how they will be assessed either formally or informally according to each subject specification.

Drama in Education (DIE): Warren Nebe explains the concept of DIE as "a pedagogical approach to education that places the individual learner at the centre of the learning experience where meaning is not absolute but rather, negotiated" (2006: 2). The negotiation happens through story, metaphor and role-play, where both the learners and the educator engage and reflect through the drama and the real world. This educational strategy encourages a learning environment that uses dramatic elements and principles to ignite a learning that is liberating, creative and empowering to the learner, for the learner and by the learner; in the presence of a facilitating educator.

Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR): "A technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. This will be multiplied by emerging technology breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the 'Internet of Things', autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage, and quantum computing" (Peters 2017:28-29). In the context of my research, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has an influence on the output of education and influences the rapid progression of paperless approaches to teaching and learning.

Hard Skills: These are "teachable abilities or skill sets which are typically learnt in the classroom, through books or other training materials or on the job." (Doyle, 2018) Some examples of hard skills that are acquired in the classroom can be language proficiency, mathematical ability, typing speed, machine operation, computer programming etc. (Doyle, 2018). With the progression of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, there will be increased attention on learners' hard, more technical skill development and enhancement, as the technological era may require such skills.

Paperless Classroom: As Michael Scherer puts it, the paperless classroom "represents the ultimate result of technology transforming the classroom, through a national push by government to get a laptop, tablet or smartphone into the hands of children in every school" (2014:1). The educator is now positioned in front of a smartboard, "a digital whiteboard which can be used as a projector, an internet browser or a normal board for the teacher to write on digitally" (Gedye, 2016). In addition to that, this classroom requires the re-imagination of the role of the educator as a facilitator who is well-versed in all (if not, most) things to do with technology. Although South Africa at large has experienced certain challenges with this transition, certain schools have successfully advanced into the programme.

Soft Skills: "Commonly referred to as 'people skills', soft skills are recognised as personal attributes or a cluster of personal traits that optimise and enable positivity and enhance people's interactions and relationships with each other" (Dell'Aquila 2017: 1). In comparison to hard skills,

these skills are viewed as “non-technical, less tangible and harder to define, however they are critical to the success or failure of an individual. “People are usually hired because of their hard skills but fired for the lack of soft skills” (Talgan 2015:8).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The paperless learning format is dedicated to increasing learner averages, honing in on more of their digital strengths and contributing to their online savvy and awareness. An enormous focus is placed on learners’ hard skills aptitude such as typing, writing, using software programs and finance etc. in the paperless classroom. Although the paperless classroom boasts of its ability to eliminate paper waste, encourage fast paced communication, feedback of tasks and efficient circulation of information (Craven, 2017), I harbour concerns about the balance between hard and soft skills and how that balance is maintained and prioritized.

Soft skills are transferred through dialogue and exchange in class discussions between the learner and educator, through probing, questioning and listening. This dialogical exchange is minimized in the paperless classroom, as the dissemination of information is directed from the smartboard to the educator and then, to learner from their device. UNESCO acknowledges the challenge ahead which will require designing new approaches to education which will not only prepare learners to navigate these technologies, but also maintain their interpersonal skill sets (2017:2).

I recall an interesting encounter on the 28th of August 2018 in my arts-based research methods class at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The lesson begins and impulsively, all nine of us (students) reach out for our laptops. Our lecturer lets out a “Woah!” and to my surprise, she says “I will not accept laptops in my class. Let’s go back to old fashioned pen and paper. Those things (devices) create a block between you and me.” I had entered this Scandinavian country convinced that I would have to up my “techno game”, as they are perceived to be

spearheading in the paperless field. Ironically, my lecturer felt that our laptops caused a blockage, an interruption or some kind of restriction of personal connection and contact. The laptop symbolised a separation between us and her and almost, removing complete focus from each other. I am not ignorant to the fact that she is in the older generation, but I took that moment to understand the pertinent problem to her, which may be a problem in the greater scheme of the paperless classroom: a deterioration of personal interaction.

Taking a closer look at the current state of the paperless classroom roll-out in South Africa, numerous concerns have been identified and *Mail and Guardian* online journalist, Lloyd Gedye (2016) sees the initiative as "grappling with many teething problems". Besides theft and damage to facilities, a major concern has been adequate educator training. "If a teacher uses the interactive smartboard as an overhead projector, it's still the same old way of teaching. If you don't train your teachers well, you won't see the full benefit. Teachers need time to adapt" (Gedye, 2016).

An immediate rush of questions flood my mind: to begin with, how well-versed are educators in soft skill development? Who designs the learning programmes? Does the educator have a say in the design process of these programmes? How are these educators being trained with technology and by whom? What training strategies are being implemented? How is the personal interaction being supplemented? Where is the balance between rigorous hard skill focus and soft skill enhancement in the presence of these technologies?

On the 12th of January 2019, it was announced that the JSE listed education group, Curro is in the process of launching a new "tech-focused schooling model, with a progressive model that will allow learners to operate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution with a predominantly digital working format" (Writer, 2019). Ross Hill, the Executive Head at Curro Foreshore maintains that the school is driven by "providing it's learners with relevant skills for a 2030 workplace, whilst retaining some traditional teaching practices" (Writer, 2019). With a teaching school day of 08h00 to 17h00, no sports field and a large focus on robotics and coding in their curriculum, one can imagine that hard skills are placed at the forefront of their schooling model. In similar fashion, on the 12th of

March 2019, it was publicised that *South African Schools would get 3 new subjects* (Writer, 2019). Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga declared that by 2020, a coding and robotics curricula would be included from Grades R to 9 which would ensure that the schooling system "equips learners with skills for the changing world, such as problem solving and critical thinking and prepares them for the Fourth Industrial Revolution" (Writer, 2019). She encourages that the robotics curriculum will require creativity as learners will design, experiment and invent, "through cardboard construction activities" (Writer, 2019). This latter part of her presentation alludes to the prospects of a blending learning where traditional three dimensional learning is integrated with computerized learning.

John Dewey, an educational pioneer professes that there will be a danger of an undesirable split between the experiences gained in more direct associations and what is gained in school (Dewey 1916: 10). It is now 2019 and what Dewey states, exhibits elements of truth. There is a considerable split, in knowledge imparted and knowledge attained, similarly to the imbalance of the teaching of hard and soft skills in the paperless classroom. From the two abovementioned educational developments, I am made aware of the plans to shift the education system to paperless, on the premise and expectation that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will cater for techno savvy and digitally efficient learners. Which led me to this question: what about their soft skills?

The learner in a paperless classroom spends more time on the computer therefore decreasing physical interaction with their peers. The educator's new medium of teaching is streamlined through the smartboard, limiting the educator's ability to integrate soft skills. Therefore herein lies the decrease of soft skills as a result of the paperless classroom. Especially in the South African primary school context where one educator teachers numerous subjects to one class, I was compelled to question realistically and practically, the time he/she has to maintain soft skills development, with the pressure to complete the curriculum. Shifting from paper to digital invites a rethinking of the educator-learner relationship that has been ignored historically. Furthermore, I deduce that the paperless classroom will enhance the learner's hard skills more than their soft (interpersonal) skills.

The research looks at the following two pertinent questions in my endeavours to unpack the topic in greater detail.

1. What is the role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?

2. What Drama in Education strategies can be employed by the educator in integrating soft skills in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?

Driven by the above questions, the purpose of this research is a summative analysis. This research is conducted from an analytical perspective and I consider the possibilities of a practical engagement for future research. I pay close attention to the paperless classroom phenomena in South African primary schools and propose ways in which Drama in Education, as an educational strategy for educators, may be able to foster and supplement a soft skills curriculum- in the hard skill prioritized environment. I do so through a research process of:

1. Observing a current paperless and/or blended learning school's organization, structure and teaching and learning strategies.
2. Identifying possible gaps and opportunities for Drama in Education strategies to be introduced into that setting.
3. Conducting semi-structured interviews with various experts in the field, engaging them in my research interest and their professional opinion on the paperless classroom meeting Drama in Education, as well as questionnaires for educators in the school.

Finally, from my data findings, summative insights and recommendations to The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and The Independent Examinations Board (IEB) (as core South African educational bodies), will be provided. These address the imbalance of hard and soft skills in the paperless classroom and the opportunities to train educators with Drama in Education strategies, in order to alleviate this imbalance for the betterment of their holistic learners.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH REPORT

This research report is divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1 addresses my rationale or the significance of the research and the theoretical and conceptual framework. The theoretical and conceptual framework frames and connects Drama in Education to other existing pedagogical strategies that inform the research.

Chapter 2 covers relevant literature in Drama in Education and evaluates existing material, acknowledges criticisms and determines relationships between the core terms of the research report. I furthermore introduce three key strategies that can be used in the paperless classroom to foster a soft skills curriculum.

Chapter 3 covers the research method for my study, I discuss the reason for my use of case study as an appropriate method for collecting and analyzing data and then, I conclude this chapter by describing the ethics procedure that was involved and approved.

Chapter 4 encompasses my data collection process and maps my analysis from observation, interview and questionnaire, including documentation which seeks to answer my research questions in greater detail.

Chapter 5 is a consolidation of the research questions, having presented and addressed the data findings in Chapter 4. Lastly, I make recommendations to educational bodies based on the data findings.

The conclusion presents to the reader a summary of the report and future intentions of the research, as well as limitations.

Chapter One: A different kind of teaching and learning.

RATIONALE

In a Fox News interview, Mike Rowe debates:

> Communication over email or text is easily misunderstood, you cannot look into someone's eyes digitally. Emojis are not representational of actual human-felt emotions and they could erode soft skills (Rowe, 2017).

In a Masters research study called *The Voice of Teachers in a Paperless Classroom* by Shonfeld and Meishar-Tal, they identify challenges related to teaching and learning in the paperless classroom (2017:190). The fourth and most pertinent challenge in the paperless classroom (which is core to this research) is "Under-developed skills: Social Skills" (2017: 191). The educators in the study were concerned that the learners' social skills were reduced, in retreat and social anxiety was on the rise. Furthermore, the teachers observed that the lack of social skills was clear in the classroom dynamics, as the learners "go home and play with their friends through the net and those who do not have friends, find refuge on the computer (2017: 191).

Alison Doyle (2018) in an online blog, defines soft skills as "interpersonal (people) skills which are intangible and non-technical. She adds that they are similar to emotions or insights that allow people to "read" others and they are much harder to learn, at least in a traditional classroom; not easily measurable or evaluative" (Doyle, 2018). These soft skills include personal development, leadership, self-motivation, decisiveness, empathy, responsibility, conflict resolution, the list goes on. Highlighting their impact, Lisa Tenorio (2017) comments that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be powered by a combination of soft and hard skills with relevant expertise from the educator.

These hard skills, explained by Tricia Hussung (2017) can be defined as teachable abilities or skills sets that are easy to quantify. She states that they can be learned through coursework or training

and are more based in assessments and testing such as the intelligence quotient (IQ), which is empirical and reliant on the ability to learn, understand and apply information to skills, logical reasoning and abstract spatial thinking (Hussung, 2017). Soft skills, on the other hand, she maintains that they require emotional intelligence (EQ), which can be associated with the ability to identify, assess and control the emotions of oneself and of others (Hussung, 2017). From all these definitions, one can deduce that soft skills tend to be more innate or indirectly developed through experience and relation.

Captured in Rabana and Martin's (2017) online newspaper article, there are four areas where technology can make a great impact, namely "delivering access to content regardless of location, improving learning outcomes and teaching; making teachers' and students' lives more efficient and are effective through better administration, and training or re-training of young people with work-relevant skills". The four abovementioned areas are closely linked to hard skill development which culminate in the acquisition of a certificate or grade score. This can be assumed because the emphasis on achieving "work-relevant skills" is hailed as being the output of a technology based learning.

EDUCBA, a skills based organization state on their website that "though candidates work hard to acquire hard skills for higher pay, they often tend to ignore their soft skills. Since there is no certificate for good communication skills or ability to cope with stress, we take such skills for granted" (EDUCBA, 2016). Soft skills are key components in maintaining human personal engagement and development. Soft skills will be even more essential for the Fourth Industrial Revolution because they foster significant personal abilities such as how to talk in an interview, what to bring up in professional conversation, how to make a strong first impression and even how to make someone laugh. On the surface, these skills may seem superfluous but they have a huge impact on the learner's progression in future.

Dr Tim Elmore (2014) blogging on the topic, *The inverse relationship between Technology and Soft Skills* emphasizes that even though he knows that technology is not going away, it has certainly

altered the way people interact with one another, negatively. He adds that "as technology goes up, empathy goes down, as information expands, attention spans diminish, and as virtual connections climb, emotional intelligence declines" (Elmore, 2014). In conjunction to this, the UNESCO-KEDI Policy Statement on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, upholds "the vital role that that liberal arts and social sciences will have in the coming years. For instance, creative problem-solving, people management, and social intelligence remain significant bottlenecks to machine learning and artificial intelligence" (2017:2). Both of these views underpin the significance of my research by proposing an educational alternative, which will encourage soft skills development in this growing technological era. They further confirm that soft skills development will play a vital role as these digital fields mature, as they currently have the potential to decrease.

"Gone are the days of a teacher lecturing to students from the front of the room, while the kid sits silent and bored" enthusiastically, the voice over artist in the school's video presentation, convinces me about their schooling model (*School X*, 2018). This very statement underpins my advocacy for Drama in Education in the classroom, whether traditional or paperless. The school's statement above speaks against Paulo Freire's 'banking concept' whether traditional or paperless (2009: 63). A concept that sees the teacher, believed to be the 'all-knowing' vessel standing in front of the chalkboard and 'filling the empty vessels' (the learners) with subject knowledge (2009: 63). My anticipation is that the computer should neither replace nor work against the educator in the classroom, and that the learning should not be overly reliant on its presence. Over and above that, the paperless classroom should not simply exhibit a traditional classroom, with added modern technology. The classroom experience should be transformed by a mediating instrument. This research suggests the possibility of Drama in Education as this mediator.

There is a gap in this paperless educational equation: 1) there is a traditional educator, 2) the learner is being taught by this traditional educator through the use of a smartboard and, 3) the learner follows instruction and guidance, which is in turn, transferred to the device. These devices become two things, a connection in the virtual space or a blockage in the physical space. Technology is no substitute for the personal interactions between teachers and learners (Pilane, 2015). The educator

and learners communicate and exchange dialogue via their devices and in some cases, the educator is mute and the learner is completely guided by the device. This begins to decrease their interpersonal engagement and exchange, and in turn furthermore decreasing their interpersonal skills. What can fill this gap? The research seeks to suggest that Drama in Education as an educational strategy is appropriate enough to foster a soft skills curriculum.

> Drama in Education enables the participants to understand concretely and to construct their learning rather than to simply transmit knowledge from the textbook. Furthermore, drama based approaches might be seen as a potentially rich classroom resource for interactive and imaginative learning (Guneysu & Temiz 2012: 2046).

There are three types of Drama in Education (DIE) streams, namely: 1) The drama educator that teaches drama as a subject, 2) the educator that uses drama to teach other skills (in this case, soft skills) and 3) the drama facilitator who uses theatre making as an educational strategy (Halley 2018:1). The fundamental significance of my research proposes the training of the traditional educator with Drama in Education strategies, in order to enhance a soft skills curriculum, whilst simultaneously honing in on their required hard skills-as per curriculum requirements. Acknowledging that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is not going away, my research envisages the evolving classroom taking its shape in the presence of a soft skill propelling Drama in Education catalyst.

At the point which both The DBE and IEB successfully deploy the paperless classroom in primary schools, they need to consider its nuances, advantages and possible limitations, in endeavours to nurture a holistic individual, (well-balanced in both hard and soft skills) for the future. That way, they are able to produce diversified educator training policies for the paperless classroom, which include the employment of Drama in Education and its strategies.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

> "Like Caldwell Cook, Dorothy Heathcote sees drama in a broad educational setting. It is impossible to consider drama without involving more general educational principles" (Hodgson 1972:165).

Earlier in the report, I addressed the term 'drama' with inferences of doing, action and making. In this section, I discuss the educational complexities through analysis of related theories and concepts. In particular, I will make connections between two critical learning theories such as constructivist learning and experiential learning and how they have informed the view of Drama in Education throughout the study. This chapter encapsulates the surrounding principles of educational practice, discusses the role they play in the construction of Drama in Education and addresses their connecting features.

Popularly known as the "father of the progressive education movement", John Dewey played a significant role in the development of progressive educators (Darder, A et al. 2003:11). In his book, *Education and Democracy*, he outlines the process of a learner being introduced to the formal education system which immediately produces an outright imbalance in the sense that "the acquiring of information and of technical intellectual skill do not influence the formation of a social disposition, ordinary vital experience fails to gain in meaning, while schooling, in so far, only creates 'sharps' in learning" (Dewey 1916: 9). He detests the view that an adult confers their expert knowledge, based on a prescribed system and assumes that the learner will benefit from all of its information.

The metaphor of 'sharps' in learning is connected to the stereotypical analogy that a learner who is described as 'sharp', exhibits high intellectual proficiency or rather, hard skill competency. Dewey acknowledges that in education's priority to focus on the 'sharps' in learning, it neglects the bends and curves-which are inherent in the diversified mind of a learner (1916:9). This study is particularly focused on how a learner develops an equal balance in the "sharps and curves",

without placing one's importance over the other. Amongst a plethora of learning theories, Drama in Education derives most of its features in constructivist and experiential learning theories, which play a role in the way a learner's 'sharps and curves' are balanced or even addressed throughout their learning process. Nonetheless, they all hold one common outcome in education: meaning making. I agree that it is not as explicit in the more historical pedagogical approaches, that the learner should participate actively in their process of meaning making nonetheless, DIE and more constructivist approaches advocate for this.

> Jean Piaget's theory of constructivism argues that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences. As they perceive each new experience, learners will continually update their own mental models to reflect the new information, and will, therefore, construct their own interpretation of reality (Olusegun 2015:66).

Constructivism is a core concept which guides the research. I am particularly interested in how Drama in Education, may facilitate the process of meaning making in this changing climate of education-the paperless classroom- in such a way that soft skills are an ongoing priority in the learning process.

> Drama is to be about meaning-indicating, meaning-seeking, meaning-making and meaning-finding. Drama is the means of rooting all the school curriculum back in a human context where it sprang from, so that knowledge is not abstract, isolated subject-based discipline, but is based on human action, interaction, commitment and responsibility (Bolton 1998:177).

Drama in Education's endeavours to hone in on the learner's ability to seek, make and find meaning indicates its links to constructivist approaches to learning. Relating to this, Dewey states that education is not an affair of telling and being told, but an active and constructive process (1916:46). Learners should be able to connect what they are learning with what they have experienced and make meaning of those separate encounters, which inform their understanding of

the knowledge. My understanding of constructivism is that knowledge is not fixed and undergoes a process of construction by the learner, threading meaning together. The minute education becomes an isolated and exclusive experience to learning, we hinder the learners' full potential to access their own ability to interpret their own ideas, reflect and act upon them in various areas of their lives, with their peers and society at large.

Beck and Kosnik discuss that like Drama in Education, "on a social constructivist view, knowledge is dependent not only on social interaction, but on all other aspects of the person: attitudes, emotions, values, and actions. The paradigm is strongly holistic" (2006:13). The ability for a learner to understand, make sense of life and respond in an appropriate manner, are essentials to soft skill development; which form part of their attitudes, values and action. Which brings me to a key term, when looking at the constructivist approach: collateral learning.

> Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that desire to go on learning (Dewey 1938: 49).

Bryan Berretta (2016) defines collateral learning as "the accidental learning that occurs in and outside of the classroom." Reflecting on Beck and Kosnik's (2006:13) debate on constructivism being a culmination of attitudes in social interaction, I note that it includes elements of collateral learning as the process of meaning making is also dependant on all other aspects of the person. Collateral learning is the lesson that students walk away with, from the 'accidental experience' outside of the intent of the instructor. Drama in Education experts, Jonathan Neelands and Betty Wagner associate this idea of 'accidental learning' and tacit knowledge by explaining that each learner possesses "vernacular forms of knowledge" (1984:3), which are drawn out by the educator as they "bring out what the child knows but does not know that they know" (1999:1), respectively. Likewise, the process of meaning making is catalysed by experiences which can be unpredictable,

unconscious and ‘accidental’. This element of collateral learning is a driving force for soft skills as the learner goes through a constant development and enhancement of their attitudes to people and things.

Johnathan Neelands outlines that every child enters the classroom with knowledge they have acquired through various life experiences and circumstances (1984:3). This accidental or rather, “eureka” moment happens in the classroom when they are suddenly able to react or respond to information, not knowing where that response came from. Unlike a difficult mathematical problem that needs a calculator, soft skill difficulties require an actual human or personally engaging encounter to ‘test’ their proficiency. Like meaning making, which is not quantifiable, soft skills are not as easy to grasp as one would memorise or calculate a times table. The acquisition of these skills largely come through the process of consistent human and social interaction, experience and exposure to every day decision making opportunities in life.

The paperless classroom will bring about more emerging pedagogical perspectives and debates, but what remains is the ability for a learner to keep in touch with their humanistic side. “Collateral learning” working hand in hand with the constructivist approach can therefore be synonymized with the process of fostering soft skills. These ‘enduring attitudes’ that are fostered during collateral learning always keep one in check, alert and self-aware in both educational and normal life contexts (Dewey 1938:49). These are the attitudes such as hard work, determination, leadership, motivation and team building that do not appear on the certificate or transcript however, they are the ones that will matter the most in future. These attitudes are again learnt unconsciously and sometimes under pressured human situations. In Drama in Education, these pressured human situations that cannot be ‘studied’ are usually introduced in the form of dramatic tension or inciting incidents during the dramatic encounter. Throughout the tension of the drama, learners are faced with opportunities to develop those ‘attitudes’ unknowingly. Drama in Education is therefore committed to being a catalyst for these sustainable attitudes in its educators and learners.

The relationship between the learner and the educator is crucial to their learning partnership. Both parties play both diverse, interdependent and interchangeable roles. In traditional pedagogical theories, the role of the educator has been augmented and placed on a pedestal. From personal experience, I was always told in staff meetings that "you must tell them (the learners) that you are the queen and this (the classroom) is your castle". That is where the divide began: the learner was given lower status and zero sense of authority or control over what they learn and most importantly, what they teach - because they too have knowledge to share. Dewey frowns upon an education system, like Paulo Freire's 'banking concept' where "teachers are agents through which knowledge and skills are communicated and rules of conduct enforced" (1938: 18). Another concept of metacognition, can be placed alongside the constructivist approach. This concept speaks back to the process of knowledge exchange in the learning environment and how the learner, in making sense of the world around them, is continually reflexive.

> Metacognition is the process of thinking about one's own thinking or learning in an educational context. While cognition is thinking or learning, the prefix "meta-" adds the layers of "at a later or higher stage of development" and "more comprehensive," so metacognition refers to active, higher-order processing through reflecting on, monitoring, self-regulating, evaluating, and directing the thinking and learning processes. Considerable research has demonstrated that metacognition enhances students' learning because such self-awareness allows them to develop effective learning strategies and be more intentional about learning (Chick N et al. 2009:4).

Drama in Education demonstrates increasing metacognitive abilities in its approaches to creating a self-aware and reflexive learner. For example, in a process drama intervention, Dorothy Heathcote lets the children decide what they want their play to be about and she lets them discuss details of location, date and possible scenario (Wagner 1999:9). Having tested this method during a practical examination period in Botswana in May 2018, I noticed that handing over the freedom to the learners gave them a deeper sense of responsibility and intentionality. This power immersed itself throughout the planning, during and to the end of the drama.

During the reflection at the end of the process, some of them were able to reflect on what they thought in the drama, what informed their behaviour and took a hindsight perspective on their actions. Others were able to express the duality they experienced as they thought as themselves and in their various roles. I could see that intentionality followed every decision they made prior and during the drama. This demonstrates to me that DIE possesses metacognitive features in its approach. The concept of metacognition is valid to consider in my research because it examines the ability for a learner to think about their own thinking and how they make meaning and sense of their encounters. Christopher Andersen further buttresses my point by stating that drama techniques serve as methods to foster metacognition in classroom learning (2002: 265). Similarly to my experience in Botswana, he comments on the learners' ability to step out of role and examine their own thinking as critical to the learning process (Andersen 2004: 282).

Furthermore in their research article, titled *Self-regulated learning, Metacognition and Soft Skills: The 21st Century Learner,* Laskey and Hetzel address views of multiple authors in their definition of soft skills, as being a non-cognitive component of cognitive achievement and equally a part of metacognitive thinking (2010:13). Unpacking this statement further, metacognition and soft skills play an interdependent role in the sense that a learner who is lacking in soft skills (handing in an assignment on time, coming late for class), affects their cognitive academic development (resulting in lower marks). The learner's inability to discern their behaviour in any setting and to be able to think about the consequences of their actions, exhibits poor soft skills and in turn he/she not being metacognitive, as he/she does not reflect on their behaviour.

In an article *Could Explicit Training in Metacognition Improve Learners' Autonomy and Responsibility?,* Brahim Machaal reflects that there needs to be some sort of practical educational model that not only highlights the importance of students' metacognitive learning but, also provides them with strategies to build their autonomy and responsibility (2015: 267). Drama in Education, as proposed by Colleen Johnson can be a relevant practical educational model for metacognitive learning as per Machaal's reflections. In her study *Drama and Metacognition,* following a detailed discussion on her use of role-play, improvisation, thought tracking, still image and simulation with primary school learners, she states that:

> Drama has the potential to enhance children's thinking skills and metacognition, which are pivotal to their learning. Drama for thinking strategies can be accessible to the non-specialist, it is a learning medium through which children can explore issues of human significance and exploits cross-curricular learning (Johnson 2002: 601).

Having considered the constructivist learning theory, I find it closely connected to Drama in Education, based on my conversations around the learning process being layered in the ability for a learner, to actively participate in the formulation of meaning, especially for themselves. I find that traditional pedagogy has placed so much emphasis on the educator making meaning for the learner, that they walk out of the schooling system unable to relate with and relay their own bodies of knowledge. The process of self-regulated learning begins with the freedom for the learner to construct their own meaning which is largely influenced by experience.

It cannot go without saying that Experiential Learning theories play a huge role in the makeup of Drama in Education principles. Drama in Education in its form, structure and methodological principles, matches the characteristics of an experiential learning theory. Kolb (1993) explains the fundamentals of experiential learning as an ongoing process which is grounded in experience, the resolution of conflict, a learner adapting to the world around them and being in transaction with their environment which all culminate in knowledge creation. The learning in DIE happens through observation, interaction and reflection as both the learner and the educator undergo a guided process of goal oriented learning, which is grounded and fuelled by live experiences. In his theory of experiential learning, David Kolb states that the "goal directed" process of learning will result in the learner developing four different abilities, namely: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (1993:148). The learner develops the ability to use self-experience in order to solve problems and regulate new ways of thinking about the world around them, their attitudes and belief systems.

> Learners have concrete experience; they make observations and reflect on the experience; they formulate abstract concepts and generalizations; and finally they test the implications of new concepts in new situations. Experiential learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb 1984:38).

Cambridge English Dictionary defines the word 'experience' as "(the process of getting) knowledge or skill from doing, seeing, or feeling things or something that happens which has an effect on you" ("Experience", 2019). This definition serves as an indication that experiential learning involves an active physical and emotional state of being as knowledge is acquired and transformed. However, John Dewey warns that not all experience is genuinely or equally educative and he detests the nature of some 'mis-educative' experiences, which often distort the growth of other experiences (1938: 25). Kolb responds to this argument by saying that whether personal or lived experience is that of joy or sadness, or the learner having acquired certain lengths of experience all informs the way they learn or engage with a particular curricular activity, one cannot isolate any form of experience from the learning as it is deeply embedded in the learner's knowledge systems (Kolb 1984:35).

My connection of Drama in Education to experiential learning stems from this very understanding that drama is embedded in the exploration and confrontation of the lived human experiences. In addition to that, I deduce that soft skills are largely gained through lived experience and Drama in Education is a suitable frame for exploring this way of learning. John Dewey further advances his claims by explaining that:

> The method of teaching is the method of an art; education has general methods. Part of the learning, a very important part, consists in being *master* of the methods which experience of others has shown to be more efficient in like cases of getting knowledge (1916:164).

John Dewey's concepts on education for social learning (1916) and harnessing on learner experience is a thread that keeps Drama in Education connected. The progressive nature of experiential learning lies in its attention to observation, interaction and reflection, in a self-directed manner. Jonathan Neelands prioritises the higher status in the classroom to the learner, as they have the ability to refine their own ways of learning, by using their existing experience to discover its meanings (1984:2).

Sharon Bailan states that Drama in Education's educational value lies in the possibility it affords for expanding students' experience, in conjunction with their learning of new materials, rather than in contexts in which students simply re-experience what they know (1993: 103). The role of the educator becomes increasingly noteworthy because they hold the learning space, containing what comes in and what flows out and how relevant it all is to the learning. However, the educator does not have complete control of the learners' responses or reception of the learning material. The educator facilitates the learning alongside the learners, being mindful that it is not from a traditional or a directive standpoint. As the learners interact with their peers, a process of checking in with oneself and the other occurs, whilst achieving to the foremost goal: learning.

"Drama is especially suited to experiential education. It is a powerful mode that can draw students into an experience; it is a tool to help move the learning experience" (Boggs et al. 2007: 834). This statement can be supported by Gavin Bolton explaining that:

> Drama in Education allows the learner to be 'within the subject matter rather than outside it; they are involved in 'knowing this' rather than 'knowing that'; their understanding remains implicit rather than proportionality explicit; they speak from their gut rather than from their mind (1986:158).

The latter part of the statement causes a stirring argument that drama and the arts as a whole do not rely on cognitive ability, as they do operate from the mind but from feeling. However, I counter this argument by stressing that the ability for the learner to speak from the gut, demonstrates their instinctive, intuitive and imaginative abilities; and these are honed in through experience. If learning is to take place in the head (cognitive domain), heart (affective domain) and the hands (psychomotor domain), which Drama in Education encompasses through experience in practice, then a transformative experience takes place in the classroom (Singleton, 2015).

> The concept of education is a constant reorganising or reconstructing of experience. It has all the time an immediate end, and so far as activity is educative. It reaches that end – the direct transformation of the quality of experience. We thus reach a technical definition of education: It is that reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience (Dewey 1916: 59).

Drama in Education as an educational strategy is connected to experiential learning as it too undergoes a process of "negotiating and renegotiating the elements of dramatic form for the purpose and the contexts of its participants (O'Toole 1992:2). The main priority of Drama in Education's learning experience is that the learner undergoes a process of transformation in their thinking and their reception and exchange of knowledge. Unlike traditional pedagogical systems, this exchange of knowledge and transformation can only happen in the presence of acknowledging lived experiences, which form part of the way learners think, behave and engage with content, both consciously and unconsciously. Juxtaposing the constructivist approach to experiential learning, the process of meaning making is accumulated by all these lived encounters and experiences, which inform how learners express themselves and reflect on their learning.

In conclusion, this chapter viewed the constructivist and experiential approaches to learning and commented on how they make ties with some core characteristics of Drama in Education. Elements such as metacognition and collateral learning served as a thread, connecting the constructivist learning approaches to DIE, together. The literature review that follows will further unpack Drama in Education and how its guiding principles of practice are supported, reviewed and argued.

Chapter Two: The guiding principles of practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current South African curriculum, known as the National Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) has been running from 2012 to date throughout Grade 1-12 (2012:2). This curriculum followed as a response to the unsatisfactory Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) curriculum model. OBE was "scrapped" as teachers complained of an overload of administrative work, lack of training and poor quality of textbooks, to name a few (Mahlangu, 2010). Towards the end of 2018, it was announced by the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga that the public would be given 21 days to provide feedback on the CAPS curriculum, as she was considering making amendments to it (Nkosi, 2018). It is valuable to enter into a discussion around CAPS, highlighting its successes and failures in order to generate a context of teaching and learning in South Africa.

Upon implementation, the CAPS curriculum was aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum was developed to achieve seven principles: "1) social transformation, 2) active and critical learning, 3) progression, 4) high knowledge and high skills, 5) human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice, 6) Valuing indigenous knowledge systems and 7) credibility, quality and efficiency" (DBE 2011d: 4). Looking closely at active and critical learning, M G Mbatha defines it as follows:

> Critical learning includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking, especially in case studies, projects and practical tasks. During active learning learners engage with the material, participate in the class, and collaborate with each other. One must not expect learners simply to listen and memorize, but should help them demonstrate a process, analyse an argument and apply a concept to a real-world situation (2016:63).

Following this definition of active and critical learning, one may see the connection between the CAPS curriculum and the constructivist learning theory, as it seeks to provide the learner with analytical and reflective skills, by applying meaning and constructing their own knowledge. In a nutshell, the CAPS curriculum, intended to progress from the OBE curriculum by ensuring that the learner is a well-rounded individual, who plays an active role in their learning process. The CAPS curriculum also hoped to re-direct and shift the role of the educator, as playing a more transformative and empowering role.

However, in his research study on educators' experiences about the CAPS curriculum, Mbatha noted that many of the educators identified obstacles to their progress and the successful implementation of the curriculum, namely: inadequate teacher training, work overload and class size to name a few (2016: 66); which are similar complaints regarding the OBE curriculum. Making recommendations to the DBE, Mbatha states that teacher training in the CAPS curriculum should be increased from two to three days and that programmes should be created to equip educators with skills to make required changes to teaching (2016:78-80). He adds that the large class size resulted in educators not being able to implement diverse and creative teaching strategies, as the resources too, were limited (Mbatha 2016: 64).

Going back to my introduction, I cannot stress more strongly how the classroom of the future needs to prioritize the training of their educators. The success or downfall of any curriculum has a lot to do with the preparation of the educator and their exposure to diversified educational strategies. Mbatha makes a pertinent confession that the classroom he observed did not even have modern resources such as computers and libraries (2016:67). Now, if the current curriculum is experiencing difficulties on its own, without technology, how then are they preparing themselves for the technological transition?

In parallel with Mbatha's findings, online newspaper journalist, Nkosi (2018) confirmed that many educators criticised the CAPS curriculum for being overloaded with content and their not having enough time to teach. Ohers warned that the learners were at a disadvantage, as there was "too

much emphasis on assessment, rather than teaching and learning" (Nkosi, 2018). The latter part of the comment is core to my argument that the current schooling system is largely focused on hard skill development, as stated in the "emphasis on assessment" part. Bruce Talgan supports my argument by stating that the current education system is the cause of the decline in soft skills due to the significance placed on teaching in order to be tested (Talgan 2015:24). He also adds that "with computers, content providers and teachers doing so much for learners, they have hardly any experience digging deep, puzzling and reflecting" (Talgan 2015: 25).

Bruce Talgan's view of 'digging deep' has connotations that soft skills encompass enquiry, introspection and intention in order to be fulfilled (2015:25). Having first-hand experience with the CAPS curriculum as an educator, I can attest to the fact that the curriculum exhibits some qualities of Paulo Freire's 'banking concept' of education, in the way the information is disseminated from educator to learner. Although it is modelled to provide many opportunities for learner exchange and engagement (CAPS 2012:12), the structure lends itself to the educator assuming an 'all-knowing', powerful positon of knowledge, especially because there becomes less and less time to hand over the lesson to the learner; whilst trying to keep to deadlines and schedules.

As alluded to in Chapter 1, soft skills were seen as a bonus and not a main requirement of the educational output because, at the end of the day, the measure of a learner's knowledge was their ability to demonstrate a pass mark of 30% and above. The CAPS curriculum therefore, has the potential to prize hard skills over soft skills. Supporting this, Mbatha adds that the CAPS curriculum encourages activities that promote higher order thinking knowledge and skills, in such a way that if they achieved a specific aim, they would be able to use these qualifications outside of the schooling system (2016: 32). Where does this leave soft skills? But first, are they indeed just 'soft'?

Online blogger, Trevor Muir (2019), in his article titled *Stop Calling Them Soft Skills; They're Essential Skills* advocates for the shift in using the term 'soft' to 'essential' when referring to interpersonal skills. He insists that there is nothing 'soft' about them and they are necessary to thrive in the modern world (Muir, 2019). Agreeing with the prioritization of hard skills over these interpersonal skills, he emphasizes that these skills are more essential than a learner's ability to memorize facts and equations (Muir, 2019). He further recognises that the educational system should not do away with core hard skill based subjects but the benchmarks need to be adjusted and not just emphasise on "knowing the information, but rather how students obtain it, present it and what they do with it" (Muir, 2019).

I am challenged by this argument, simply because I am drawn to look at the definition of the word 'soft' to begin with. It implies "mushy, squashy, gentle and low", which another online blogger, Lia Garvin (2018) adds that they are actually the hardest to learn. Giving this opposition against the word 'soft' more weight, Seth Godin (2017) says that they should be rather called 'real skills' as they are human skills that do most of the work. He adds that even if one does have vocational skills (hard skills), they are not of help to us without the real, human skills (Godin, 2017). I do accept the debates made by all three bloggers and recognise how they have opened up a fresh discourse when thinking about the connotations of the word. However, I will continue to use the term 'soft skills' because on the other hand, 'soft' also suggests malleability. This ability for one to remain strong and determined under pressured situations (e.g. schooling and work environments) without breaking and falling apart, is the kind of quality that a well-rounded individual should possess. In truth, over and above academic content, our educational system should shape such an individual- who is soft skill aware and alert.

As the paperless classroom initiative begins to take shape throughout all primary schools in South Africa, I foresee a mere transferral of the set curriculum at the time, from textbook to computer and the added promise of intensive ICT educator training. Which, without adequate guidance and structure, this training may yield fruitless results. The literature below will attempt to outline the trajectory of Drama in Education, as well as key methods that the traditional educator can be trained with, to employ in the paperless classroom for the enhancement of soft skills. These

approaches have been used by myself as an educator, other DIE specialists and a plethora of researchers. I do however, acknowledge the criticism that some of these strategies have received and I note how they may require possible modifications to suit a paperless classroom.

> The term 'Drama in Education' is not the study of dramatic texts, although this could be part of it; it is not even teaching drama or teaching about drama, although this could be a large part of it. Essentially, it is a process, dramatic in kind, which focusses pupils' feelings and intellect towards educational goals. These goals are generally to do with the development of the mind (Bolton 1986:18).

Firstly, I break down the term at its starting impulse: 'drama'- an Aristotelian Greek term, meaning 'to do'. Yes, DIE places the learner at the centre of participation and action, but, Gavin Bolton dispels the fallacy that "concrete action alone carries the meaning of the experience, and that action is not the drama itself" (1986: 255). To associate DIE with a learning that is embedded in action alone, would be watering down its true purpose. This idea of 'doing' involves a learning that is in continual negotiation of the body and the mind as they receive, exchange and produce knowledge. "The goal is to learn through drama, enabling learners, either during the drama itself or after the drama in a classroom, to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of their actions" (Wagner 1999:1).

This 'doing' in the classroom can be stimulated by an educator that recognises that in some instances, teaching a particular part of the curriculum by way of the "banking model" or computer may not be as effective. For example, in a Social Sciences lesson focused on building a memorial museum for the fossil remains of post-war veterans, instead of the educator lecturing in front of the classroom, she rather 'enrols'[2] the learners as a team of palaeontologists who have just excavated these fossils and are to present them to the country. In this moment, the educator "consciously employs elements of drama to educate-literally to bring out what the children know

[2] A DIE term that involves the taking on of a particular fictional role for the drama (O'Neill 1995:78).

but do not yet know that they know" (Wagner 1999:1). Throughout this lesson, learners are introduced to the fossil excavation process, fossil structure, the role of palaeontologists and the necessary terminology as per the curriculum but also, playing the role amongst each other builds comradery, collaboration and communication skills.

> The most important benefit of using drama techniques in education is that they prepare the learners for real-life situations through experience, experimentation and joyful activity. Drama activities offer a safe environment where the learners can speak and act freely, even in a traditional classroom setup (Kovács 2014:203).

According to Gabriella Kovacs, "Drama in Education is a process and a personality-centered method based on pedagogical and psychological principles, developed from the practice of 'as if' games" (2014: 201). Applied drama educators demonstrate their commitment to the learner-centred approach through the construction of diversified methods of using drama, in teaching. Due to the fact that drama is "unequivocally child-centered" (Neelands 1984:5), the educator needs to employ various strategies to connect either the curriculum, specific learning area or life skill to the drama, in such a way that the learner makes practical and valuable connections. These, all put together enable the learner to be self-reflective and analytic even outside the classroom environment, maintaining a healthy balance between hard and soft skills.

"Drama educators do not simply modify classroom methods, they revolutionize them. They are catalysers, facilitators giving freedom, life and the opportunity to learn, to their students" (Rogers 1969:126). The 'revolutionary' responsibility of the educator, that Roger's offers, leaves with not only a challenge for the educator, but a realisation of their call in contributing to alternative and transformative educational conversations. It is clear that the schooling system concentrates more on a quantitative measuring system of learners, over their qualitative experience of education, in the manner in which their level of competence is defined by a numerical grading system or percentage. Qualities such as determination, conscientiousness or diligence, for example cannot be measured or do not count for a promotion into the next grade or level of schooling competencies.

Dorothy Heathcote highlights the effectiveness of Drama in Education as it commits to "building volume within the student" (Wagner 1999:1). She acknowledges that often, educators go for quantity, in order to "cover as much ground as possible" but "the best thing to do is to go for quality of experience, to plummet deep into feeling and meaning" (Wagner 1999:1). The educator plays a vital role in encouraging a learner who is able to not only comprehend their learning but engage with it from an ongoing meditative point of view, as they navigate the curriculum. According to Bonomo, the writer of the article *Creating a paperless classroom* writes that a major difference with the 21st century classroom is the shift in platform from hard copy to digital (2016:8). This statement leaves out the various other shifts that need to take place which include educator training, diversified learning strategies and the maintenance of soft skills even in this 21st century classroom. The introduction and inclusion of technology has not only changed the environment of the classroom, but also needs an altering of the learning that takes place, which contributes to an all-encompassing learner.

One of the main goals of using drama techniques in education is to form and develop social and interpersonal skills. Jonathan Neelands supports this by affirming that "drama (in the educational context) is not as concerned with the transmission of theatre skills but rather the child experiencing and experimenting with new ideas, concepts, values, roles and language in action" (1984:6). The following strategies are vital in Drama in Education. For purposes of the length of this report, I will only address the following three: 1) role-play, 2) drama games and 3) the dramatic encounter. These will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

> Role play, involves the process of both the educator and the learner, imagining that they are someone else in another world and exploring a situation through that person's eyes, in order to understand the world in which they live (Bowell & Heap 2001:29).

DIE encourages the educator to not merely present a problem to the learner and ask them to find a solution but rather, create a world in which the learner can invest their belief in, know who they are, what they are doing and why they are there, discover the problem and work with their peers

to solve it. Once they have stepped out of the role, they are able to make connections between the fictional and their real-life contexts. Drama in Education provides countless prospects for a learner to construct meaning both as themselves and during role-play which is core to the features of the constructivist approach as addressed in Chapter 1. Particularly, in the case of role-play, they are in the action and are not simply bystanders-this places them in a revolutionary position. The constructivist approach places the learner at the centre of the educational experience as they search for meaning through the knowledge they build and negotiate. The educator in this environment does not provide the information, they rather facilitate this meaning making process. O'Toole illustrates this by saying that drama meanings are constantly emerging in multiple and many-layered dynamics, transformation is ongoing and the mood is palpable to the participants (1992: 43).

Disputing role-play's complete effectiveness in her research article *Drama as Experience: A Critical Review*, Sharon Bailin (1993) debates that role playing is unlikely to enhance empathy unless it is accompanied by the acquisition of concepts and information coming from ethical theories, logical studies of normative discourse, psychology and sociology. Empathy, for example is a soft skill that needs development over time. To say that role-play alone, will enhance empathy, would be incomplete. However, this is precisely where the role and the responsibility of the educator becomes more extensive than meets the eye. The educator, in undergoing the process of role-play with the learners, needs to frame the dramatic encounter in such a way that it elicits opportunities for them to become empathetic to the context, situation, content or each other in their roles. Creating this opportunity on its own will need more social, psychological awareness from the educator in selecting sources for the dramatic encounter, which include context, story, roles, pictures etc.

> Using a game as a technique in drama has lots of opportunities. First of all, games are highly controlled activities and players must submit to the rules. Games can be described as enjoyable, fun activities, used to highlight tension in social situations, useful for breaking the ice and getting to know people and helpful for revealing the game structures in real-life situations, i.e. blocking, hiding and deceiving (Özbek 2014: 58).

In *Serious Games Development and Application*, the authors speak back to a board game called 'Don't Panic' which is known to enhance soft skills in the crisis management field (Minhua Ma et al. 2012:2). They note the importance of combining real-life situations with play in order to illicit opportunities for the acquisition of communication skills, managing moments of crisis and fostering team building (2012: 3). Although this board game is not DIE-based, this indicates the interest of researchers in soft skill development all over the world, through varied creative means.

Games, in Drama in Education play an essential role in developing a relationship with the learners, facilitating a warming up of their bodies and minds for the action and building a group rhythm and dynamic. It would be insufficient to mention games, without considering aspects of play. I will address this in greater detail in Chapter 5. In a paperless classroom, games may be used as a good ice breaker for the lesson or a connecting mechanism to grasp content, in an appealing and exciting way. Özbek asserts the importance of games as they "establish trust, confidence or rules; simplify a complex experience or are put into the context of drama rather than played for their own sake" (2016:58). The role of the educator is to align each game with the curriculum or the lesson's learning aim, so that they are "not played for their own sake", depriving them of their meaning.

In terms of soft skills such as "honesty, moral discernment and even cleanliness", Sharon Bailin (1993) disputes the ability of engaging in drama activities to increase them. She adds that even the most optimistic drama educator would find it difficult to accept that self-expressive drama activities would affect radical and automatic change (Bailin 1993: 98). I would contend that soft skills development is not an automatic or radical feat, but one that encourages consistency and commitment. Dorothy Heathcote, when working with learners makes it a point that each learner walks out of the lesson having changed their positioning of a certain attitude, a change in perspective or even building their confidence (Wagner 1999: 5). The change is not automatic but is in the process of an ongoing transformation, which is not measured by time, as Bailin would have it.

In my personal experience with role play and game, the awareness that soft skills were enhanced in a moment comes through in reflection, when the learners acknowledge the part they played in the dramatic encounter and how that may or may not have shaped their decisions to lead, motivate or encourage their peers during the time of tension. At that point, honesty, moral discernment or cleanliness might not be instantly increased but it is present and recognised-whether they give it a name or not. This buttresses the characteristics of an experiential learning approach where the learning is not in isolation but in continuous marrying of experience with reflection.

> Thus it may be that as a direct result of a drama experience, some children in the class might for the first time realize that being a historian is like being a detective, or that a scientist's persistence in examining what is natural is a way of ignoring what is supernatural, or that motherhood is a mixture of joy and pain or that freedom has limitations or that policemen are real people with houses and families or that heroes not are [sic] without blemishes, and so on (Bolton 1984: 66).

Thirdly, Drama in Education provides a unique experience where the learner and educator engage with and take part in a dramatic context. Carl Rogers explains this as the moment at which the learner is provided with:

> First-hand experience of various processes that occur in real-life: with decision making based upon incomplete and changing information… with the handling of interpersonal relationships in negotiation, bargaining and deals (1969:139).

Like the moment expressed by Bolton (1984) above, this moment, in a process drama encounter (a DIE method), is termed a "complex dramatic encounter" (O'Neill 1995: xiii). This dramatic encounter takes place with both the learners and their educator, in its unpredictable and unscripted nature (O'Neill 1995: xiii). It usually encompasses the process of the parties involved as they create a fictional world, investing in it and taking on specific roles to solve any conflict or problem that arise. The dramatic encounter, or context, is catalysed by the educator (or rather teacher-in-

role[3]) as they guide the learners into this fictional world. This particular feature of DIE is also connected to the theories of experiential learning.

Again, in disapproval with the elements of the dramatic experience, Sharon Bailin states that the process of simply having students undergo dramatized experiences and automatically enhancing their understanding of concepts is unfounded. She further stresses that educators must have particular aims and direct the experience in particular ways (1993: 103). However, I add to the last part of this statement that directing the experience should have its limits and should not mean that the educator takes full control of the learning (O'Neill, 1995). In line with her argument on role playing, this further emphasises that the role of the educator is not only focused on implementing various DIE strategies but in addition to that, being aware of all other external factors that influence that lesson is increasingly vital.

Even though theory and research have advocated for the effectiveness of Drama in Education, one cannot remain ignorant to some of its shortcomings and criticisms. Arguing against the discussion that the paperless classroom may limit interpersonal relations and diminish soft skills; recent studies have discovered that the paperless classroom, on its own, is also able to improve students' engagement and motivation, as well as higher order thinking skills and collaboration (Ferguson 2017:1153). Adding to this finding, it is stated that the digital classroom environment also enhances the instructor's ability to solicit active participation from all students during class, conduct immediate and meaningful assessment of student learning, and provide needed real-time feedback and assistance to maximize student learning and enhance performance (Enriquez 2010; Watfa & Audi 2017). These arguments stem from greater conversations that the paperless classroom, in its endeavours to promote self-directed learning, will ensure that learners become increasingly independent, responsible and develop their leadership skills- as they work unsupervised. I question where the educator will be placed in his equation.

[3] A DIE tool which allows the teacher to take part in the drama as an insider, in role. The technique involves the teacher assuming three stances of either facilitator, enabler or manipulator, all in the commitment to propel and support the learners throughout the dramatic encounter (Morgan & Saxton 1987:38-41).

Derek Snyder (2016) believes that because learners are already operating in the technological realm, they are exposed to new ways of acquiring soft skills, i.e. they may not be physically interacting with each other but they are doing so by a different means- through the virtual space, making attempts to prove that the digital classroom has benefits to consider. I think to myself that until such a time that technological transmissions are seamless, batteries or signals never die, WiFi connections do not time-out or our load shedding woes are wiped out; then perhaps the 'perfect' paperless learning environment can begin. Until then, who or what is addressing the gaps that are being opened as a result thereof?

David Hornbrook, in his book *Education and Dramatic Art* comments that "the emphasis on 'doing' has allowed drama to be increasingly identified with those pupils less likely to reach high levels of academic attainment (1989:21). The "high levels of academic attainment" part indicates to me that Hornbrook measures academic ability through quantitative and not qualitative standards, as per all educational bodies in the country. A fellow Master researcher, Delphine C. Njewele adds that the reception of DIE has seen fluctuation in value amongst people in academic circles (2010:21). I suspect that a contributing factor to this may be that a lot of the DIE scholars and research is predominantly from the 80s and 90s. There remains a gap in new DIE pioneers and researchers that have documented the progression of Drama in Education interventions in the current classroom post 2000; especially out of Europe and America. Going through some of Hornbrook's books, Njewele notes that he criticises Drama in Education theorists, claiming that their theories and claims about the educational value of classroom dramatic experience have remained obscure (Njewele 2010: 22).

Takács concludes that even though Drama in Education can play a beneficial role in reshaping and changing the educational system in a positive way, there is not enough scientific evidence yet which could prove how knowledge is created through drama activities (Takács 2009: 34). However, I disagree with the notion that science would be an accurate measure of the effectiveness of intangible human experiences. This furthermore shows that there is a great amount of significance placed on quantity and tangible deliverables as a measure of accomplishment, over

quality of the benefits to human encounter and interaction. Debating Takács' view, in her lecture titled, *Arts Education in schools: Does arts education help teachers and learners, or conceal substantive teaching and learning problems*, Emeritus Professor Dr Gay Morris, a South African DIE trailblazer makes crucial points. Reflecting on the current state of affairs in South Africa, she observes that literacy and numeracy have become increasingly hard skills for learners to obtain, yet she encourages that the process of learning these subjects in itself instils particular values, attitudes and behaviours in the learners (Morris, 2015). She introduces the concepts of the 'hypothesis' and play as being essential tools in the process of creating knowledge:

> Whilst, in the improvisation of drama, we are simply playing but simultaneously, we are learning to hypothesize, manage spaces with people in motion, test compositions and solve problems. Dramatic play is hypothesizing a particular circumstance and thinking and acting within the given constraints. It is the processes of making, presenting and performing in the drama activity that fosters human creativity (Morris, 2015).

Earlier in this chapter, I touched on the dramatic encounter (which Morris describes as the 'hypothesis') and aspects of play in games, that require a learner to invest intellectually, emotionally and in role, to be able to manage the situation. At the end of the dramatic encounter, the learner has undergone transformation. The transformation of attitude, belief or opinion is proof that knowledge has been created and exchanged-beyond science.

In expected fashion, Hornbrook continues to problematize Drama in Education as a method which is concerned with the dramatic performance of the child, undermining the learning that is to take place (1989: 103). He adds 'it is my contention that conceptually there is nothing which differentiates the child acting in the classroom from the actor on the stage of the theatre' (Hornbook 1989: 104). Betty Wagner opposes this impression by stating that "Heathcote does not use children to produce plays; instead she uses drama to expand their awareness, to enable them to look at reality through fantasy, to see below the surface of actions to their meaning" (1999: 2). Buttressing this point, Dorothy Heathcote defends that "drama is a means of learning, a means of widening experiences even if we never act in a play or stand upon a stage. It is a human instinct to have a

willing suspension of disbelief" (1972: 158). Countering Hornbrook's argument, Bailin highlights a significant point by saying that the learning in such cases is, then, a result not simply of direct dramatic experience, but rather of reflection on the experience in conjunction with the experience (1993:98).

Going back to the experiential learning theory, a crucial element in grasping the learners' experience of the lesson, through Drama in Education, is reflection. Kolb emphasises this by saying that in experiential learning, knowledge is a process of transformation, in constant recreation and not an independent entity to be transmitted or acquired and that learning, in itself has the ability to transform the experience objectively and subjectively (1993:155). The process of consistent reflection throughout the learning experience, dramatic encounter and in and out of the role demonstrates that Drama in Education is not only in the business of getting the child to 'perform', as Hornbrook (1989) problematizes. If dramatic performance was only the case then learners would be robbed of meaning making and informing a global understanding of their lives, in relation to the world.

Lastly, Terri Anne Elliot warns that "the introduction of the CAPS curriculum has made allowance for some Drama from Grade R to Grade 9 however, multiple problems can hinder its impact" (2016:57). Our current educational system is layered in socio-political difficulties and hindrances to our progress. The turbulences in transitioning to paperless systems are a direct reflection of the work that still needs to be done. This presents more opportunities for artistic intervention socially, educationally and politically. The artistic intervention in this case encompasses arts and more specifically to this paper, Drama in Education. Drama in Education provides a platform for both its learners and educators to not only learn freely, but impact their dramatically encountered solutions in their immediate communities. In a country going through so many societal challenges, no one can blame the lack of mathematical or accounting ability; but rather, social skills are at the heart of the solution. With the inclusion of these skills in the evolving classroom, as cliché as this may sound, the world can be a better place. This chapter considered some of the surrounding views of Drama in Education from the perspective of its role in soliciting a soft skills curriculum and the potential for its inclusion in our South African educational context.

Chapter Three: Assessment Tools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following is an outline of the research methodologies that I employed in this study. These methodologies may be compared to assessment tools which are used to assess a learner's ability or proficiency in a particular learning area. Similarly, these research methodologies have been used as tools to seek out and address the abilities, inabilities and proficiencies of the paperless classroom, in fostering soft skills. The research took the shape of a qualitative method by using case study, participant observation and field notes, semi-structured interviews and documentation. Although I used a combination of these instruments, this cannot be deemed as a mixed method approach, as the data collected and analysed is solely qualitative and not including quantitative approaches.

This study employs qualitative research methodology through case study approach to collect data. The central questions to the research were 'what is the role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?' and 'what Drama in Education strategies can be employed by the educator in integrating soft skills in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?' This section seeks to outline the selected research methods intended to answer these questions, as well as their effectiveness.

> The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent (Mack, N et al. 2005:1).

Unlike quantitative research methods, which are premised on numerical measuring systems, qualitative research is nuanced on the quality of human experience. The method is rooted in understanding and interpreting of human relations, interactions and phenomena. These two methods differ in the types data instruments used, the forms of data produced and questions they pose for example, 'how many?' versus 'why is?' Charmaz gives an analogy of qualitative research methods as one either knowing about a world by describing it from the outside, yet to know what living in the world means, one needs to learn from the inside. Starting from the inside is the initial step to develop a rich qualitative analysis (2010: 15). This inside-out approach is precisely what the process of effective data collection entails, to be able to submerge oneself in the world of the participants of the study, in order to understand them, their knowledge and their authentic contribution to the research better. This approach includes conducting fieldwork and working with the participants directly or merely being present in their environment.

This study involved the use of three qualitative research methods, namely: participant observation, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, as well as documentation. The data was generated through field notes, audio recordings and finally, transcription. The information gathered and data collected was particularly aimed at attempting to not only answer my research questions but to build a greater scope of the research itself, through the discoveries made. Below are the tools that I used in the qualitative methods. I will briefly describe each of the three tools that I used in this qualitative study.

Case Study

> Case study research is qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audio-visual material and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case based themes (Creswell 2007: 73).

This research looks at the case study of a particular progressing paperless school, which has requested to be referred to as *School X* in this report. The selection of this school was based on the

specificities of the research focusing on the phenomenon of paperless technologies in South African primary schools and, the imbalanced transference of soft skills to the learner. From observation and personal experience as an educator, I identified gaps in this paperless classroom and considered scenarios where these gaps could be potentially filled by Drama in Education methodology and strategies. The selection of this school as a relevant case study is to provide an overview of the current, existing paperless classroom situation and give recommendations for the future for not only educators but our South African governing educational bodies; the DBE and IEB.

> A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 2003: 13).

In this statement, Yin emphasises that phenomenon and context are a good starting point for the selection of a case study in one's research. In the case of my research, the phenomena is the paperless classroom and the context is a growing democratic South Africa progressing into the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The impression that these boundaries are not clearly evident shows how interchangeable and interdependent they are. It becomes an increasingly important point to be clear about the focus of the study and its core objectives, as well as identifying the most suitable methodology to answer the questions related to the phenomenon. What has been core to my experience with case study, is the ability to experience complex human interaction and encounters.

> It fits research on drama education well because drama is a non-reproducible experience, by its very nature as a negotiated group art form. The participants within a drama education session or series of sessions create a unique set of social relationships that become a single unit of experience capable of analysis and study (Caroll 1996: 77).

Caroll in this abovementioned finding highlights that case study approach is appropriate to Drama in Education processes in the classroom. Su Jeong Wee attests to this by confirming that:

> The case study method is particularly suited because it attempts to understand the complex instructional processes and the interaction between the teacher and the students in a natural classroom and school context in an open and flexible manner (2009:491).

However, in the case of this report, there is no practical or physical employment of DIE strategies by me in the paperless classroom at this stage. The employment and proposal of these strategies are discussed from a theoretical perspective, considering the emerging present and the hypothetical future. This study's output is to provide recommendations through a summative assessment.

Participant Observation and field notes

Mack, N et al. express their definition of participant observation as being:

> A qualitative method whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations, and uncover factors important for a thorough understanding of the research problem that were unknown when the study was designed (2005: 13).

The participant observation took place in two Blended Learning Facilities (BLF), which encompassed the learning from a computer. The first BLF included a mix of learners from Grade 1-3 and the second, Grade 4 and 5. In the two sessions, I also observed two educators as they facilitated each class. During observation, my physical presence (as researcher) lent a clearer perspective of the paperless classroom situation, as well as the learners' interaction with technology, their educator and their peers. Observation in a sense, was from a distance. This was due to the fact that it was only focused on the educator's teaching strategies as well as the learners' interactions with their devices in the lab. I did not engage in any communication or direct contact

with the learners. I would either sit in the corner of the room or walk around the facility to see what online programmes they were busy with. Mack, N et al. call this kind of observation: distancing, the researcher learning what life is like for an 'insider', while remaining, inevitably, an 'outsider' (2005: 13).

> In gathering observational data, researchers take field notes to record the participants' verbal and non-verbal behaviour and the context in which these behaviours take place, as well as the researcher's own thoughts, feelings, impressions, and insights (Maharaj 2016: 114).

During this observation, I made detailed notes about what I saw, heard, felt, experienced during the lesson related to my research focus. The field notes allowed me to not only reflect on what was happening, but to also make connections throughout, as researcher and a prospective DIE trainer of educators. I was also increasingly conscious of monitoring my subjectivity throughout the process. In the report, I reflect on the observation moment that took place on the 21st of November 2018 from 07:00- 15:00. I do acknowledge that this observation took place close to the end of the year where assessment was completed. However, I am under the impression that spending close to 3.5 hours in each group, lent me a variety of intensive data collection opportunities.

Interviews

The study included the development of semi-structured interview questions and a questionnaire, which have been included as Appendices 2 and 3 respectively. The interviews were held with two professionals in the field of education and the paperless classroom implementation process and five questionnaires were conducted with the educators at the school. In addition to that, I engaged in verbal conversation with other *School X* educators. I also had the opportunity to study at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, which afforded me enriching conversations with experts in the field of technology, drama and the classroom teaching.

"The research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee" (Kvale 2011: 9). The choice to use interview, as a novice interviewer was to not only build my interview skill but, because there is no better engagement on a topic than with someone who has observed its progression and can express their views, opinions and reflections. This exchange and interaction of knowledge gives the research weight and adds value to its arguments, discoveries and meaning making processes.

As reported by Silvia Rabionet, "good qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews relies on the knowledge, skills, vision and integrity of the researcher doing that analysis" (2011: 565). In the creation of the interview questions, I paid careful attention to ensuring that not only are we having a comfortable conversation, but the questions adhere to ethical protocol and contribute to an honest, enriching conversation that is aligned to my research objective. All my interview subjects asked to remain anonymous due to their various positions and public status in their particular career fields.

The two interview subjects, whose identities will remain anonymous are 1) a lecturer at a local university's Faculty of Education and 2) a departmental official who is involved in the digitalisation/ paperless classroom process in South African public schools. I also include a conversation with associate Professor Kristian Nødtvedt Knudsen, of the Norwegian University of Technology, specialising in Drama/Theatre in Education at their Department of Teacher Education.

Written questionnaires were conducted with five educators that I encountered in the BLFs. These can be explained as "the printed sets of questions to be answered by respondents, either through face-to-face interviews or self-completion, as a tested, structured, clearly presented and systematic means of collecting data" (Payne, G & Payne, J 2011:1). Three of the five identified educators, preferred that they read the questions and respond via audio recording as they found writing; time consuming. Following questionnaire feedback, I can add that the questions were understood by all educators and the language used was simple and straightforward.

All the anonymous questionnaires were conducted at *School X*, with additional conversations with some of their educators and field notes from the observation, whose identities will remain confidential. The questionnaires were filled in by educators who teach in Blended Learning Facilities between Grade 1 and 5. These questionnaire responses will also be furthermore analysed alongside the documented teaching plan and Scholar Engagement Pack.

The interview and recorded questionnaires were recorded through a voice recorder on a device.

Documentation

> Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. They include advertisements; agendas, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; books and brochures; diaries and journals; event programs (i.e., printed outlines) etc. (Bowen 2009: 27).

As part of data collection, I used material acquired from the school in terms of their BLF lesson plan and schedule, a BLF plan and guide. These documents will assist in gaining a comprehensive perspective of their content, overview of their structure and the way they approach the completion of tasks and educational outcomes in a lesson, term or cycle. These documents will be used as data in themselves and will also be checked across some of the questionnaire responses for greater contextual understanding. I also refer back to the field notes that I made during the observation of the learners as they learn either Mathematics, Literacy or Natural Sciences on the software programme.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical considerations and procedures for the commencement of my study have been adhered to. Following application to the University of the Witwatersrand human research committee (for non-medical purposes) an ethical clearance certificate was granted upon successful completion of all requirements for my study. The requirements included a letter of permission from the school to conduct my research, relevant participation and consent forms, questionnaire templates, interview questions and a notice to parents regarding the study and my observation of their learners. This clearance certificate, including a clearance number (see Cover page), authorised the following:

1) Participant observation of classes of learners and educators of *School X* for the duration of the study.
2) The conduction of questionnaires and interviews with a selected number of educators.
3) The conduction of semi-structured interviews with a selected number of experts in the field.
4) The use of audio recording and note taking during the data collection process.

The clearance certificate has been attached as Appendix 1.

Chapter Four: Research Invigilation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The word 'invigilate' can be summed up as the duty of an educator, mostly during an exam situation to keep watch over and supervise the learners. This supervision is useful for cheating management, keeping track of time, ironing out any discrepancies or queries they may have with the examination or being there to assist them during this strenuous time.

I call the data section of this paper, "Research Invigilation" as I the researcher, supervise, observe and keep track of the research and the process. The invigilation includes the analysis and monitoring of the observation, questionnaires and interview and documentation process. The audio recordings were played carefully and transcribed before data analysis was done, all questionnaires and other documentation were thoroughly examined and scrutinized. Therefore, following correct processes throughout this 'exam', feedback can now be given, as to how the research questions have been addressed. For structure and flow of information, the research has been organised in themes.

> Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarising the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it (Maguire & Delahunt 2017: 3353).

There have been threads of information which have joined together very well in the data collection process that form good patterns in the discussion of the concepts in the study. I have identified three groups of these threaded ideas as the following themes in which the data will be presented:

1) A view of the paperless classroom, 2) The hard-soft skill imbalance in the paperless classroom and 3) DIE as a soft skills integrating educational strategy (which will be carried into Chapter 5).

PRESENTATION OF DATA

This study is aimed at critically examining the role of Drama in Education being an educational tool to foster a soft skills curriculum in paperless classrooms of South African primary schools. Considering the opinion that the traditional formal education system, and now transitioning into paperless classroom has emphasised the measurement of a learner's academic ability and proficiency, based on their hard skills aptitude- this paper seeks to address this prizing of hard skills over soft skills. Moreover, I imagine a paperless classroom, functioning in the presence of a driving force Drama in Education, as the educator endeavours to nurture a balance between hard and soft skills, in the pursuit of the manifestation of a holistic learner and individual.

The study asks the following key questions:

1. What is the role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?
2. What Drama in Education strategies can be employed by the educator in integrating soft skills in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?

These two questions go hand in hand and will be addressed within each thematic concern. The data has been extrapolated from observation, field notes, interview, questionnaires and documentation that have been extensively analysed and transcribed.

1. A view of the paperless classroom

This section is directed at outlining the view of the paperless classroom. The word 'view' is two-fold in the sense of how I (as researcher) physically perceived the paperless classroom (with my eyes, ears and feelings) during observation through field notes and how the interviewees and educators' (in their responses) received it from their experiences of it, and the way in which they addressed their views around what their expectations, shortfalls or opportunities of the learning format would be. In addition to that, I include the conversations, views and opinions of researchers, scholars and society at large who are exposed to the paperless classroom. This section includes the view of the classroom structure, learner responses, facilitator conduct and overall classroom behaviour. From this section I then intend to identify the gaps, with the hope that Drama in Education has the potential to fill. The African National Congress states:

> All children of South Africa must get equal opportunities in terms of infrastructure in all schools, if we are to maximise the opportunities of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Government should invest nationally in a paperless system based on digitised and automation of systems (Mzekandaba, 2018).

Upon entering the first Blended Learning Facility (BLF) of the day, I was exposed to a huge classroom. The first thing I looked for was a whiteboard; there was none, but there as a TV in the corner. The learners were all seated in their allocated chairs, facing forward in the direction of their laptop screens. Some learners had earphones on and others did not, but it was not an alarming difference. One group on the far side of the room was very quiet, attentive and engaged, they seemed smaller in stature; I was later told that they were Grade 1s. The other group closer to me seemed restless, a bit chatty yet older, they were Grade 3s. So there was a difference in the age range of learners in the lab, all engaging in their grade specific work.

From my observation, in order for a class to be deemed, 'paperless', there needs to be laptops, computers or smart devices (tablets or cell phones) for each learner at the ratio of 1:1 (one device per learner), with hearing devices (in the event of sound being transmitted), a smartboard for the educator (with all its tools and functions) and most importantly, internet connection (via Ethernet cable or Wi-Fi connection). *School X*, refers to this classroom model as a "Blended Learning Facility (BLF)"or "Learning Lab" which means that, from the above definition of the term (pg. 9); traditional teaching is placed alongside technology and all- if not most learning- takes place through the facilitation of an educator and/or the device itself.

Upon engaging with Question 1 in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3), all of the educators boasted positively on the paperless classroom being exciting, fun and engaging for the learners. From the array of positive responses by the educators, it can be reasoned that the learners were also enthusiastic about this learning format due to their fascination with and ability to manoeuvre around gadgets and digital devices. In addition to that, it indicates to me that the paperless classroom is expected to bring a different feel to learning through its applications. Its introduction and presence to not only *School X*, but the country at large is seeing spurts of optimistic feelings. On the 21st of July 2015, the Gauteng MEC of Education, Mr Panyaza Lesufi, facilitated the opening of the first interactive smartboard class at Protea Glen Secondary School, in Soweto. In the interview, a learner was asked how excited she was about this project. She responded as follows:

> Yoh, I am so very excited. We were told that we, they are going to launch the programme, which is going to teach us, the new technology is going to teach us with smartboards, tablets and we are going to introduce laptop to the teachers, which is so grateful for us. We are going to have access to new technology which is so wonderful. We are going to get great marks for that (Rahlaga, 2015).

Amidst all this excitement, what exactly is the paperless classroom bringing to the learner other than 'fun'? The learner concludes in an optimistic manner at the end of her response, trusting that the implementation of paperless technologies, will result in 'great marks'. There is a looming sense

of expectation that these digital technologies will either improve their understanding of content or better their grades, versus the traditional teaching they had been exposed to. This begins to address a priority for DIE which, like these paperless technologies uses the skills and interests of the learner to inform their learning process.

Shonfeld and Meishar-Tal show in their study that learners generally respond positively to the paperless initiative, in fact they exhibit no desire to go back to the paper system, as this suggests that a new teaching model encourages the learners to explore their own learning (2017: 187). This has seen to be true in my observation of *School X*. The learners seemed to have adapted to the learning programmes and knew their way around the software. Whilst walking around to see their Mathematics and Literacy lessons, I noticed that the programmes followed a step-by-step structure and if a learner gave an incorrect answer, they were given another opportunity to correct their inputs. An educator explained to me that their online programme was designed in such a way that if they did not achieve 100% for a section, they would have to do it over and over again until the 100% pass is attained. Confirming the Protea Glen learner's desire for great marks, *School X's* paperless classroom system demonstrates its priority in providing its learners with numerous opportunities to improve their mark. This begins to indicate to me that there is over emphasis on the paperless classroom contributing to the learner, cognitively, focusing more on their hard skill development i.e. the programme's expectation to achieve good marks.

Opposing the view of the impression of a paperless classroom utopia in the case of early childhood development, an educational psychologist who asked to remain anonymous in a News24 article titled *Paperless Classrooms: Tablets may have severe side effects* warns*:*

> When children in Grade 0 are already using tablets as a learning device, there is a problem. These are formative years in which children develop their gross and fine motor skills and spatial awareness. This is the time when children should be colouring-in with crayons and pencils, not by the touch of a screen. It is through drawing, colouring-in and cutting that children begin developing the fine motor skills required to master writing. I am even seeing children as old as ten who cannot hold a pen properly! (Wilmot, 2017).

Showing the educational psychologist's argument, a *School X* educator's response to Question 1 in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3) is as follows:

> The scholars love gadgets and technology. Scholars don't catch words but give them a computer and they'll master the objectives.

I assume that 'catching words', in this context could either mean understanding and comprehension of spoken language or the grasping of particular curricular concepts. I begin to question the universal effectiveness of this learning format, if a learner is applauded for their technical skill, at the absence of their language comprehension. Like the argument of the educational psychologist, what kind of a child are we nurturing in the process of enhancing their technological abilities? The formative years of a child result in the way they will relate to one another and the world around them in future and they become increasingly important years for the development of both hard and soft skills. These two statements in combination may be a warning for the future which indicates that the over reliance of technology has the capability to alter the way children learn and relate altogether. Adding to the view of the paperless classroom structure, the departmental official, when asked question 5 in the interview template (see Appendix 2), pauses.

> An ideal paperless classroom, for me, is when the learner is not as obsessed about the presence of these technologies in the classroom, but rather, on what they (the technologies) can do for them. I find that these gadgets begin to mean too much to them (learners) and that is why when I receive reports of theft or the power failure, the way they are so devastated, it is as if they have lost all the knowledge.

From this response about the structure of the paperless classroom, the departmental official assists in the identification of the possible hindrances to the successful functioning of the paperless classroom. These hindrances may be power failure, theft and poor or no internet connection.

Martha Chauke (2015) cannot stress enough how important internet and connectivity are in this classroom setup; not only for the learner's homework, projects and assignments but for the educator's lesson preparation. In conversation with a BLF facilitator[4] (one makes an enlightening connection with the choice to call BLF educators, 'facilitators', which is very much aligned to DIE educators who too, are called 'facilitators'-as opposed to the traditional term of 'teacher- which denotes one-directional knowledge output), she mentioned that when the internet was down, the scholars[5] were unable to access the programme and she would resort to finding other ways to engage them for the day. She explained that the engagement usually followed the form of working on worksheets rather. In an instant, the paperless classroom is converted back to the traditional paper classroom.

Confirming this, Shonfeld and Meishar-Tal state that a major challenge to the success of the paperless classroom are technological problems. They express that whilst the learner and educator have adapted to technology, problems to do with maintenance, web crashes and failing operating systems slowed down the learning (2017:191). These uncontrollable and unpredictable circumstances pose a challenge to this learning format, which places the educator under a pressured environment to ensure that the learning takes place. Later in Chapter 5, I shall propose DIE strategies that may cushion these blows.

Now, in my observation of the educators in the BLF, I noted how the role was shifted, almost dramatically; as compared to the role of a traditional educator in a traditional classroom. Firstly, a major shift was how, in the Blended Learning Facilities (BLFs), they were now referred to as 'facilitators'. However, do consider that in the questionnaire responses, I was not able to know who responded as 'educator' or 'facilitator'. I further request that you follow this interchanging of terms with me. The facilitators would walk around the BLF, observing their learners as they worked on the programme and they would give instruction or clarity when required. Unlike the traditional educator that spends most of the time talking, this was not the case and this enlightened

[4] *School X* educators refer to themselves a 'facilitators' in the BLF or Learning Lab space.
[5] *School X* learners are referred to as 'scholars'.

my view of the paperless classroom even more. When asked in Question 3 (see Appendix 3) how the educators taught with technology, all five of them said that they do not teach but rather 'facilitate, assist and guide the learners'. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word 'facilitate' means to "make (an action or process) easy or easier".

Carl Rogers expresses that:

> The goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change, the man who as realised that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security (1969:104).

On the other hand, I do find it problematic that this term would only be used in this particular classroom format. What happens when the facilitator walks out of the BLF? At what point is the "facilitation of learning" made 'easier' and then to what extent does it switch with the environment? Following the observation of the facilitators in the lab, I was able to deduce that they had undergone some sort of handover process that took place between them and the computerised learning programmes. Instead of their role being to impart or exchange knowledge with their learners, they became mediators between the learners and the programme; giving clarity or even sorting out technical glitches. One facilitator commented that in actual fact, the computer did her work for her.

Due to the re-imagined role of the educator in this schooling environment, learners were demonstrating qualities of independent and self-directed learning, which many researchers have stressed this to be an important objective of paperless classrooms (Craven, 2017; De Bonis & De Bonis, 2011 and Shonfeld & Meishar-Tal, 2017). These qualities of self-directed learning tie into the process of a constructivist theory, as they begin to make meaning of what they are learning for themselves outside of the educator's projections. There is a thin line between the educator and the computer in how the learning should unfold. Yet, the ability for each learner to be seated at

attention to their designated online tasks, going through a series of learning followed by assessment, demonstrated to me that the role of the educator was shifting.

Each programme had a voice-over instructor and immediate feedback was given providing the learner's results, the facilitators merely walked around and instilled discipline in disruptive moments or assisted with technical difficulties. In fact, the learners were doing 98% of the work themselves. Although my view of the paperless classroom sees the educator being emancipated from being the 'all-knowing vessel', I discovered that their role was now positioned to one of guidance, discipline and technical assistance. One begins to question the consideration of learning diversity in the classroom: learners who learn kinaesthetically or those who fall under Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theories. The paperless classroom has the potential to rob educators from the prospects of implementing diverse and supplementary strategies in their teaching (specifically when there is no internet connection, the use of paper can surely not be the only solution). Secondly, there is an indication that this learning experience results in little interaction between scholars and facilitators.

Lastly, my view of the paperless classroom was shaped by the way the learners responded to and interacted with the BLF system. As I did not interact with them verbally, these responses were on the basis of how they interacted with their devices, their facilitators or their peers. In order for the paperless classroom in *School X* to be deemed as functional, the first indication of this was how the learners behaved in it. The scholars were constantly reminded of the decorum and etiquette they were to uphold in the BLF. At the beginning of each class, I observed the facilitators welcoming the learners and reminding them how to behave in the BLF. On the wall, there were printed papers that read: "1. Hang your bag on your chair." and "2. Sit on your maximus glutes." In an instant, a facilitator warned "I am going to count down from 5. I do not want to hear laptop sounds, no car sounds or stadium sounds".

She counted down and in expected fashion, the learners settled down. Overtime, the rowdiness continued and the learners were instructed to make bubbles with their mouths and put their hands on their laps, away from the keyboard. The facilitator explained to me that "a scholar cannot talk with their mouth full of air, so bubbles means they must be quiet". Another facilitator added to the conversation by saying that "There are a lot of rules here but we don't discipline them by shouting, we give them warnings and give feedback about their behaviour in their homework packs. They know that if they misbehave in here, they lose laptop time".

Linda Harasim stipulates that the behaviourist learning theory focuses on that which is observable: how people behave and especially how to change or elicit particular behaviours. It focused on how we act and what impacts upon and changes how we act (2012:10). The abovementioned observations lend a correlation with a behaviourist approach in the BLF, where the experience of it and opportunity to work is very structured and behaviour based. The paperless classroom, like any other traditional classroom is then viewed to require a desirable behaviour in order for the learner to take part in it. If that behaviour is not adhered to, then the facilitator is in constant negotiation of reinforcements or punishments so that the previous negative behaviour is not repeated. Especially in the above facilitator's admission that in the event of a scholar not adhering to the rules, they would lose BLF privileges. It shows that *School X* lent some of its educational features to the behaviourist learning theory.

In my theoretical framework, I made a point that an education that elicits freedom exhibits the features of an experiential theory. When thinking about the concept of behaviour in experiential learning approaches, Hoover and Whitehead (1975:25) express that:

> Experiential learning exists when a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally processes knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement.

Unlike the behaviourist learning theory where good behaviour is rewarded and bad behaviour is punished and displayed for all to see; the experiential learning theory encourages a learning that is fuelled by activity. This activity exposes behaviours as specific forms of knowledge and attitudes to be addressed in and through constant reflection. Now the action of removing a learner from the computer, causes the learner to be deprived from their education; although in attempts to teach them soft skills such as discipline, responsibility or respect. However, my research serves to seek out how DIE can serve as a more enriching tool to enhance these soft skills without the inclusion of punishment and threat.

My view of the paperless classroom, just from pure observation and discussion with the interviewees and educators has begun to open me up to various gaps that need to be addressed and the possibilities of this complex learning format. The themes to follow will present these gaps and discuss how DIE may be a catalyst to effecting transformation in the paperless classroom and playing an active role in fostering a soft skills curriculum.

2. The hard-soft skill imbalance in the paperless classroom.

This theme begins to unpack my argument on the priority that is placed on hard skills acquisition over soft skills development in the paperless classroom. Due to this prioritization, I deduce that it results in an imbalance and the learner is at a disadvantage. In propelling this discussion forward, I will pay close attention to research question one:

- What is the role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?

Question four in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3) seeks to find out whether the paperless classroom maintains soft skills or not. In response, an educator makes the following declaration:

> It doesn't unless they're allowed to talk. It's all about progress here (in the Blended Learning Facility) and getting their (the learners) percentage higher.

This response revealed to me that 1) there is a perception that soft skills can only be obtained through verbal conversation and communication, and 2) the main objective of the learning experience in the learning lab or BLF, is academic progress which is symbolised by high percentages, (as confronted in theme one as well). It is one of the confirmations of my argument that the paperless classroom will result in a learner's aptitude being measured based on their ability to achieve a certain percentage in number, regardless of their ability to hold a conversation outside the classroom, for example.

Sally Blake et al. express that research on the impact of technology on children's overall development has been slow in coming to the academic community. Like the educational psychologist in the *News24* article, they question whether the early use of technology is harmful or beneficial. Moreover, they emphasize the huge responsibility that educators have in finding ways to balance the educational offerings, in age appropriate ways and time frames (2012: xiv). In response to Blake et al.'s questions, Shonfeld and Meishar-Tal's paper identify four main challenges associated with the paperless classroom. These challenges were identified by the educators in their study as being "1) distraction and discipline problems, 2) Information Overload, and 3) Under-developed skills which include social skills, reading skills and writing on paper (2017: 190-191).

The responsibility of the educator in creating a balance between educational offerings is associated with the balance of hard and soft skills in the learning outcome. Also, I note that this balance can only be maintained if the educator is as fluent in their technical skills as they are, interpersonally. Furthermore, I recognise that although in Shonfeld and Meishar-Tal's study, the paperless classroom is found to refine hard skills on a larger scale, but the learners are also placed at a disadvantage because of the way these skills are taught to them. In fact, it validates that hard skill acquirement is also lacking in the endeavours to create a balance. Considering Shonfeld and Meishar-Tal's challenge of 'information overload' in the paperless classroom, the educator in the

study mentions that although the learners are well versed in technical ability, they are unable to manage and organise the information in a way that they can make meaning and sense for themselves. If the process of meaning making becomes difficult to achieve, in the information overloaded paperless classroom, then it shows the potential to minimize a constructivist approach in learning.

In our interview (see Appendix 2), the departmental official had difficulties grasping what soft skills were. After explaining them to him, this is what he had to say:

> I sometimes refer to myself as extremely socially awkward… I am not scared of people but I am one of those people they won't choose to put (my name down to speak) on any programme at family events. I am usually in the corner somewhere, minding my own business...Ma2000 (millennials) would call me a "techno geek". I do codes, numbers, systems, that's what I am good at. Uhm… you can say that's how I think... But just because I think better with numbers does not mean I lack in those "soft skills" because there are times where I have to take the lead in our team and I step up to the…eh… plate.

In an online article, *It's important to balance hard and soft skills,* Dr Vidya Hattangadi (2017) affirms the departmental officials' response by stating that that the working environment requires "candidates with hard skills who can hit bull's eye once hired and soft skills to fit in the organisational culture". She goes onto explain that in the case of hard skills, the rules stay the same, however when it comes to soft skills, rules change depending on the company culture and people one works with (Hattangadi, 2017). This shows me that soft skills are more complex than people think, especially because they need to be adjusted accordingly to environment, circumstance or people encountered. However, although the departmental official states that there are times he does take the lead, my question is rooted in how balanced he is in coding and his leadership capability. Therefore, soft skills should not exist in hints and moments but rather, they should be consistent features in a person's daily life.

On another note during her interview, the university lecturer from a neighbouring university's Faculty of Education defines a core element in her understanding of soft skills:

> It's alarming really, Moratoa. I mean some of my students, even at Master level cannot even articulate themselves in front of their peers. I uh…believe we also make the mistake of assuming that soft skills are just about standing in front of that filled lecture hall, but here is the thing Moratoa, it all boils down to that human factor… You know, there are specific traits that you can only inherit, for lack of a better word, from human interaction.

Buttressing the university lecturer's closing sentence, I am now compelled to introduce the prospects of Drama in Education as this catalyst for human interaction in the paperless classroom. Drama in Education has a huge role to play in the paperless classroom because it is primarily concerned with meeting the all-encompassing educational needs of a learner. In conjunction with the lecturer's observation that students are not able to articulate themselves in front of their peers, Gavin Bolton (1986:20) laments that this occurrence could be caused by the fact that concepts that are important to the understanding of life become neglected by a school system, which is rather dedicated to value-free 'detached' knowledge of subject disciplines. Blake S et al. add that:

> Education is more about child-rearing than knowledge acquisition. And since the child rearing is primarily about forming character, instilling values and cultivating habits, it may be the last area to be augmented by technology (2012: xvii).

In the questionnaire (see Appendix 3), I asked the *School X* educators if or what they knew about Drama in Education and initially, their responses started with "No" or "Not sure". Later in the response, they all recalled an experience that they had with a theatre company from the Western Cape. This company had come to *School X* to teach their scholars about anti-bullying by "acting it out". One of the educators attempted to give a concrete example of a Drama in Education related experience by saying:

> I don't know much about it but I can assume that in involves skits or acting. It can be done as an extramural activity. E.g. we have core values that our scholars strive for every day so Drama in Education can be used to act them out, to make them simpler to understand.

Let us take a closer look at these Core Values that are mentioned, which have been written on their Scholar Engagement Pack, teaching schedules and stuck on the walls of every class and BLF. These core values are what each learner strives to live by and commit to in the school community, in the presence of their peers and educators. They are service, responsibility, kindness, achievement and persistence (Scholar Engagement Pack, 2018) and I identify them as examples of soft skills. The significance placed on these principles validate to me that the school is just as concerned as I am about fostering soft skills in the cultivation of a well-versed learner. However, in my observation, these core values were largely fostered and encouraged outside of the Blended Learning Facility (BLF) and mostly in normal classes, the playground and assembly- if we are to say that these soft skills can only be enhanced via human interaction-which is limited in the BLF. Even though the learners verbally pronounce their commitment to upholding the values before every BLF session, it may not be enough to simply profess them: how are they acted upon in the paperless classroom?

The above educator's response when stating that Drama in Education can be used as a tool to facilitate the understanding of these core values through a more experiential nature; demonstrated to me that she had an idea of the possibilities of what Drama in Education could do. The departmental official instead (during the interview), seemed unsure of his definition of Drama in Education but stressed that it could have something to do with "using drama to teach". These responses indicated to me that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in the educational fraternity in terms of rigorously introducing and exposing all varieties of existing educational strategies, especially Drama in Education. Although this will be addressed later in the paper, exposure to Drama in Education methodologies in university faculties of education and not just the arts programmes, will assist in enlightening this gap.

Dorothy Heathcote, a DIE pioneer states that the starting point of Drama in Education "is usually an area of the curriculum, where there is less emphasis on story and more on problem solving or living through a particular moment in time" (Wagner 1999: 1). Drama in Education has the ability to foster both hard and soft skills, consciously and unconsciously as the educator unpacks the curriculum or learning area. The discretion of the educator allows the class to be framed in such a way that they tackle both the curriculum content -which is hard skill based- whilst enhancing their soft skills unconsciously. Endorsing this, the lecturer speaks back to her first encounter with drama in education being done at her previous primary school where she taught.

> A company of actors came to the school and uh… we gathered all the kids in the hall to watch some sort of play about recycling. At the time I didn't know that it (the methodology) had a name but we could figure out that they were teaching the kids. And you know what that free time meant for us. I, uh remember that at some stage, the kids would answer their questions and even hop on stage. The performers even taught them rhymes and songs and dances to help them remember the content… if my memory serves me well. Now in hindsight Moratoa, I uh realise what an impact it made to those kids because they would sing "Reuse, Reduce, Recycle" and the Natural Science teacher's job was basically done.

Following this, she explains that anything to do with the arts continues to be marginalised and more needs to be done to introduce these concepts in teaching and learning. She encourages by saying that that these methodologies can be considered as effective tools for learning and they are extremely engaging for the learners. Vukojević, Z states that since Dramatic Art has been introduced into the Croatian National Curriculum Framework for preschool, primary and high school as a compulsory art subject, they have made significant strides in teaching and learning experiences (2018: 108). You may recall that I mentioned an example in Chapter 2 on palaeontologists at a memorial museum. Like the lecturer's experience, when the learners witness or take part in a fictional world, as if they are there, they grasp the concepts better and are able to make meaning for themselves.

On *School X's* (2016) website video, the voice-over artist describes their teaching and learning model. They introduce their "Social Emotional Learning" curriculum which is aimed at ensuring that their scholars learn how to handle their emotions and can nurture healthy relationships for positive conflict resolution. They deduce that their model allows the scholars to express their feelings positively and appropriately (*School X,* 2016). I verify that during the observation I did not see this "Social Emotional Learning" curriculum in action, specifically in their BLF. I can assume that this was the case due to the fact that verbal communication in the facility is limited and the focus of their attention is predominantly on the screen.

There is a gap for Drama in Education in their "Social Emotional Learning" model particularly because they stress that the model is non-traditional and is placed in the hands of the learners, connecting with some core objectives of Drama in Education. From my observation, it is not very clear how they endeavour to completely achieve this, specifically in their BLFs, as the relationship between their scholars and facilitators seemed disconnected. I can confirm that some aspects of School X's model are non-traditional, in terms of their call-and-response phrases between the scholars and facilitators (e.g. Facilitator says "No sticker, No?" and all learners respond, "Playtime"), their application of core values and specific mottos they profess upon entering every class or in assemblies, which all instil values, morals and form a communal ritual. This showed me that *School X* was welcoming of diverse strategies in their learning format.

A concrete example of this is captured on a video insert titled *Blackley and Broadene: The Shoe Factory*. We see Dorothy Heathcote take 6 year old participants through a processual journey of shoe-making (Taylor, 2019). Through game, enrolment and deliberate manipulation of dramatic tools and elements, not only do the participants experience the imagined profession of shoe-making but they learn to collaborate through designated roles and responsibilities, honing on a social emotional learning skill. This intervention demonstrates the ability for DIE to encourage curriculum-based research and exploration and the implementation of knowledge grasp through dramatic means. Hakan Usakli affirms the need for filling the gap I have identified for a DIE model by stating that "the essence of drama is social interaction, involving contact, communication and the negotiation of meaning within a group context" (2018: 2).

> Drama in Education encourages motivation, develops multiple intelligences and encourages various learning styles. The position of the teacher and the pupil in such forms of work enables the pupil to freely express feelings, thoughts and attitudes, and express their decision-making skills (Vukojević 2018: 107).

Further in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3) I questioned the educators regarding any possible gaps they noticed in their learner's interpersonal relations with their peers, due to learning in the paperless classroom. Two of them mentioned that the learners exhibited good leadership skills and were extremely disciplined, while another said that some struggled, as their main priority in the BLF, was to work. Another one responded as follows:

> I think the gaps are not that big because we do not only do the paperless classroom. They get to interact in other learning areas (traditional classroom) and then when they come to online space they know it is a quiet space most of the time.

The complete implementation of the paperless classroom model in all schools will result in all classrooms and possibly all subjects making the transition as the years go by. This educator's response shows that if the paperless classroom is to be a quiet space, then learners may not be able to interact with their peers on a direct and personal level. Advocating for its effectiveness, De Bonis and De Bonis motivate that the paperless classroom improves the efficiency of the learning experience; as well as creating the independent student, who does not play an obedient and submissive role as they follow the teacher-directed instruction (2011:84). Still, the notion of the learner zoned into a cubicle-like structure, with their eyes streamed onto a computer screen and boasting the ability to "play with their friends through the net" (Shonfeld & Meishar-Tal 2017:191) begs much to be desired. I am continually aware of the conversations around the benefits of the paperless classroom and remain objective to all arguments, but on its own, will this format yield in socially thriving results? I do not believe so. In the words of Gavin Bolton:

> The epistemological purposes of Drama in Education are to do with bringing about a change in a participant's understanding of the world as distinct from all the other purposes drama may rightly lay claim to: learning to do drama, learning about drama, learning social skills, learning language skills and learning about oneself (1979:148).

Talk of the Fourth Industrial Revolution being pioneered by machinery and robotic technology, make suggestions that people with limited skills and competencies will be at risk (Morgan, 2018). Whilst more of these technical jobs (which would have previously required high IQ and hard skill competencies) decrease as they become replaced by automation and robotics, an increasing number of opportunities for people with soft skills such as creativity and innovation, will present themselves. Therefore, I gather that the inclusion of Drama in Education in educational institutions and its implementation by educators will assist in bridging the soft skill gap. Boggs J et al. (2007:834) attest to this view by stating that:

> As more educators adopt an experiential learning approach, the use of arts-based learning techniques increases, and drama is one teaching approach whose use is steadily growing.

According to Richard Courtney, Caldwell Cook, a pioneer of Drama in Education proposed that drama was a sure way to learn (1974:27). According to Courtney, Cook constructed three basic principles in Drama in Education which highlighted that:

> 1) proficiency and learning should not come from reading but from action, from doing and from experience, 2) good work is more often the result of spontaneous effort and free interest than of compulsion and forced application and lastly, 3) the natural means of study in youth is play (Courtney 1974:27).

The paperless classroom is a complex environment as it is, therefore it requires a catalyst which will maintain human exchange and allow for a balanced learner. Especially looking at *School X*'s blended learning facility, I have been made aware that the paperless classroom not only isolates

the learner from their facilitator in terms of knowledge exchange but it reinforces a passive learning experience for the learner as well. From Cook's three principles in DIE, one is exposed to the nature of experience and experiential learning that creates a solid base for the paperless classroom to stand on. In order for *School X*'s core values, Social Emotional Learning curriculum, call-and-response phrases and in a nutshell, their non-traditional method to take greater shape; Drama in Education needs to be introduced. Therefore, Drama in Education definitely has a place and plays a pivotal role in fostering a more intentional soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom.

Chapter Five: Progress Report.

Drama in Education as a soft skills integrating educational strategy

In Chapter 4, the first theme examined the paperless classroom as perceived through the eyes of my observation of *School X* and comments from interviews and questionnaires, as well as researchers worldwide. From this, I identified gaps in its format. The second theme touched on the hard to soft skill imbalance in the paperless classroom and attempted to highlight the role of Drama in Education, in fostering a soft skills curriculum.

This chapter is compared to a Progress Report in the sense that it gives feedback of the research process and begins to propose a way forward. This last theme will address the various Drama in Education strategies that exist and how a *School X* facilitator could integrate them in their paperless environment, to further stimulate a soft skills curriculum. The conclusion of this chapter will consist of the various recommendations that may be given to the DBE and IEB bodies.

In the questionnaire (see Appendix 3), I asked the educators what teaching strategies they were currently using to enhance soft skills. Most of them mentioned that they would place the learners in groups, especially placing the "struggling one" with the "more clever" one, helping them with "thinking outside the box" or finding a moment to encourage them daily. I then asked, still in the

questionnaire, what other activities could be included in the paperless classroom, to enhance soft skills. Two of the responses were as follows:

> Nominate the ones who got 100% in their tasks to encourage others. This will build their leadership skills.

> Because the learning lab only focuses on literacy and maths, we could rather do these activities in the normal classes.

These responses give one a depiction of the situation in the paperless classroom as merely continuing to be a traditional classroom with technology. It also exposes the risk that learners potentially face as their soft skills are placed on the back burner, when their educators fail to provide them with various learning approaches. I reflect on another call-and-response phrase which seeks the scholar's affirmation, as to whether they grasped a concept or not. The facilitator gives an instruction or rectifies a particular technical concept with the scholar; she then says "Get it, Got it?" and all the scholars respond, "Good". How is she certain that each and every scholar did, honestly *get* it, well before the programme scores are displayed? How is she certain that this call-and-response is not just an exciting repetitive phrase but, truly indicates each learner's understanding of content, instruction or information?

This is a call to our higher education institutions as they prepare new educators into the system; to introduce a plethora of teaching methodologies outside of the outdated, traditional pedagogical approaches. How are we preparing these educators for these ever-changing educational environments? In addition to that, even though the DBE and government ensured that educators would be given sufficient training to teach with technology (Mzekandaba, 2018), does that training only begin and end at the technicalities? Michael Goodman (2016) adds that "in fact, technology, if not used in teaching correctly, can hinder rather than help", which may be the case in the paperless classroom environment. I then questioned our two experts in the field (see Appendix 2) about any dynamic feature they thought drama strategies and activities, would bring to the paperless classroom:

> Uhm…I think learners learn differently, not all of them are actors or confident enough to get on stage so I am not too sure if they will all be able to learn this way… Uhm, just a side note…for example when we were growing up, I used to watch programmes like Soul Buddyz, which indirectly taught me about issues and the next day all my friends and me would… uhm… sorry, one second please… So…yes…all my friends would talk about what we saw and would say "yoh but if I was that character, I would have done this or that"… So coming from that perspective drama can bring a new wave of learning for all (Departmental Official).

In contrast, the university lecturer takes on a more contentious stance:

> You know Moratoa… I come from the old school of thought or generation where teaching is teaching and learning is learning…Uh… don't get me wrong, I am all for new ways of knowledge transfer but there is time involved and work that needs to be covered…I admire drama for the way it does attempt to teach… and uh… I agree that it can bring out positive learning experiences, Moratoa but how do we practically mesh them in this technically demanding sphere? I'm now thinking for myself… how would I possibly perform and teach and fiddle with the slides all at the same?

Zrinka Vukojević gives an account of the journey to integrating dramatic art in Croatia's education system (2018:106). She reflects that at first, educators were reluctant to apply drama as a teaching method because they felt they lacked knowledge or stressed of time constraints, like the university lecturer in the interview response above worries. However, with more exposure to drama experience and its knowledge and skills, they began implementing creativity and play in a more efficient way, and started applying drama in school subjects for various educational purposes (Vukojević 2018:109). In the conversation with Professor Kristian Knudsen (2018), he explained that even though there's a computer screen present, the educator needs to be aware of principles of multimodality.

> When we are talking about drama games and having fun and role-play, people seem to think it's about entertainment, or edutainment and there is no learning about anything. We take the risk of putting a traditional view of drama in education and bringing it into a future perspective. It's not just that drama is creative, but what is relevant about drama is that it is multimodal (Knudsen, 2018).

He further stipulates that the concept of multimodality is his article *Social Media- A New Stage for the Drama Teacher,* that it has been previously used to explore meaning-making processes in a drama pedagogical context (Knudsen 2016:208). A person shapes their understanding in relation to different forms of expression (modalities), which are then transformed into meaning. He defines a modality as being an example of a language, music, sound, light, pictures, video, text- any kind of specially created and culturally provided resource, which when woven together with other modalities, creates understanding (Knudsen 2016:208). This concept of meaning making as a result of exposure to these multimodal ways of exploring education, demonstrates the presence of the constructivist approach to learning, taking it even further.

School X exhibits their understanding of multimodalities in the way they model their assembly, which includes song, dance, music, as well as the different languages or colloquial phrases in their chants and call-and-response mechanisms between their educators and learners. Nonetheless, their facilitators can afford to introduce more multimodal approaches in their BLFs. Rachel Forgasz adds that embodiment can also be included in modalities, in the sense that it emphasizes on live, 'enfleshed' experience, especially because educators and learners are able to use bodies, faces and gestures in meaning making (2015:116). This results in a 'doing' and active experiential process of learning.

Another agreement with Knudsen (2016) is stated by Pamela Bowell and Brian Heap as they enlighten that information in a DIE process may be represented in many forms; for example, written or spoken word, pictures, diagrams, photographs, sound, light, story, costume and many more- these are known as 'signs'- and meaning is communicated through these (2001:69).

These begin to outline the various tools that a facilitator in a paperless classroom can use to not only stimulate the learning, but to sustain soft skills- due to their collaborative and participatory nature. In the case of embodied modalities, it aligns with the principles of making, being and doing that I outlined in the theoretical/conceptual framework.

The last question in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3) asks the educators to imagine how different, teaching and learning would be through the use of Drama in Education strategies. One responded by saying that they had attempted to use role-play and their scholars seemed to understand the work better, the other mentioned that each core value had a particular song and dance move which captivated the scholars more, and the others emphasized that not all learners would respond the same, as they all learnt in different ways. In conversation with a different (in terms of position) *School X* educator, she mentioned that there was a need for arts education and activities in the school but could only be offered at extramural level, as their curriculum was already "jam packed". I asked her, "why wait for after school when your educators can thread the arts throughout the learning?" She smiled and nodded her head.

In Chapter 2, I had begun to touch on three strategies that educators could employ in the paperless classroom to enrich soft skills. That way, by the time the whole school reaches a paperless stage in all learning areas, they may have a better chance at testing out the success of their working model. These existing and effective strategies included 1) role-play, 2) games and 3) the dramatic encounter.

In *The Effective Use of Role Play: A Handbook for Teaches & Trainers,* Morry van Ments defends role-play saying:

> No matter how much reading and observing the student undertakes, the only way to develop interpersonal and communication skills, is by using them in actual interpersonal experiences. Role-play is ideally suited to provide the necessary life experience (1983:24).

Role-play, in the paperless classroom can be achieved by both the educator and the learner, as they navigate an area of the curriculum or lesson plan. One must also not confuse role-play with 'acting' or artificial performance because in role-play, "participants are likely to undertake multiple roles that require simplicity of representation instead of complete identification and naturalistic portrayal" (O'Neill 1995:69). Similarly, Wagner points out that Dorothy Heathcote does not push her class to do theatrics or perform tricks or act in an artificial way (1999:2). This is to alleviate any resistance from educators in implementing this strategy, for fear of not being able to 'act'. Role-play is more than just a useful educational tool. It is also a kind of lens, another way of looking at everyday interactions, and a very effective one" (Heinrich 2018: 50).

> Mantle of the Expert is a dramatic-inquiry based approach for teaching and learning. It is a fully integrated Dorothy Heathcote method in which children learn across all curriculum areas by taking on the roles of experts engaged in a high status project for a fictional client. In this technique, power and responsibility move from teacher to group, learners feel respected by having expert status, insight and understanding of different expert occupations are explored and it provides distance from experience through professional codes (Özbek 2014: 54).

Dorothy Heathcote's *Mantle of the Expert*, in my personal experience, has shifted the power dynamic in the class significantly. This is due to the fact that the learners experience an increased level of confidence in expressing not only the content in their roles but mostly, in their own ability to relay information and command attention amongst their peers. In their various roles, I observed them step into leadership roles, delegate tasks, create meetings and address one another in complete attention. Role-play may have an even bigger impact in the paperless classroom as it is "useful for helping children with social difficulties as they begin to voice their own ideas through the mask of a role" (Özbek 2014: 57).

Role play can include a change in attire to a costume, a name tag and or/props that add to the belief of the fictional world. In this way, learners' soft skills are in constant progression and development. Whilst the learner takes on an expert role, the educator or facilitator assumes teacher-in-role. This strategy, as explained in Chapter 2, allows the educator to be a part of the action but not necessarily influencing any decisions that the learners make (Morgan & Saxton 1987: 39). Bancino and Zevalkink (2007:5) describe role play as being an effective technique to drive subject content home in a way that a traditional theoretical lecture cannot. In this case, role play assists in implementing a soft skills curriculum in a more tangible and relatable way, where the educator, as teacher-in-role, is neither an outsider nor an unapproachable authoritative figure.

As said by Olivia Saracho, "the fundamental role of the teacher is to use the natural spontaneous play of children in a way that it has educational value, while continuing to maintain its qualities as play" (1998:9). It would be incomplete for me to mention the concept of games, without including the benefits of play in any educational setting. Kennedy Ginsberg states that:

> Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth, by allowing them to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength (2007:183).

Play is a social activity between learners that allows them to interact with their peers and reflect on their experience through the active state of play. Looking at the Grade1-3 scholars I encountered in the Blended Learning Facilities, I believed that they yearned to play. Whether by playing games, or playing different roles in the process of Drama in Education, learners adapt to behaviour, become socially and emotionally sensitive to their needs and the needs of their peers, and they explore their mastery in soft skills. This playing, when introduced and framed by the facilitator in an appropriate manner, especially in the silent BLF, will drive positive results. The educator equally needs to know the purpose of each game, the duration of its effectiveness and identify it's suitability for each learning outcome. That way, learners are conscious that the game has purpose, direction and are aware of its benefits for them individually and as a group.

> The efficacy of games for learning depends largely upon teachers' capacity to leverage games effectively as learning tools and on students' willingness to engage in game play and other pedagogical activities—such as dialogic interactions for meaning making—so that game use in the curriculum can be rendered effective for learning (Chee 2016:4).

When the learner begins to notice that a game has enhanced their focus, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, a positive attitude, to name a few; the educator has unconsciously stimulated their soft skills. Drama in Education prides itself in its endeavours to provide an experiential learning environment that takes place in the intimacy of the classroom turned agreed-upon imagined world. Janet Presnilla-Espada describes that the creation of the dramatic encounter is the process whereby the teacher creates a synthetic environment, having set parameters. Students experience the reality of the scenario, make decisions within its context and obtain meaning from it (2014:52), and in turn offering the constructivist approach to learning. Arrighi, G.et al. add that:

> The teacher and students are also self-spectators in the drama; there is a level of critical self-reflection of their own responsibilities when inhabiting or wearing the many 'heads' of the process drama" which are also rooted in the features of the experiential learning theory earlier mentioned (2018:95).

This supports the statement made by Cecily O'Neill stating that the learners and the educator are "an audience of their own acts" (1995: xvi). The fact that the drama is made for them, by them and with them; proves the self-initiated and autonomous nature of DIE. The educator is also responsible for the various injections of episodes and tensions, in order for their learning experience to be heightened. I remind you of palaeontologists at a memorial museum example again: What better way to exercise understanding and experiential learning, unless being in that cycle of total immersion and suspension of belief?

There is a pertinent occurrence in the learning of this dramatic encounter, called 'metaxis'. John O'Toole explains this occurrence as 'the magic of theatre' when both the fictional and real contexts collide in the mind of the learner, as they occupy an in and out of role state. At this point during the dramatic encounter, the learner is able to engage in a complex critical thinking moment, about the world they live in and the choices they have made. This moment nurtures soft skills such as communication, trustworthiness, reliability and accountability to name a few. They further make meaning of the experience both in the world of the drama and as themselves. This ability to experience a duality in education is central to the work of Drama in Education, in developing a multi-faceted learner, who is fully-fledged in both hard and soft skills.

From what I observed, *School X's* model has the potential to foster a substantial balance in hard and soft skills in their learners. It would be an even more phenomenal learning experience that enhances a diversified learner, if they were to be consistent in their non-traditional approaches in all their classes, especially their Blended Learning Facilities. The advanced equipping of their educators with these Drama in Education strategies will change the feeling and current outlook of their BLFs. Since the learners are Grade 1-3 level (7 to 9 years) and in foundational stages of learning, one questions how socially aware they will be in their older years, with such early exposure to the paperless classroom.

Closing off the interview (see Appendix 2), the university lecturer reflects:

> Until all educational stakeholders, bodies, organisations…uh…you name it, can sit together and agree on one thing, one system then this work will be a hell of a process, Moratoa…It's scary really. My son of eleven, eleven Moratoa would rather sit in the house and play video games…I tell him we are going to the farm to see his grandmother and he tells me we can FaceTime her rather…Shocking! Let us not even talk about what the actual situation in schools is like…

In Chapter 4, I identified three main gaps in *School X's* teaching and learning model of their paperless Blended Learning Facility. These were, 1) little to no interaction between scholars and facilitators; from the premise that this interaction could enhance soft skills, 2) the over emphasis on the paperless classroom contributing more to the learner's cognitive abilities, at the loss of their intangible benefits and, 3) the facilitator's role being limited to guidance and technical assistance; whereas opportunities would be presented for them to use diverse and creative learning strategies. I considered and was able to define the role that Drama in Education (from both constructivist and experiential perspectives) could play in not only fostering a soft skills curriculum, but in proposing a mediation between this lack of interaction and collaboration and being a solution to some of the warnings about technology.

Finally, this final theme presented three strategies that facilitators in *School X* could employ in their BLFs, to improve their approach and take their learning environment, steps further in their already progressive strides- in order to integrate soft skills. I acknowledge that there are many more Drama in Education strategies I could have included, however due to the nature of the research report, I could not address all of them. These strategies provide their users with comprehensive opportunities for exploration and engagement. Learners and educators can benefit from them in order for their learning experience to be well balanced and aligned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EdGlossary (2013) defines a 'summative assessment' in the schooling system as being used to: evaluate "student learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement in order to determine 1) whether or to what degree students have learned, and 2) they are evaluative rather than diagnostic". In this case, this research was a summative assessment of the paperless classroom and to what extent the presence of Drama in Education and its strategies can foster a soft skills curriculum. Below are the recommendations I have established for the DBE and IEB, following my summative assessment.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is therefore, a call for all stakeholders and role-players to reshape and reimagine our stance on education. For the successful roll out and implementation of the paperless classroom initiative in South African primary schools, that will foster a soft skills curriculum going forward, our educational bodies need to consider the changing educational climate and the changes that need to be made for the progressing learning format. Therefore, intense and rigorous planning on a holistic level needs to be considered.

Firstly, I propose that our educational bodies should prioritize the extensive balance of both hard and soft skills at equal levels in their curriculum. Although the curriculum, as documented seeks to do so, it now becomes a question of how the educators are approaching the material. I would imagine that the future South African primary school curriculum will experience the technological integration and this process would require adaptation and re-framing. Therefore, educators should not only be trained with the skills to have technological and digital aptitude, but appropriate strategies to strengthen learners' soft skills in the paperless classroom. That way, the Blended Learning Facility may foster a systematic balance of both in the way the educators approach this new learning relationship.

Considering the extensive budget that has been projected to achieve this roll out on page 7, which I assume is largely focused on the purchase and installation of these digital systems- I further propose that the money should also include educator training. Drama in Education facilitators and educators can be identified and supported to train traditional educators in private and public primary schools to implement a soft skills curriculum strategy. These training programmes will be essential to building the holistic educator, for the holistic learner. Furthermore, in the training of educators, Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Post Graduate Certificates of Education (PGCE) qualifications should be tailored by higher educational bodies to include Drama in Education strategies or diverse experiential educational approaches in the commitment to foster soft skills.

In terms of the exposure to the arts, arts subjects in the schools should be included on a larger scale, as they elicit and promote social awareness and foster healthy learning communities through their practice. The inclusion thereof should not only exist on extramural basis but as valued curricular members. As the programmes advance, considerations should be made to tailor the programmes to include arts-based subjects and not only focus on Mathematics, Sciences and Literacy etc. By creating in-built moments in the learning for learners to engage in a multimodal lesson i.e. dramatic encounter, song, dance or role-play, which is supplemented and facilitated by the educator, off screen, then the content may be grasped interactively, practically and creatively, further employing a soft skills curriculum.

I do acknowledge that because the research was not conducted practically and that I had not referred to specific –or parts of a- curriculum, the research is limited. The above recommendations not only show me that there are conversations to be had on this growing research topic, but challenges me to develop my thinking around education, the educator I want to be and most importantly, the learning that still needs to be done.

CONCLUSION

This research set out to critically address the paperless classroom roll-out which was directed by the South African Department of Basic Education, based on world standards (Pilane, 2015). This roll-out aimed to ensure that all public primary and high schools would make the transition from paper to digital learning systems namely, 'paperless' by 2017/18-following the release of an extensive budget and teacher training (Wilmot, 2017). I further considered what this learning approach would entail and to what extent it would prioritize mathematical and scientific subjects or learning areas, prizing hard 'tangible, quantifiable' skills (Hussung, 2017). Considering extensive research views and opinion, they presented to me that this new wave of learning may diminish soft 'interpersonal' skills, which are intangible and are acquired through human interaction (Elmore, 2014). In fact, I came to know that calling them 'soft' had the potential to completely relinquish them of their power.

Looking at the current state of our educational system, the upsurge of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the ever-changing environment, I began to question how our learners at primary school level would be cultivated to be effective leaders, team builders, communicators etc., with such a hard skill driven educational output. Paying close attention to critical pedagogy and traditional systems of education (Freire, 2009; Rogers, 1969), it seemed as though the paperless format would only experience one change, technology and not teaching style (Bonomo, 2016). This is where Drama in Education was introduced.

I questioned-amidst the paperless classroom, the traditional educator, the imbalance of hard and soft skills- the role that Drama in Education could play in fostering a soft skills curriculum in primary schools. I also examined what Drama in Education strategies the educator in a paperless classroom could employ to further maintain this fleeting balance between hard and soft skills.

These thoughts culminated in the following two research questions:

1. What is the role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?
2. What Drama in Education strategies can be employed by the educator in integrating soft skills in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools?

In Chapter 1, I considered constructivist and experiential learning theories that inspired and supported Drama in Education through their similar functional and foundational features, and how they frowned upon traditional pedagogical systems of knowledge (Dewey, 1916). The report included a literature review in Chapter 2, which defined Drama in Education and the core concepts surrounding it (Neelands, 1984; O'Neill, 1995; Wagner, 1999). I further acknowledged the researchers that scrutinized its form, structure and effectiveness as a viable educational approach (Takács 2009; Hornbrook, 1989). This research took the shape of a qualitative output through a case study method (Yin, 2003), in which the data was generated through observation, interview and questionnaire and some evidence of documentation. Chapter 4 included the presentation and analysis of the collected data; paying close attention to research question one. Whilst Chapter 5, was a consolidation of the data findings, covering research question two and making recommendations.

This conclusion serves as a summary of the process undergone in this research journey. Also, I emphasise that this paper served as a summative assessment of the paperless classroom of *School X*, an independent primary school that has successfully implemented the system. The findings of my research confirmed that *School X* does indeed exhibit qualities of prizing hard skills over soft skills in their paperless classroom, however does implement non-traditional approaches in the rest of the school environment, i.e. 'normal classrooms' and assembly, that assist in fostering soft skills. As this paper was solely focused on their paperless classroom on its own; therefore, from observation and their educator responses, I deemed my argument to be true.

Following the integration of Drama in Education methodologies and training their facilitators with various soft skill enhancing strategies in their Blended Learning Facilities, a positive hard and soft skill balance can be achieved.

I do acknowledge that their model is also currently effective as it is an independent school. It will be interesting to see how South African public primary schools progress in this transition. With the current incidences of theft in these public schools (Ngqakamba, 2019), it is causing a further delay and researchers like me become limited in research opportunities.

In the interest of future research, there is a need for more researchers to write about the paperless classroom in African countries. More specifically, with South Africa leading in its implementation, I call for researchers to reflect on its progression, shortfalls, and opportunities, and how they have an impact on education as a whole. For example, with the decrease of crime or rather, the tightening of security systems in the area of our paperless public schools, there becomes a possibility to build on this paper, from a different context altogether. Currently, with the scourge of burglary, we are unable to test the effectiveness of the paperless classroom in public schools. My research may also be limited because *School X's* working system can be contended to be masked by its exclusivity, as it is a private school and is not painting the whole South African picture.

Foundational research in Drama in Education, although trailblazing and remaining core to the practice, needs to be extended by present and future practitioners. A lot of its teachings stem from alternative education advocates in the likes of Gavin Bolton (1979), Dorothy Heathcote (1972), Norah Morgan and Juliana Saxton (1987), who are undeniably formidable pioneers but, looking at the dates of reference, need new innovative ideas and progress. I acknowledge the relevance of Drama in Education and it's malleability in specific contexts across the globe, however, documentation of such processes need to be made more available. Therefore, more recent works and theories in Drama in Education, which are also decolonized need to come to the forefront or made easily accessible in literature, journals and books.

Finally, I envisage the furthering of this study to PhD level, where these strategies are practically tested and implemented in a paperless classroom, as this study was only done from a purely theoretical and analytical perspective. A possible research area would be focusing on specific curriculum content or subject matter, in which the specific Drama in Education methods may be applied.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will not only challenge the position of the working class but will require a changing educational narrative, which creates indispensable, socially and culturally aware individuals. Failure to identify and implement educational approaches such as Drama in Education, will indeed rob us interaction, collaboration, leadership and developmental qualities for the future of our country.

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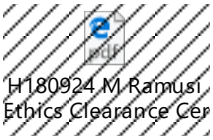
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Appendix 1: Ethics Clearance Certificate



Appendix 2: Research Interview Questions for Experts in the Field

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
DRAMA FOR LIFE
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: EXPERTS IN THE FIELD

These semi structured interview questions are part of qualitative research for the paper titled: *The role of Drama in Education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools.*
The professional opinion and engagement of experts in the field with the following questions will help the research in many ways. The researcher will be able to establish 1) the outlook of paperless classroom since its roll out, 2) what the paperless classroom envisages to provide for the learner, 3) the need for soft skills in the paperless classroom and, 4) what role an alternative teaching strategy could play in soft skills development.
These interview questions may be conducted face-to-face, via email or telephonically based on participant's availability and preference.
As stipulated in the consent form and participation information sheet, all answers will be treated with confidentiality and will only be released as part of research report qualitative data findings.

1. What is your background in your field of expertise?

2. Please describe a day in the life of your career.

3. How do you view the current educational system in South Africa?

4. What is your knowledge and understanding of the current paperless classroom situation in South African primary schools?

5. How does your ideal paperless classroom look like?

6. In your opinion, what skills will the paperless classroom will bring to a young learner, as compared to traditional teaching?

7. Studies show that the paperless classroom will hone in more on the learners' hard skills than their soft skills.
   a. Your view on this?
   b. What is your understanding of soft skills?
   c. Please explain the importance in these skills in a learner.

8. Do you know of anything that is currently being done to prepare educators for more paperless classrooms?
    a. If no, what do you recommend should be done?
    b. If yes, please elaborate.

9. Which qualities do you envisage an educator should possess in this growing classroom format?

10. What alternative teaching methods were you exposed to in your schooling years? a. How successful do you think they would be in the current paperless classroom?

11. What do you know about Drama in Education?

12. Do you think drama, as a teaching strategy, can play a role in fostering soft skills in the paperless classroom? How so?

13. What dynamic do you think drama activities in learning, would bring to the paperless classroom?

14. In terms of alternative teaching methods, what recommendations would you make for the current South African educational schooling system, (on its way to being paperless and for the future)?

Appendix 3: Research Questionnaire for *School X* Educators

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
DRAMA FOR LIFE
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

This questionnaire is part of qualitative research for the paper titled: *The role of Drama in Education in fostering soft skills curriculum in South African paperless primary schools.*
This questionnaire provides information that will assist the research in many ways, namely it will assist the researcher in 1) getting an outlook of the current paperless classroom setup, 2) discover the educator training processes involved in integrating technology in their teaching, 3) identifying the current gap in soft skills curriculum for learners and 4) exploring current and future teaching strategies employed the paperless classroom.

Following your signed consent, please be reminded that your answers will be treated with confidentiality and will only be released as part of research report qualitative data findings. Thank you for agreeing to volunteer in this study.

1. What is has been your current experience of the paperless classroom?
2. What kind of formal training or preparation did you receive in assisting you to teach with technology?
3. Please give a brief description of how you teach with technology?
4. In your opinion, does the paperless classroom maintain a learner's soft (interpersonal) skill? (If so, how? If not, why not?)
5. What gaps are you noticing in the learner's interpersonal relations with their peers due to learning in this way?
6. What teaching strategies do you currently use to encourage soft skills development for the learners?
7. What other activities do you think could be included in the paperless classroom, in order to enhance and maintain soft skills?
8. What do you know about Drama in Education?
9. To what extent do you think, using drama to teach in the paperless classroom, will yield a different teaching and learning experience?