



A Case Study on Blending Technology and Practical Pedagogy to Meet Generational Learning Needs

Melisa Mutsa Chawaremera¹  & Tshegofatso Precious Matsemela¹ 

¹Independent Institute of Education, Emeris, Faculty of Law, Johannesburg, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the integration of audio-visual media into legal education, with a focus on addressing generational learning needs in South Africa. Utilising a multi-cohort case study of final year LL.B students, it examines the pedagogical impact of supplementing some of the Law of Evidence and Litigation Techniques concepts with the Netflix Docuseries *Senzo: Murder of a Soccer Star*. Student feedback and researcher reflections revealed that multimedia learning enhanced comprehension, critical thinking, student interest, as well as engagement, particularly among the Generation Z students who identify as visual learners. However, the study also highlights challenges such as time constraints, recollection difficulties and limitations in access to the docuseries. Through engaging the literature on blended learning and generational pedagogy, the discussion of this study demonstrates that while technology cannot replace foundational legal reasoning, it can meaningfully supplement traditional methods of teaching when it is implemented with caution. The findings of this study suggest that a carefully balanced adoption of streaming content can enrich legal pedagogy and better align legal education with the realities of contemporary learners.

Keywords: Practical pedagogy, legal education, visual and audio media, generations, blended learning

Correspondence

Melisa Mutsa Chawaremera
Email:
mchawaremera@emeris.a
c.za

Publication History

Received:
4th June, 2025
Accepted:
12th November, 2025.
Published:
30th December, 2025.

To Cite this Article:

Chawaremera, Melisa
Mutsa, and Tshegofatso
Precious Matsemela. "Think-
Pair-Share Strategy and
Achievement in Difficult
Concepts in Chemistry
Education: A Scoping
Review." *Journal of
Education and Learning
Technology* 6, no. 12 (2025):
1466 - 1485.
[https://doi.org/10.38159/jel
t.202561219](https://doi.org/10.38159/jelt.202561219)

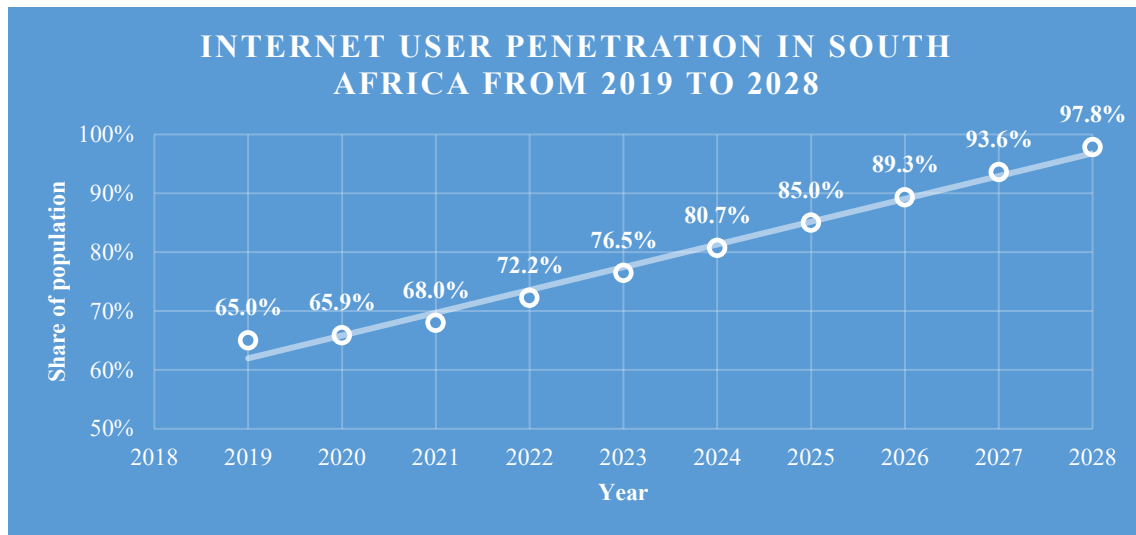
INTRODUCTION

Innovation in teaching and learning can be a critical mechanism that requires priority within the educational sector and specifically within tertiary education. It has been established that a mutual objective unites educators across different geographical spheres and levels of education, namely, to help students learn effectively.¹ In South Africa, the statistics of active social media users expanded nearly threefold within the past decade, reaching 28 million in 2022.² Internet penetration projections from

¹ Concordia University Texas. "3 Reasons Why Teachers Need to Use Technology in the Classroom." *Concordia University Texas*. Accessed December 10, 2023. <https://www.concordia.edu/blog/3-reasons-why-teachers-need-technology-in-the-classroom.html>.

² Statista. "Internet Usage in South Africa - Statistics & Facts." *Statista*. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/topics/10252/internet-usage-in-south-africa/#topicOverview>.

2019 to 2028 indicate an even steeper trajectory of digital integration into daily life.³ With tertiary students forming the demographic most active online, the lecturer environment faces heightened pressure to compete with the attention economy of social media.



*** Internet user penetration in South Africa from 2019 to 2028⁴*

Against this backdrop, the conundrum arising is that law schools are under increasing pressure to design pedagogy that is both academically rigorous and contextually relevant for a generation of digital-native students. Traditional didactic methods of teaching risk alienating learners accustomed to interactive technology driven environments. However, very importantly, the professional demands of legal education, particularly at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 8, require careful safeguarding of analytical reasoning and critical thinking. The aim of this study is therefore to investigate whether audio-visual media, specifically, streaming services, can supplement rather than substitute conventional legal pedagogy. To achieve this aim, the study pursues the following questions: (i) Should audio-visual tools (streaming services, specifically) be used as a teaching mechanism for legal education?; (ii) What benefits can be derived from integrating these tools, as revealed through student feedback and researcher reflection?; and (iii) What limitations and risks does this methodology present within the legal education fraternity?

To structure the discussion, this study will first examine the defining characteristics of the two generational cohorts currently shaping the majority of tertiary legal education, Generation Y and Generation Z. It will then explore innovative teaching methodologies that endorse blended learning as a mechanism for bridging generational learning needs. Thereafter, the case study will be presented, followed by an analysis of its results and a critical discussion that situates these findings within the existing body of literature.

Generational Learning Needs: Generation Y v Generation Z

³ Statista. "Internet User Penetration in South Africa from 2019 to 2028." *Statista*. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/484933/internet-user-reach-south-africa/>.

⁴ Statista. "Internet User Penetration in South Africa from 2019 to 2028."

It has been argued that, to enhance lecture effectiveness, both the complexity and method of delivering learning material should be tailored to the audience.⁵ In light of societal and generational shifts, educators must continually reflect on their teaching approaches by distinguishing between what fosters successful learning and what hinders it, in order to cultivate the most effective and supportive learning environment.⁶

“At least five different generations are identified in the modern world: a) The traditionalists (Silent Generation or the Greatest Generation), born between 1928 and 1944, who value authority and a top-down management approach, b) The Baby Boomer Generation, born between 1945 and 1965, who tend to be workaholics, c) Generation X, born between 1965 and 1979, a generation who is comfortable with authority and view the work-life balance as important, d) Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1995 and who generally grew up in prosperity and are technology savvy, e) Generation Z, born after 1995.”⁷

It remains diligent teaching practice for educators to understand the recipients of their educational content and an understanding of different generational classifications can aid in effective educational delivery. This research is cognisant of the fact that the generational classifications are guidelines, and the descriptions fit a substantial number of persons in the distinct demographics. However, this research acknowledges that these classifications are not a “one size fits all”. Therefore, descriptions and recommendations rendered will be to aid the majority demographics and do not purport to be the exhaustive solution. The generations that currently form the primary tertiary educational fraternities as of 2020 consist of learners forming part of the Generation Y and Generation Z cohorts.⁸

Understanding Generation Y

Researchers and the mainstream media institutions use the early 1980s as starting birth years and the mid-1990s as ending birth years, with the generation typically being defined as people born from 1981 to 1996.⁹ Based on a survey conducted in 2021, most South African internet users accessing the internet via their smartphones were aged 25-34 years.¹⁰ The former can be regarded as the individuals who mostly form part of the Generation Y demographic. As is apparent from the aforementioned extract from Cilliers, this generation is primarily known for being “technologically savvy”.¹¹ In addition to this observation, it has been submitted that this cohort of individuals is interested in creativity and endeavour to “work smart and not hard.”¹² Critical scholars have described Generation Y as persons who lose interest in passive presentation of concepts and gravitate more to being involved in learning and working processes to maximise interest and input from them.¹³ It is in light of this classification and understanding of the cohort that the exploration of non-traditional ways of teaching may be investigated in a bid to interact with the cohort and stimulate interest, which could yield bounteous results. In 2010, students of this cohort had only recently received the opportunity to use the internet to seek and obtain scholarly material and

⁵ P. Lenz, J.W. McCallister, A. Luks, T. Le, and H. Fessler, “Practical Strategies for Effective Lectures,” *Annals of the American Thoracic Society* 12, no. 4 (2015): 465–620, at 563.

⁶ The Art of Education University, “What You Need to Understand About Generation Z Students,” <https://theartofeducation.edu/2020/12/what-you-need-to-understand-about-generation-z-students/> (accessed December 14, 2023).

⁷ E. Cilliers, “The Challenge of Teaching Generation Z,” *International Journal of Social Sciences* 11, no. 3 (2017): 188–198, at 189–190.

⁸ A. Dolot, “The Characteristics of Generation Z,” *e-mentor Journal* 74, no. 2 (2018): 44–50, at 45

⁹ *The Economist*, “Generation Next: Millennials Will Outnumber Baby-Boomers in 2019,” <https://web.archive.org/web/20190315052954/https://worldin2019.economist.com/millennialsvboomers> (accessed January 15, 2024).

¹⁰ Statista, “Distribution of Internet Users Using a Smartphone to Access the Internet in South Africa in 2021, by Age,” <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1341191/share-of-internet-users-with-smartphone-in-south-africa-by-age/> (accessed November 20, 2023).

¹¹ Cilliers, “The Challenge of Teaching Generation Z,” 189–190.

¹² Jean Twenge, *Generation Me* (New York: Free Press, 2016), at 159.

¹³ Twenge, *Generation Me*, 159.

consequently, knowledge on how to effectively make use of this channel was limited.¹⁴ Nonetheless, this has since developed and guidelines to execute learning and assessment are being provided gradually.¹⁵ The genuine interest in this mechanism for learning remains a reality.¹⁶ Pursuant to this assertion, the extension of the use of the internet through streaming services, such as YouTube, Netflix and Showmax (specifically for legal education) can be explored further.

In essence, the above displays some of the key educational needs of the Generation Y demographic to require the following for learning and comprehension: (i) use of technology, (ii) active (interactive) learning and (iii) innovation/creativity.

Understanding Generation Z

Generation Z individuals (also known as “Zoomers”) consist of persons born approximately between 1997 and 2012.¹⁷ Wider classifications of the cohort state that this is the fraternity of individuals born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s, and they are categorised as individuals who are specifically well acquainted with the utilisation of the internet (and generally display comfort with the utilisation thereof).¹⁸ It has been established that this generation possesses several attributes, earning them some of the following dubs: “iGeneration”, “Gen Tech”, “Online Generation”, “Facebook Generation”, and several additional technology-related attributes.¹⁹ This generation has also been previously designated the title of “digital natives”.²⁰ Further categorisations suggest that this cohort of individuals work and learn better with the utilisation of digital tools, which, when absent, have posed challenges in their comprehension of work concepts or learning material, respectively.²¹ Some of the common traits of Generation Z individuals also include a propensity towards anxiety and a high drive to succeed, with the end goal of making money.²² Instant gratification has also been established as a key characteristic or enigma in current society, and this is inclusive of all generational cohorts as participants of the digitised fourth industrial revolution.²³

An elaborate example of the aforementioned can be established from the worldwide phenomenon of “TikToks (TM)” and “reels” that have vastly and abruptly taken over social, educational and work spaces.²⁴ With these, it was established that individuals engage better with visually presented material, and furthermore, the content must be presented in the most simplified and precise manner possible.²⁵ Longer presentations on the aforementioned platforms have been found to be less engaged, while precise

¹⁴ M. Asdaque, M. Khan, and S. Abbas Rizv, “Effect of Internet on the Academic Performance and Social Life of University Students in Pakistan,” *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 1, no. 1 (2010): 21–27, at 21.

¹⁵ R. Puspita and D. Rohedi, “The Impact of Internet Use for Students,” *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering* 306, no. 2 (2017): 306–311, at 307.

¹⁶ Puspita and Rohedi, “The Impact of Internet Use for Students,” 307.

¹⁷ Dolot, “The Characteristics of Generation Z,” 44.

¹⁸ Oxford University Press, *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

¹⁹ Lenka Kohnová, Jozef Papula, and Natália Salajová, “Generation Z: Education in the World of Digitization for the Future of Organizations,” in *Proceedings of the 15th International Technology, Education and Development Conference* (2021).

²⁰ Oxford Royale Academy, “7 Unique Characteristics of Generation Z,” *Oxford Royale Academy*, <https://www.oxford-royale.com/articles/7-unique-characteristics-generation-z/> (accessed November 7, 2023).

²¹ Dolot, “The Characteristics of Generation Z,” 45.

²² GWI, “7 Characteristics of Gen Z in 2023,” <https://blog.gwi.com/marketing/generation-z-characteristics/> (accessed February 15, 2023); and Dolot, “The Characteristic of Generation Z,” 45.

²³ Yuko Makoto Nakayama, “A Quick Bite and Instant Gratification: A Simulated Yelp Experiment on Consumer Review Information Foraging Behavior,” *Information Processing and Management* 58, no. 1 (2021): 1–13, at 3.

²⁴ Paul Jankowski, “Why Instagram™ Reels Will Beat TikTok™ Especially in the New Heartland,” *Forbes*, August 14, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauljankowski/2020/08/14/why-instagram-reels-will-beat-tiktok-especially-in-the-new-heartland/?sh=6b7a68362d27> (accessed August 14, 2023).

²⁵ Demand Sage, “36 Instagram™ Reels Statistics for 2024 (Detailed Insights),” <https://www.demandsage.com/instagram-reel-statistics/> (accessed November 29, 2023).

and simplified presentations receive more traction.²⁶ For contextualisation, the referral to the above becomes valuable as the above-mentioned insights shared on the “TikToks (TM)” and “reels” are primarily received from the generational group classified as Generation Z (as the majority consumers of the presentations of the “TikToks (TM)” and “reels”).

In summary, some of the core elements that can be inferred for aiding learning and comprehension for Generation Z encompass the following: (i) use of technology and stimulating digital tools, (ii) utilisation of teaching mechanisms that promote ultimate success and (iii) simplification of or aiding teaching mechanisms to diminish the manifestation of anxiety.

Innovation in Legal Pedagogy: Blended Learning and Audio-Visual Tools

Pursuant to the established characteristics of the student cohorts above, it becomes prudent to explore the meaning, necessity, and mechanisms for a better legal educational delivery. There are various ways of teaching and learning innovatively. These include blended learning, incorporating audio-visuals and the use of technology. Learning with technology refers to employing technology as a means of achieving the learning outcomes as set out in various modules.²⁷ Bozalek and Ngambi state:

“The primary consideration for learning with technologies should therefore start from an outcome of accomplishing meaningful learning, and work backwards, asking pedagogical questions, interrogating strategies of teaching and evaluating the affordances of technologies to support this end.”²⁸

Learning with technology encompasses the integration thereof in the learning process in legal education. This can be through using available Learning Management Systems such as Blackboard Learn (TM),²⁹ or incorporating various collaborative platforms such as Padlet (TM),³⁰ Microsoft Forms (TM),³¹ or Flipgrid (TM).³²

Blended learning is defined as ‘the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face experiences with technology-enhanced learning experiences.’³³ Various blended methods of teaching that can be employed within the classroom can include, but are not limited to, using mobile devices or laptops to carry out teaching in lectures or holding flip classrooms.³⁴ A flipped classroom is where a lecturer gives the students an opportunity to engage with the material and present it during class to allow for a deeper understanding of the concepts.³⁵ This can be through the use of surveys, polls, quizzes, discussion forums, etc. This promotes collaborative interaction between the lecturer and the students, as well as amongst the

²⁶ Forbes, “Five Insights into the Popularity of Short-Form Video Content,”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2022/09/06/five-insights-into-the-popularity-of-short-form-video-content/?sh=7854ddef79e5> (accessed September 6, 2023).

²⁷ W.R. Kilfoil, ed., *Moving beyond the Hype: A Contextualised View of Learning with Technology in Higher Education* (Pretoria: Universities South Africa, 2015), 3.

²⁸ Vivienne Bozalek and Dick Ngambi, “The Context of Learning with Technology,” in *Moving beyond the Hype: A Contextualised View of Learning with Technology in Higher Education*, ed. W.R. Kilfoil (Pretoria: Universities South Africa, 2015), 3.

²⁹ Anthology, “Blackboard Learn: Designed with the Modern Learner in Mind,” <https://www.anthology.com/en-emea/products/teaching-and-learning/learning-effectiveness/blackboard-learn> (accessed January 9, 2024).

³⁰ Padlet, “Padlet: Beauty Will Save the Work,” <https://padlet.com/> (accessed January 9, 2024).

³¹ Microsoft, “Microsoft Forms: Free Tool to Create Online Surveys, Forms, Quizzes and Questionnaires,” <https://forms.office.com/> (accessed January 9, 2024).

³² Flip, “Flipgrid: Personalized Learning Using the Power of Video,” <https://info.flip.com/en-us.html> (accessed January 9, 2024).

³³ A. van der Merwe et al., “Blended Learning with Technology,” in *Moving beyond the Hype: A Contextualised View of Learning with Technology in Higher Education*, ed. W.R. Kilfoil (Pretoria: Universities South Africa, 2015), 11.

³⁴ Van der Merwe, “Blended Learning with Technology,” 13.

³⁵ Van der Merwe, “Blended Learning with Technology,” 15.

students themselves. Therefore, blended learning is achieved through ‘blending online or digital components with face-to-face instruction.’³⁶

Lastly, audio-visuals are the materials that are used to convey meaning without depending solely on verbal symbols and language, as they act as an aid to further learning and understanding.³⁷ These may relate to the use of docuseries’, movies, pictures, etc.³⁸ According to Shabiralyani *et al.*, visual aids make learning more interesting and aid in disseminating knowledge to students.³⁹ Audio-visuals may be used when students are learning with technology or through blended learning, as discussed and defined in the preceding paragraphs.

Employing the use of technology in the classroom is not a new phenomenon; audio-visuals have been employed for decades in the form of slides or educational videos. Within the scope of lecturing law and for the purposes of this study, the emphasis is on how this method of teaching can be used differently to assist law students in not only grasping the material at hand but also being able to apply it. This does not, in any way, take away from the lecturer’s duty to instil the much-needed knowledge that will equip a future legal practitioner. The purpose is to emphasise the supplementary nature of technology to legal education and how one may support the other. Kalyani and Rajasekaran also place emphasis on audio-visual tools being supplementary to textbooks.⁴⁰ An innovative way to bring this about is to employ streaming services as an audio-visual tool that students can use to improve their critical thinking skills.

The implementation thereof can assist the student in grasping the learning material more efficiently. In addition, it can encourage engagement between the lecturer and the students. This can include watching a docuseries or documentaries on high-profile cases, especially those broadcast on media outlets such as Netflix (TM), Showmax (TM), Disney Plus (TM) or even YouTube (TM) (which may prove more convenient due to its accessibility). One such case study given to the students followed this route. This aspect will be discussed in more detail below. This is where the differing generational needs of students also come into play. This innovative method of teaching assists students in “*opening new channels of intellectual stimulation... which meets the needs of the new generation*”,⁴¹ thus making it imperative for lecturers to also utilise available platforms when lecturing so that they may convey the curriculum to the students in a way that is captivating and engaging, given the needs of their target audience.

Fundamentally, legal educators have the discretion to decide which blended methods of teaching and/or audio-visuals will be essential in aiding their students’ comprehension of the curriculum.⁴² Essentially, the proposed technology utilised in legal education must support the students and be a supplementary means of accomplishing important class-related objectives.⁴³

THE CASE STUDY

In a bid to integrate the specific generational needs established above and the innovative teaching methodologies established, the following case study was formulated to assess whether a balance exists

³⁶ Learning A-Z, “Blended Learning,” <https://www.learninga-z.com/site/company/what-we-do/blended-learning> (accessed January 9, 2024).

³⁷ Chinyere Chukwueke, “Availability and Utilization of Audio-Visuals for Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study,” *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology* 15, no. 2 (2022): 45–56, at 46.

³⁸ Chukwueke, “Availability and Utilization of Audio-Visuals for Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study,” 46.

³⁹ Ghulam Shabiralyani et al., “ESL Learners’ Impact of Visual Aids in Enhancing the Learning Process: Case Research,” *Journal of Education and Practice* 6, no. 19 (2015): 226–234, at 226.

⁴⁰ D. Kalyani and K. Rajasekaran, “Innovative Teaching and Learning,” *Journal of Applied and Advanced Research* 3, no. 1 (2018): S23–S25, at S23.

⁴¹ Kalyani and Rajasekaran, “Innovative Teaching and Learning,” S23.

⁴² Kalyani and Rajasekaran, “Innovative Teaching and Learning,” S24.

⁴³ Susan Canick, “Infusing Technology Skills into the Law School Curriculum,” *Capital University Law Review* 42 (2014): 663–708, at 678.

in supplementing legal education through a streaming service and catering for specific generational educational needs. In compiling this study, the necessary ethical considerations were taken into account, and all participants partook in the task voluntarily. The case study consisted of a task given to the Emeris, Ruimsig Campus, final year LLB students enrolled for the Law of Evidence and Litigation Techniques module (NQF Level 8). The first cohort of students was assessed in 2023. However, due to the small size of both the 2023 and the 2024 cohorts, the study was extended to include the 2025 cohort. The decision allowed for a more representative sample, particularly of Generation Z students who currently form the majority in higher education.

The Task

The students were instructed to watch the Netflix Docuseries titled *Senzo: Murder of a Soccer Star*. Subsequent to watching this docuseries, they had to answer questions that tested their ability to practically apply their knowledge of concepts taught in the Law of Evidence and Litigation Techniques module to the docuseries. Thereafter, they were to render personal feedback on the effectiveness of the series in aiding their understanding of concepts taught in the module. The rationale of the case study was to conduct research into whether the airings of the court cases, or the media reporting on court cases, can influence the ability of law students to comprehend legal concepts, considering the demographics of the students (being Generation Y and Generation Z). Legal studies tests some essential skills to establish student competency to be eligible to be a professional within the field. Amongst the mechanisms used to test this competency are:

- (i) the ability to practically apply the law to practical sets of facts and
- (ii) the ability to display critical thinking.⁴⁴

The exercise in the lecture

As briefly outlined above, the students had to answer questions which stemmed from the content that was covered in lectures during the course of the semester. The questions were as follows:

- a. Which types of evidence did you identify from the docuseries? Name and explain these.
- b. Under what circumstances will the types of evidence mentioned in (a) be admissible?
- c. Discuss what you understand about the rights of an accused person in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- d. Accused No. 2 made a confession. Explain what a confession is and briefly provide a summary of his confession.
- e. Provide one or two examples of evidence that may have been obtained unconstitutionally.
- f. A lot of statements were taken by the police/investigating team. Provide reasons why these will not be readily admitted by a court of law in certain circumstances.

The above questions opened a discussion with the students, which was engaging and allowed the students to apply their critical thinking skills based on what they could recall from the docuseries.

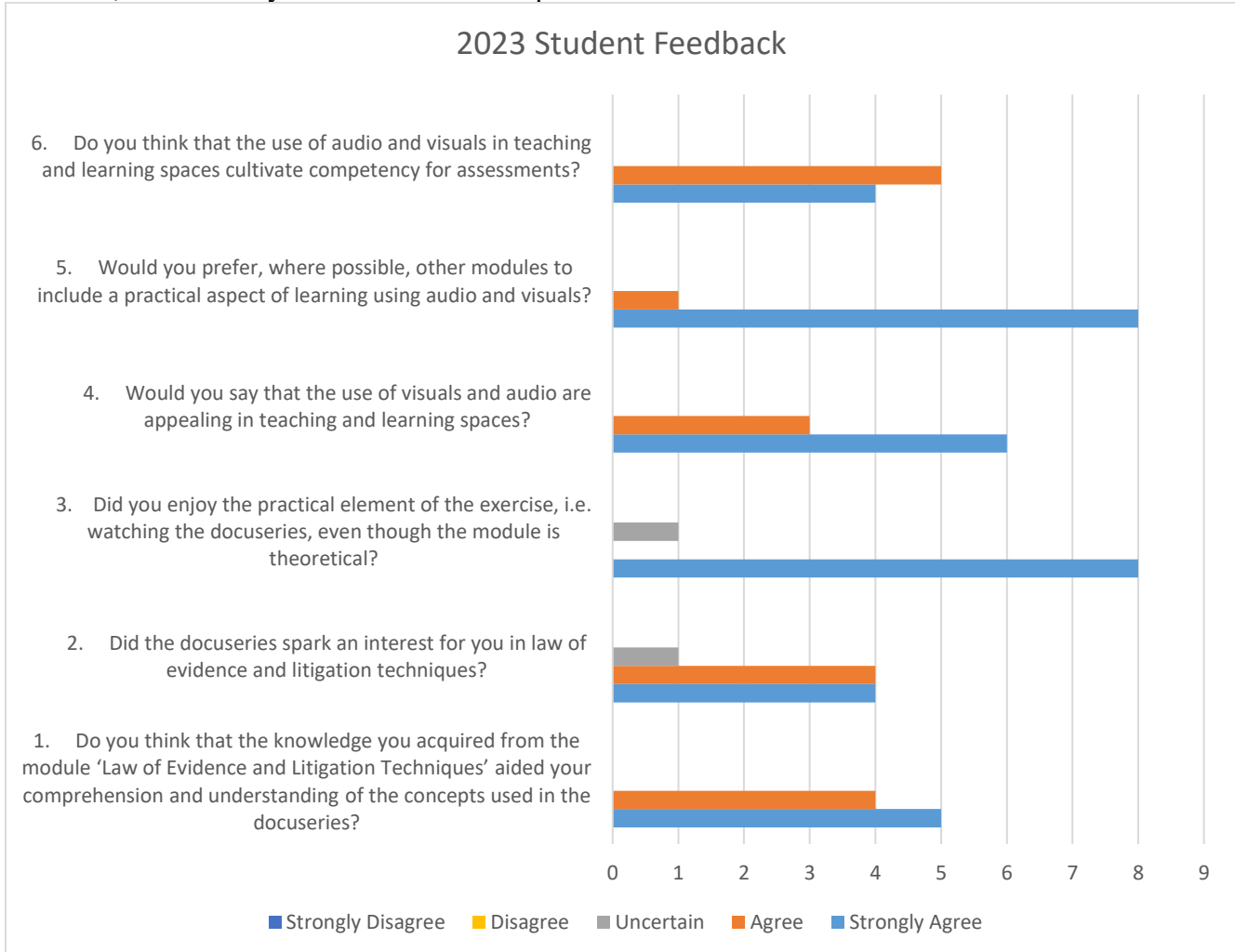
The Feedback from the Students

The feedback from the students was collected using a questionnaire where the students could indicate, on a scale of 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', their feedback as it pertained to the task that was completed with them. A total of 9 students participated in the case study in 2023. For 2023, the summary of the different generational groups was as follows:

⁴⁴ M.A. Du Plessis and M. Welgemoed, "Training for Legal Practice – Towards Effective Teaching Methodologies for Procedural Law Modules," *Obiter* 43, no. 2 (2022): 205–233, at 205.

Details	Nr. of students
Generation Y participants	5
Generation Z participants	2
Did not indicate category	2

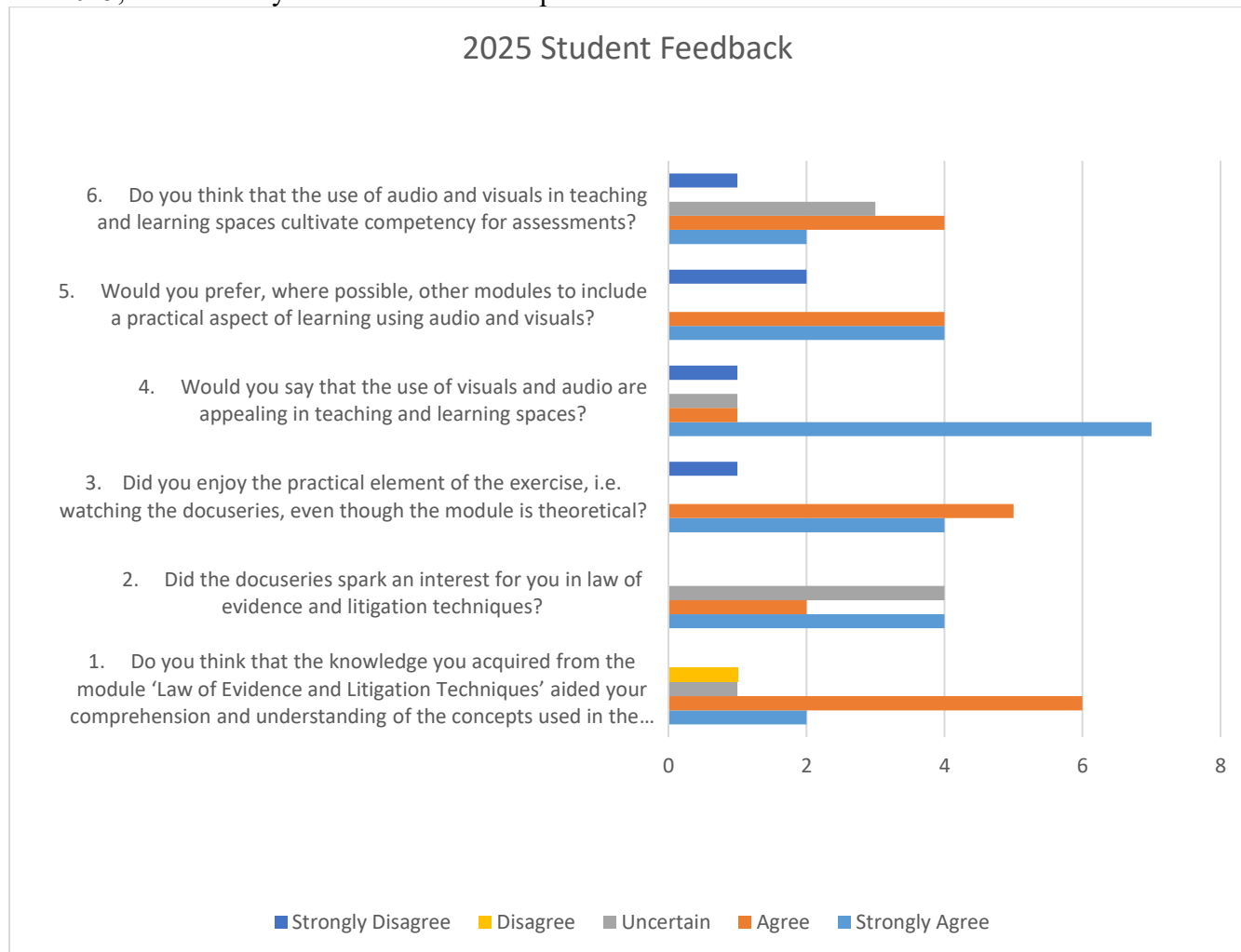
For 2023, the summary of the results of the questionnaire was as follows:



For 2025, the summary of the different generational groups was as follows:

Details	Nr. of students
Generation Y participants	2
Generation Z participants	14
Did not indicate category	0

For 2025, the summary of the results of the questionnaire was as follows:



Merits of the exercise

Interesting and enjoyable

The participants in both cohorts indicated that they enjoyed the exercise as it allowed them to learn from a different perspective. They were allowed to engage with the views of others, and this highlighted some interesting points which, in certain instances, they did not consider. The exercise, to a degree, proved that different views can be cultivated from the same content, thus allowing for deeper engagement and critical thinking.

Engaging and interactive

The exercise proved to be engaging and interactive as the participants shared their views with one another and the researchers. It became evident that some of the participants were not only relying on the docuseries alone to answer the questions, but also on the knowledge previously obtained in the module throughout the semester.

Beneficial

Some of the participants found the exercise beneficial, noting that they identified as audio-visual learners and often struggled to engage with traditional, text-heavy learning methods. The use of the docuseries allowed them to visualise legal processes and to contextualise theoretical concepts in a more accessible

and relatable manner. The multi-sensory approach enhanced their comprehension of key principles within the module, particularly evidentiary rules. While the 2023 cohort provided useful preliminary insights, it was the 2025 cohort (comprising a larger number of Generation Z students) that offered more robust and reflective feedback. They expressed that the integration of audio-visual content not only facilitated better understanding but that it also increased their motivation in the subject. The few students in the 2025 cohort who did not watch the docuseries expressed in their feedback that they were intrigued by the discussions in the lecture session. One student said they were now, “...eager to go and look up the docuseries,” while one said, “... I am definitely going to watch the docuseries now.” The 2025 cohort responses suggest that the incorporation of technology-driven, practice-oriented materials into higher education aligns well with the learning preferences of contemporary students and may contribute meaningfully to curriculum development.

Researcher Reflections on the merits of the exercise

Some of the merits identified by the researchers (but not mentioned by the participants) were that the students were made responsible for their own learning, which motivated them to partake in the exercise, and that they needed to set time aside for the exercise, in order to be able to engage with the group in the discussion. Also, the students were able to critically apply the knowledge already traditionally taught to them, which indicated a concerted collaborative effort to understand the work through blended learning that made use of audio-visual aids.

Demerits of the exercise

Time-consuming

While the majority of the students acknowledged the value of the docuseries in aiding their understanding of the law of evidence principles, a recurring concern by the participants (particularly the 2023 cohort) was the time-consuming nature of the exercise. These students expressed that the requirement to watch several episodes in preparation for the task placed additional pressure on their existing workload. For this cohort, the perceived lack of time efficiency detracted somewhat from the educational value of the experience. In contrast, the 2025 cohort appeared more receptive to the length of the content. Although they noted that the docuseries required a significant time investment, their feedback suggested a more relaxed attitude toward this aspect. This may reflect shifting generational preferences or increased familiarity with consuming educational content via streaming platforms. Nevertheless, the issue of time commitment highlights the need for careful structuring of media-based exercises to ensure that they remain accessible and manageable within the academic calendar.

Recollection challenges

Another notable challenge that emerged from the exercise was the difficulty of recollection, particularly in relation to a question about a confession (by Accused Number 2) discussed in the docuseries. Some participants indicated that the docuseries, while beneficial for contextual understanding, proved to be a limitation when students were required to retrieve exact factual sequences. This specificity, in the context of a visually and narratively dense resource, complexified the task, and many have inadvertently disadvantaged students who struggled with information retention over longer viewing periods. This feedback was shared equally by both cohorts, and it suggests a need to refine future exercises by either narrowing the scope of the questions or providing guiding prompts to help the students track critical legal moments more efficiently.

Access Limitations

In each cohort, one participant indicated that they were unable to watch the docuseries due to not having a paid subscription to Netflix. In the case of both participants, they deliberately chose not to subscribe to Netflix. They cited concerns with distractions and the potential of Netflix to interfere with their academic focus. While this reflects a conscious decision to manage study environments, it nonetheless created a barrier to engaging with the exercise as intended. Additionally, this study acknowledges that socio-economic challenges, such as affordability of subscription services and consistent internet access, can hinder full participation in technology-enhanced learning activities. These limitations reestablish the essentiality for inclusive teaching strategies that account for disparities in digital access and offer alternative means of engagement for students who may be marginalised by the digital divide.

Researcher Reflections on the demerits of the exercise

Some of the demerits identified by the researchers, but again not mentioned by the participants, were that loadshedding may have an effect on network activity in certain areas (including Wi-Fi connections). Additionally, students with financial constraints may be unable to engage in the assigned task. Furthermore, a significant risk is posed with tasks of this nature, as some students might incorrectly substitute traditional learning for the more captivating audio and visual presentations. Another risk presented by the task and its format in the form of a 5-part docuseries is that students with underdeveloped critical thinking skills may fail to sift through and distinguish between the relevant and material information versus the purely dramatic and immaterial information. However, one could also argue that the lengthy details may also assist in developing practical critical thinking.

Grey Areas

Formulating an exercise of the nature of the case study may, in some instances, demand a considerable amount of time to be allocated to the formulation of the exercise by the academic. While this can be an issue of no concern, some considerations that may need further enquiry are the following: (i) Does the time spent developing the exercise equate to the success outcome of the objective of the exercise? (ii) Is there a matching student assessment weighting that will be allocated to the task, given the time spent developing the exercise? Furthermore, the time spent partaking in an exercise of this nature may either be embraced or resented by the students who are assigned the exercise. In this regard, an important consideration for further assessment and reflection could be the consideration of the following: (i) Does the student have sufficient time to engage in the exercise, given their enrolment load? (ii) Is there enough incentive given, in terms of marks, to encourage sufficient student participation? (iii) Is the exercise interesting enough to capture attention for an otherwise generally long period of time? Lastly, some streaming services have been known to set expiration dates on the availability of content on their platforms. The revisiting or future referral for exercises of the nature of the case study becomes unpredictable as a result of the uncertainty.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this case study reaffirm the significant potential of blended learning to bridge generational learning divides in legal education. Consistent with Cilliers' and Dolot's characterisation of Generation Y and Generation Z as technologically inclined and engagement-driven, the feedback from participants demonstrated a strong preference for interactive, visual modes of learning.⁴⁵ Students across both cohorts reported that the docuseries exercise not only contextualised abstract evidentiary rules but also enabled them to visualise legal processes in a way that traditional lectures often fall short. This aligns with

⁴⁵ Dolot, "The Characteristics of Generation Z,": Cilliers, "The Challenge of Teaching Generation Z,"189–190.

Blissenden's argument that technology-enhanced pedagogy can facilitate deeper comprehension in law classrooms.⁴⁶

However, the study also highlights the nuanced challenges of technology integration. Time constraints, particularly for the 2023 cohort, echo concerns raised in Bozalek and Ngambi's reflections on blended learning, which caution against uncritical adoption of technology without regard to curriculum pacing and workload.⁴⁷ Similarly, recollection difficulties reveal the risk that narrative-rich media may overwhelm learners with extraneous detail, a concern shared by Shabiralyani *et al.*, who warn that visual aids must be carefully structured to maintain pedagogical focus.⁴⁸ The limitations around access underscore a persistent socio-economic divide in South African higher education. Chukwueke's research on Nigerian universities parallels these findings, showing that technological innovation can inadvertently exacerbate inequality if affordability and infrastructure are not adequately considered.⁴⁹ This resonates with broader digital inclusion scholarship, and it serves a key role in reminding legal educators that innovation must remain grounded in principles of equity as well as accessibility.⁵⁰

Despite these challenges, the reflections of the 2025 cohort reveal that streaming-based exercises resonate strongly with Generation Z students, whose learning preferences are shaped by video culture and digital interactivity. Importantly, the case study indicates that when guided by structured assessment, students were able to resist passive consumption and instead engage critically with the legal concepts embedded in the docuseries. This finding suggests that technology can indeed cultivate, rather than dilute, core legal reasoning skills. However, it is imperative to note that this is provided that educators frame audio-visual exercises as supplements and not as substitutes.

In sum, this study feeds into an emerging consensus that innovation in legal pedagogy must be both student-centred and context sensitive. The generational engagement observed in this case study supports a cautious optimism for blended learning. This is provided that inclusivity and balance are foregrounded. Technology can certainly enrich legal education and prepare students for practice in the digital age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The established insights (merits, demerits and grey areas) from the research inform the following recommendations:

Discretion will be key when exercising any form of innovative teaching. Students with less interest in engaging with case law through reading may, as a matter of fact, blatantly substitute the reading and engagement required with streamed docuseries like the one provided in the case study. Additionally, in the absence of adequate critical thinking, a student presented with an exercise of this nature may fail to sift through the information and determine fact from fiction, as well as what is valuable to legal education and future application. It is therefore encouraged that the academic formulating an exercise of this nature exercises discretion in the allocation of a task of this nature. One of the factors that can inform the discretion of the academic would be the level of study of the student group. Ideally, a more senior level of study group may have the ability to understand the emphasis on supplementation rather than replacement of study material. Additionally, the former may also possess the ability to sift through fictitious and irrelevant or immaterial information in the visual/audio presentation.

⁴⁶ Michael Blissenden, . "Teaching Undergraduate Law Students in the 21st Century – Pedagogy in a Technological Era." *Athens Journal of Law* 4, no. 1 (2015): 213–220 at 218.

⁴⁷ Bozalek and Ngambi, "The Context of Learning with Technology,"3.

⁴⁸ Shabiralyani et al., "ESL Learners' Impact of Visual Aids in Enhancing the Learning Process: Case Research," 226.

⁴⁹ Chukwueke, "Availability and Utilization of Audio-Visuals for Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Universities: A Case Study," at 46.

⁵⁰ M M Chawaremera, 'Algorithmic Teaching, Fading Thought? Rethinking Engagement in the AI Era' in Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Education Research (Academic Conferences and Publishing International Ltd, 2025) at 21.

The discovery that some students in the case study did not engage in the exercise as per the instructions is an unfortunate finding that brings to light an important consideration. An academic developing an exercise of this nature needs to have full consciousness of the setting of the lecture group. An informed insight into the setting is imperative, and this means the academic must establish the following: (i) is the exercise reasonably accessible to all students in the group? (ii) Does the implementation of the exercise amount to any student exclusion? In the case study, a presumption was made that students of the Generation Y and Generation Z cohorts would be interested in actively engaging in a Netflix-sourced exercise. A further presumption was made that they would have pre-existing access to the platform. Both presumptions did not fully premise the criteria now formulated by the authors in points (i) and (ii) above.

As a form of reflective practice in teaching and learning, feedback is a key recommendation in academic practice. In an instance where an exercise of a similar nature to the case study is prescribed to a student group, it will be invaluable for the academic to receive feedback from the group on the exercise (pursuant to completion of the exercise). The insights rendered by the student group will support further development and reflection, which allows for a best practice in this method of rendering legal education.

The reality of the expiration of material on streaming services warrants the exercise of care in selecting a show or docuseries to supplement teaching and learning. Some proactive measures would consist of (i) an enquiry into the duration of the validity of the presentation on the streaming services and (ii) ensuring that when expiration dates are not determinable, a confirmation of the availability of the presentation is made before a task is allocated to a student group.

CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine whether audio-visual media could effectively supplement legal education in South Africa while catering to the generational learning needs of today's students. By analysing the characteristics of Generation Y and Generation Z, exploring innovative blended learning strategies, and presenting a case study involving the Netflix docuseries *Senzo: Murder of a Soccer Star*, this research has shown that technology, when employed thoughtfully, can enrich legal pedagogy. Student feedback confirmed that multimedia resources can increase engagement, comprehension, critical thinking and motivation. However, challenges such as time constraints, difficulties in recollection, and socio-economic barriers highlight the need for careful planning and inclusivity. The discussion situated these findings within broader pedagogical literature and it emphasised that while streaming content and other multimedia tools resonate strongly with digital-native learners, they must remain supplementary to traditional forms of legal education that cultivate critical reasoning skills. The contribution of this research lies in demonstrating a practical pathway to aligning legal pedagogy with contemporary learning preferences without compromising professional standards. Ultimately, the findings support a cautious yet optimistic endorsement of blended teaching and learning as a dynamic means to prepare industry-ready legal practitioners in the digital age.

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ABOUT AUTHORS

Melisa Chawaremera is the Head of Law at Emeris, Ruimsig Campus, South Africa. Her role in academic leadership has prompted her to conduct research and start dialogue on how to best cultivate industry-ready legal professionals in South Africa. Melisa has engaged in national and international conferencing as well as authoring of journal articles and book chapters in legal education pedagogy. She brings a wealth of expertise in legal practice with a special focus on Tax Law, Constitutional Law and Administrative Law. As a Forensic Practitioner, she has made significant contributions to the field, including pivotal research for a landmark case in a Southern African country in 2014. In 2017, Melisa transitioned from her role as Forensic Division Manager with a consulting law firm in Sandton, Johannesburg, to fully immerse herself in her passion for legal education. Melisa collaborates with multiple charitable organisations to support children and women in need, aiming to promote social justice. With just over a decade of experience in academia, she is dedicated to educating future legal professionals. Melisa has academic publications in areas including decolonisation, African customary law, education and legal education, aspects of teaching and learning, corporate law and social justice. Melisa supervises and externally marks LL.M papers for the University of Johannesburg and the Johannesburg Business School, further demonstrating her commitment to legal education and research. She possesses an excellent grasp of aspects of social justice and endeavours to further critical discussions to uphold it through creating a deeper understanding of indigenous knowledge systems and corporate law. She holds an LL.M and an LL.B Degree, both from the University of Johannesburg. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Law Degree with the University of Witwatersrand.

Tshegofatso Matsemela is a Law Lecturer at Emeris, Ruimsig Campus, South Africa. She holds her highest qualification, an LL.M, from the University of the Free State with specialisation in Labour Law and has completed several professional development courses through the Law Society of South Africa's Legal Education and Development division including Introduction to Medical Law (2021), Marketing (2022), Client Care (2023) and Basic Conveyancing (2025). Since joining higher education in 2019, she has lectured on the Human Resources qualification at the Central University of Technology, Free State (Welkom campus) and on the Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Commerce in Law qualifications at Emeris. Her teaching philosophy centers on active student participation, fostering an inclusive and collaborative learning environment that encourages discussion, debate and critical thinking by integrating current events, case law and technology into her lessons ensuring learning remains dynamic and relevant. She believes that effective teaching extends beyond content delivery; it is about mentorship, support and feedback. She emphasises diligence, accountability and ethical conduct when in class as these are important values for aspiring legal practitioners to possess. She incorporates creative methods of teaching and learning, such as, making use of interactive quizzes, games, visual learning activities and role-plays to make legal concepts more comprehensible. She often engages in reflective practice from peer reviews and student feedback as a demonstration to her commitment to growth. She is currently pursuing an LL.D Degree with the University of the Free State.