

Post-COVID-19 Teaching and Learning Strategies in South African Schools



Benjamin Damoah¹ & Bunmi Isaiah Omodan¹

¹ Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a total shutdown of global economies and education institutions to lessen the spread of the virus. Due to strict compliance with safety protocols, educational institutions were duty-bound to shift from traditional face-to-face to virtual classroom teaching and learning strategies. This new teaching approach was unanimously embraced and adopted by all institutions globally. The easing of COVID-19 restrictions has led to the re-opening of mainstream schools. As a result, the study focused on teaching strategies adopted by educators after the lockdown. This study employed an interpretive paradigm anchored on the opportunity to learn (OTL) theory. Teaching and learning strategy is one of the key variables grounded in the OTL. Critical issues emerged from this conceptual paper. Among these was the lack of uniform teaching and learning methods approved by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in the post-COVID-19 era. The teaching approach adopted during the national shutdown mostly benefited learners from affluent homes, lack of digital learning and teaching support systems disadvantaged learners from poor communities. This study recommended, among others, the provision of adequate online teaching resources for implementing blended teaching and learning methods in South African schools.

Correspondence
Benjamin Damoah
Email: bdamoah@wsu.ac.za

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INTRODUCTION

The global COVID-19 outbreak affected educational sectors worldwide.¹ On 31 December 2019, the outbreak was first discovered in Wuhan, China. To flatten the curve and control illness transmission, handwashing Sanitizing, face masks, social distancing, and lockdown were measures implemented worldwide as public health interventions.²

¹ Seble Tadesse and Worku Muluye, "The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Education System in Developing Countries: A Review," *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 08, no. 10 (2020): 159–70, <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2020.810011>.

² Sumitra Pokhrel and Roshan Chhetri, "A Literature Review on Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Teaching and Learning," *Higher Education for the Future* 8, no. 1 (January 19, 2021): 133–41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2347631120983481>.

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic after it infected more than 118,000 persons in 114 countries in three months.³ As of 16 June 2022, there have been 535,248,141 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,313,229 deaths. A total of 11,902,271,619 vaccine doses have been administered globally.⁴ Omodan, argues that COVID-19 has created devastation throughout the world owing to its unrestrained expansion to practically every country, including South Africa.⁵ School closures had a negative effect on children's education. The desire to resume school was motivated by factors such as allowing learners academic progression; access to essential services, nourishment, and child welfare, such as violence against children; Well-being, both social and psychological; access to credible knowledge on how to keep themselves and others safe and lowering the likelihood of non-return to school.⁶

The COVID-19 pandemic's potential effects on students' lives is determined not just by their stage of education and course of study but also by where they are in their curriculum.⁷ On 5 March 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was detected in South Africa.⁸ More than a year later, on 15 June 2022, the total number of tests conducted had risen to 25,537,597, with positive cases of 3,981,739 and 3,861,877 recoveries. The death toll had risen to 101,576, with 18,286 active cases.⁹ Like many other nations worldwide, South Africa undertook strict pandemic preventive actions to halt the virus's transmission. Two emergency governmental advisory bodies were formed to cope with the problem. Based on the recommendations of these committees, South Africa's President pronounced COVID-19 a national disaster on 15 March 2020.¹⁰

On 18 March 2020, all schools across the country were closed as part of the initial response to COVID-19 infections. Much of the educational sector stayed closed throughout the period. The DBE intimated that, while learners were at home, provincial education departments, districts, and schools were encouraged to take advantage of the experience by ensuring that learners participate in established supportive programmes such as the Read to Lead programme, maths buddies, productive holiday assignments, and so on, under the supervision and guidance of parents and the broader community. This will be aided through the availability of workbooks, worksheets, and readers, among other things.¹¹ This shifted teaching from the traditional classroom to virtual interactive platforms during the national lockdown in South Africa.¹² Teachers employed different teaching strategies to catch up during the national lockdown in South Africa; many resorted to the use of Zoom, go-to-meeting and WhatsApp interactive virtual platforms to engage their students.

The education sector employed two learning methods to ensure the continuity of academic activities. There were two possibilities for learning: digital learning and self-learning. These efforts were met with several failures, impeding the strategy's effectiveness. Because of the crisis's

³ WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard. World Health Organization (2022).

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

⁴ WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard.

⁵ Bunmi Isaiah Omodan, "Virtual Management of Students' Unrest During the COVID-19 New Normal: The Need for an Innovative Approach," *Journal of Culture and Values in Education* 5, no. 1 (March 25, 2022): 1–12,

<https://doi.org/10.46303/jcve.2022.2>.

⁶ WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard.

⁷ Sir John Daniel, "Education and the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Prospects* 49, no. 1–2 (October 20, 2020): 91–96,

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09464-3>.

⁸ Crain Soudien, Vijay Reddy, and Jacqueline Harvey, "The Impact of COVID-19 on a Fragile Education System: The Case of South Africa," in *Primary and Secondary Education During Covid-19*, ed. Fernando M. Reimers, 1st ed. (NY, Manhattan: Springer, Charm, 2022), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354637370_The_Impact_of_COVID-19_on_a_Fragile_Education_System_The_Case_of_South_Africa.

⁹ Department of Health, "Update On Covid-19 (Wednesday 15 June 2022) - SA Corona Virus Online Portal," COVID-19 Statistics in South Africa, 2022, <https://sacoronavirus.co.za/2022/06/15/update-on-COVID-19-wednesday-15-june-2022/>.

¹⁰ Soudien et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on a Fragile Education System."

¹¹ Department of Basic Education, "National Department of Education Annual Report 2020/2021 Financial Year."

(Pretoria, 2021), https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202110/dbe-annual-report-202021.pdf.

¹² Omodan, "Virtual Management of Students' Unrest during the COVID-19 New Normal," 1–12.

immediacy, there was little time to develop an implementation strategy. Educators and students were placed into a learning model with no prior experience.¹³ Although it was difficult for both educators and parents, wealthy schools and families could maintain learning via the use of virtual learning technologies. Students from affluent backgrounds with access to the necessary resources finished their syllabus through online classes, either live online teaching or uploaded recorded lessons.¹⁴ However, many low-income schools lack the resources necessary to deliver good online instruction.¹⁵ Many students from township or rural homes lacked the necessary virtual learning materials. According to the 2018 general household survey, 22 per cent of homes had access to a computer, but just 10 per cent had internet connection.¹⁶ According to Spaul and Van der Meer, 90 per cent of South African households have cell phones and a 60 per cent internet connectivity rate on their mobile phones.¹⁷

The availability of the COVID-19 vaccine has resulted in the re-opening of previously closed educational facilities. According to government gazettes relating to official school re-opening dates, learners in grades 7 and 12 were officially authorised to attend school from 8 June 2020, followed by grades R, 6 and 11 from 6 July 2020,. However, the gazettes allowed for variations from the phased return schedule depending on a school's capacity to follow COVID-19 regulations and consent from the province's Head of Department.¹⁸ These blueprints were altered several times. Schools were closed again on 24 July, even though five grades had returned in reaction to an increase in COVID-19 cases and fatalities, as well as criticism from unions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) asserted that disparities were once again visible in the opening and closing processes.¹⁹ The closure of schools affected children in underprivileged areas the most, notably regarding access to safety, nourishment, and education offered at school. Schools in affluent communities were more likely to request the early return of additional grades to school or to continue with virtual learning or well-supported learning at home. As a result, the opening and closing schools had socioeconomic effects.²⁰

According to a survey conducted by the South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU), two-thirds of pupils from poorer homes received little or no contact from their teachers during school closures.²¹ Spaul and Van der Berg argued that 18 per cent of all children in the school-age group were in families without an adult caretaker throughout the day.²² Furthermore, without teachers' interaction or adult supervision, many African language mother-tongue learners would have been unable to manage the English language in which most of the lessons would have been given. The DBE drafted proposed teaching and learning recovery strategies for the post-COVID-19 schooling era. This

¹³ Spyridon Doukakis and Evita C. Alexopoulos, "Distance Learning for Secondary Education Students. The Role of Educational Neuroscience," in *The Role of Educational Neuroscience* (Springer Nature, 2020), 160–68, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-60735-7_17.

¹⁴ Soudien et al., "The Impact of COVID-19 on a Fragile Education System."

¹⁵ Rubeena Parker, Katherine Morris, and Jane Hofmeyr, *Education, Inequality and Innovation in the Time of COVID-19* (Johannesburg: JET Education Services, 2020), <https://www.jet.org.za/resources/theme-9-final-july-2020-parker-et-al.pdf>.

¹⁶ Statistics South Africa, "Work & Labour Force," 2022, https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=737&id=1.

¹⁷ Nic Spaul and Servaas Van der Berg, "Counting the Cost: COVID-19 School Closures in South Africa and Its Impact on Children," *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 10, no. 1 (December 7, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v10i1.924>.

¹⁸ Debra Shepherd and Nompumelelo Mohohlwane, *The Impact of COVID-19 in Education-More than a Year of Disruption*, vol. 5 (National Income Dynamics (NIDS)-Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM) Wave, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-568605/v1>.

¹⁹ UNESCO, "One Year into COVID-19 Education Disruption: Where Do We Stand? | UNESCO," 2021, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/one-year-covid-19-education-disruption-where-do-we-stand>.

²⁰ Ursula Hoadley, "Schools in the Time of COVID-19: Impacts of the Pandemic on Curriculum," Resep Non-Economic Working Paper, Stellenbosch University. (Cape Town, 2020), <https://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COVIDCURRICULUM-WORKING-PAPER-FORMATTED-1.pdf>.

²¹ SADTU, "The Challenge of Going Back to School-Survey 2," accessed October 26, 2022, <https://sadt.org.za/sites/default/files/docs/survey-full-report.pdf>.

²² Spaul and Van der Berg, "Counting the Cost: COVID-19 school closures and its impact on children." 9.

Schooling Recovery Strategy aims to establish a well-thought-out plan for the South African educational system that will allow all learners affected by COVID-19 to continue their education in a clean and sound environment. This Recovery Plan focuses on curriculum and assessment recovery, as well as other elements of post-COVID-19, to ensure that every school is a safe place to teach. The nine provincial departments, their districts, circuit offices, and the schools under their control are all addressed in this Recovery Plan. From kindergarten through grade 12, the plan will address every area of the educational curriculum.²³

On 27 January 2021, schools were supposed to resume for the 2021 academic year. A second wave, however, resulted in the reintroduction of a modified level 3 lockdown on 29 December 2020, which lasted until 28 February 2021. As a result, public schools returned two weeks later, on 15 February 2021, while private schools started two weeks earlier, on 1 February 2021. Schools have remained open since then, except for school breaks scheduled through the end of April 2021. However, most students continue to attend part-time, using rotational timetabling.²⁴ Scholars' explanations revealed that DBE-recommended approaches for teaching and learning recovery procedures during lockdown are not viable for many learners from poor communities and households.

Following two years of COVID-19 and lockdowns that severely disrupted teaching time, the 2022 and 2023 school calendars have witnessed a return to normalcy.²⁵ The easing of COVID-19 restrictions has abrogated the phase-in and rotational timetabling adopted in 2021. The 97 percent national recovery rate of COVID-19 infection has restored a relative sense of stability in the education sector, dubbed the new normal.²⁶ Schools have been in full daily attendance since 7 February 2022, from grades R to 12. Learners continue to wear face masks in classrooms without observing social distance.²⁷ Omodan asserted that though a greater percentage of activities have resumed, many activities, such as teaching and learning and meetings, are conducted online.²⁸ COVID-19 appears to have transformed teaching and learning due to the nationwide closing down of education facilities. Schools have adopted different teaching and learning strategies aftermath nationwide lockdown. Notably among them is the blended teaching approach. This study used an interpretive paradigm in order to understand the lived experience of teachers and learners. This argument was underpinned by Opportunity To Learn (OTL) theoretical framework. Based on the evidence adduced, this conceptual paper sought to explore sustainable teaching and learning strategies adopted by educators in this post-COVID-19 era.

The research question below guided the study's conceptual and theoretical argument regarding teaching and learning strategies used in the post COVID -19 era classroom: What are the post-COVID-19 pandemic-era teaching and learning strategies in South African schools? The following two objectives were examined in order to provide avenues for the investigation of the accepted theory in response to the research question mentioned above: The paper highlighted teaching and learning strategies and the approach adopted during the global shutdown and proffered plausible teaching and learning approaches to actualise the post-COVID-19 pandemic curriculum recovery plan.

²³ Department of Basic Education, "National Department of Education Annual Report 2020/2021 Financial Year."

²⁴ Shepherd, and Mohohlwane, "The impact of COVID-19 in education—more than a year of disruption."

²⁵ "South Africa Plans 'Normal' School Timetable for 2022 as It Eyes Rising Covid-19 Cases," *BusinessTech*, December 1, 2021, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/543178/south-africa-plans-normal-school-timetable-for-2022-as-it-eyes-rising-covid-19-cases/>.

²⁶ SA Coronavirus, *COVID -19 Statistics in South Africa*.

²⁷ South African Government. Disaster management Act: Directions: Full-time return of learners to schools and measures to address, prevent and combat the spread of Coronavirus COVID-19 in the Education Sector (2022). [Press Released]. <https://www.gov.za/COVID-19/individuals-and-households/education-coronavirus-COVID-19>

²⁸ Omodan, "Virtual Management of Students' Unrest during the COVID-19 New Normal," 1-12.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Opportunity to Learn (OTL) served as the underpinning theory for this conceptual paper. The concept of OTL for the evaluation of educational achievements was developed by the International Association.²⁹ The curriculum, learning materials, facilities, teachers, instructional experiences, and teaching and learning strategies are OTL variables.³⁰ OTL is about providing institutional resources and establishing institutional circumstances and procedures that will allow all learners to meet the standards and goals set by each of these institutions.³¹

According to Banicky, OTL was initially described as the overlap between what learners learn and what they are tested on.³² It was also suggested that the OTL definition has expanded beyond simply knowledge acquisition and learner evaluation to encompass various aspects affecting teaching and learning. These include teacher and student experiences, teacher development, curriculum, and the quality of school resources, all of which provide learners with an equitable chance to learn well.³³ Damoah argued that OTL covers a wide range of educational strategies employed to help students meet the learning goals predicted by the subject areas and assessment standards. Numerous studies have demonstrated that students learn well when given the opportunity. Table 1 illustrates some variables associated with OTL:

Table 1: Factors Associated with OTL

Curriculum	Instructional Quality	Time	Resources	School Conditions
conforms to content standards Incorporated across disciplines Real-world issues that are pertinent to students Synchronised with assessments to track students' progress	Teaching experience Teacher Certification Teacher turnover Teacher attendance Teacher commitment and varied teaching strategies	For collaborating and preparing lessons To provide continuous teaching	Adequate physical space Access to educational resources, technology, and textbooks Relationships between schools and communities to fulfil the needs of students in terms of health and social services Parental Involvement Quality Professional Development Equitable finance formulas within and between schools/district	Instructional leaders the part of the administrative Policies promoting collegiality of school staff High expectations for student learning Student attendance incentives Safe and orderly learning environment Teacher involvement in decision making

*Modified from Education Policy Brief.*³⁴

²⁹ Lorraine M. McDonnell, "Opportunity to Learn as a Research Concept and a Policy Instrument," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 17, no. 3 (September 23, 1995): 305–22, <https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737017003305>.

³⁰ Lisa Scherff and Carolyn Piazza, "The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: A Survey of High School Students' Writing Experiences.," *Research in the Teaching of English* 39, no. 3 (February 2005): 271–304.

³¹ Benjamin Damoah, "Teachers' Perception of the Integration of Environmental Education into Grade 12 Curriculum in East London Education District" (University of Fort Hare; Faculty OF Education, 2019).

³² Lisa A. Banicky, "Opportunity to Learn ," *Education Policy Brief* 7 (October 2000), <https://udspace.udel.edu/bitstream/handle/19716/2446/opp+to+learn.pdf?sequence=1>.

³³ Damoah, *Teachers' perception of the integration of environmental education into grade 12 curriculum*.

³⁴ Banicky, *Opportunity to learn* (education policy brief, Vol. 7), 3.

There have been many disparities in the education system in South Africa since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁵ The pandemic denied many students the opportunity to learn during the national lockdown. Many students from underprivileged households could not access virtual learning support materials provided by DBE.

The government has earmarked strategic plans to mitigate the effects of school closure. One of the key variables in the OTL is effective teaching and learning strategies, as illustrated in table 1 (instructional quality). It is argued that if teachers employ robust teaching and learning strategies in this post-COVID-19 pandemic era, the national COVID recovery plan will be achievable. This would give learners irrespective of their social-economic background, the opportunity to have a level playing field in achieving their potential. The OTL thus helped the researcher to understand the various variables which allow learners to learn in the post-COVID-19 era curriculum. This enabled the researcher to situate the study in the right context.

METHODOLOGY

The study was based on the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretative research paradigm seeks to grasp the respondents' life experiences.³⁶ In this paradigm, McMillan and Schumacher³⁷ demands the researcher to rely on teaching and learning practices used in post-COVID classrooms. According to Creswell and Poth, interpretive researchers aim to reveal respondents' perspectives, views, opinions, understanding, and interpretations of social phenomena.³⁸ The interpretative paradigm is concerned with understanding an individual's perspective of the world. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm's underlying assumption is that reality is socially created. This is why the constructivist paradigm has been mentioned at times.³⁹ The researcher sought the opinions of experts on the phenomenon as advocated by Creswell and Poth through the literature review.⁴⁰

Teaching and Learning Strategies

The term teaching methods implies overarching concepts, pedagogy, and organisation strategies employed in the classroom. A teacher's method of selection is heavily influenced by personal preferences, educational perspectives, classroom dynamics, the school's vision and goal statement, curriculum requirements, and subject area(s) of instruction.⁴¹

³⁵ DBE. South Africa plans 'normal' school timetable for 2022 as it eyes rising COVID-19 cases (2022).

³⁶ Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion, and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education* (Eighth edition. | New York: Routledge, 2018.: Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>.

³⁷ James McMillan and Sally Schumacher, *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, 7th ed. (Pearson, 2013), <https://www.amazon.com/Research-Education-Evidence-Based-Inquiry-7th/dp/0137152396>.

³⁸ John W Creswell and Cheryl N Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 4th ed. (SAGE Publications, Inc, 2017).

³⁹ Charles Kivunja and Ahmed Bawa Kuyini, "Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts.," *International Journal of Higher Education* 6, no. 5 (2017): 26–41, <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>.

⁴⁰ Creswell, and Poth, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*.

⁴¹ 2U Inc., "Teaching Methods," 2018, <https://teach.com/what/teachers-know/teaching-methods/>.

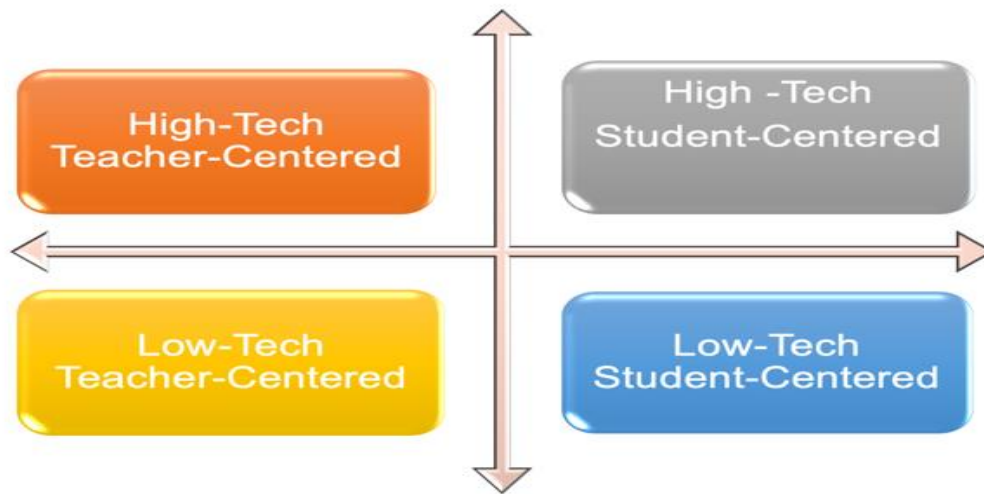


Figure 1: Teaching and learning strategies
 Source: *Teaching Methods, 2U Inc.*

In Figure 1, 2U Inc noted that teaching theories could be classified into two major categories:

Teacher-centred Approach

According to 2U Inc, teachers take centre stage in this type of instruction, where learners are viewed as empty vessels receiving knowledge passively from teachers. The teacher is solely responsible for instructional time, and this form of instruction entails lecturing students and providing direct instruction. Assessment of teaching and learning is mainly accomplished by administering quantitatively scored examinations. The instructional technique is for learners to follow explicit directions from the subject teacher and learn by listening attentively and observing how the teaching is conducted. Damoah asserted that teachers systematically give lessons through well-prepared lesson plans and notes.⁴² Direct instruction often specifies what teachers must offer, the activities students must do, and the time allotted for a specific period.

Learner-centred Approach

Teachers are critical in this form of teaching; both teachers and students play active roles in the learning process. A teacher's paramount duty is to facilitate and coach the learning process by engaging learners in learning activities such as group discussions, group projects, and assignments to ensure active student engagement. Formal and informal assessments are used to evaluate teaching and learning. Teachers receive feedback on their teaching through class activities throughout instructional time.⁴³ Learner-centred teaching strategy typically refers to teaching approaches that shift the focus of instruction away from the teacher and toward the learner.⁴⁴

Damoah argued that the learner-centred approach includes inquiry-based teaching and learning.⁴⁵ Learners are driven to ask questions about what they want to know about their surroundings. Learners formally present the conclusions of such research. Teachers in this setting ask high-level inquiries and make research recommendations regarding the process rather than the content. Learners reflect on their experience and what they have learnt at the end of the inquiry cycle. Learners

⁴² Damoah, *Teachers' perception of the integration of environmental education into grade 12 curriculum.*

⁴³ 2U Inc. *Teaching Methods.*

⁴⁴ Elize du Plessis, "Student Teachers' Perceptions, Experiences, and Challenges Regarding Learner-Centred Teaching," *South African Journal of Education* 40, no. 1 (February 29, 2020): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n1a1631>.

⁴⁵ Damoah, *Teachers' perception of the integration of environmental education into grade 12 curriculum.*

investigate how their results link to other topics of interest, allowing for more incredible research into new fields of study.

High-tech Approach

In the twenty-first century, technology plays a significant part in education. Teachers who utilise this strategy use a variety of available technologies during classroom hours. Most educators offer lessons through projectors, desktop computers, laptops, and tablets. Others implement a paperless classroom by distributing assignments/projects to students via internet-based student portals. Learners utilise the internet to access educational resources and connect with others worldwide, transforming the world into a global village.⁴⁶

Flipped Classroom

Furthermore, the study asserted that a flipped classroom is one of the instructional models for a high-tech approach. Learners can listen to or watch pre-recorded audio or video at their leisure, both at home and in class, using this strategy. They progress according to the teacher's instructions. Teachers may allocate different learners to various audio-visuals based on their preferences. Nonetheless, this lesson aims to ensure that learners grasp specified themes. Traditionally, this educational technique is a learner-centred approach. However, teachers significantly influence how students use audio-visuals, which makes the paradigm rather teacher-centred.

Low-tech Approach

According to 2U Inc, this way of teaching and learning is considered traditional. Teachers that choose this method do not use technology in their classrooms. It is the conventional mode of instruction in which teachers and students are physically present. Rather than typing or projecting notes, learners typically take handwritten notes from the board. Teachers and students rely excessively on textbooks and workbooks rather than technology. This type of instruction is based on direct instruction from teachers and teacher demonstrations. This style of instruction is referred to as the manual or conventional method of teaching. Due to the continual engagement between students and teachers, this strategy significantly improves learning. Examples of low-tech approach approaches include the following:

(a) Kinesthetics: This method allows students to freely walk around and interact with one another, communicating with their hands and gestures. This practice is known as tactile learning 'or' hands-on learning. This paradigm is based on various concepts and demands learners to be more creative to complete tasks independently. Teachers apply a variety of approaches to reflect reality in the classroom, including role play and theatre.

(b) Expeditionary methodologies emphasise "learning by doing" and active engagement in learning activities. Fieldwork, learning expeditions, projects, and case studies are all included. This is the most appropriate method for teaching practical disciplines like Environmental Education. This methodology is a project-based learning style that requires students to investigate a specific issue affecting their neighbourhood or school.

According to 2U Inc, all of the teaching mentioned above methods and strategies assist teachers in developing a better understanding of how to best organise their teaching, classrooms, and lesson delivery during instructional time and how to effectively impact learners from diverse backgrounds.

Gill asserted that each teacher has a distinct style of instruction in their classroom. Teachers' teaching approaches are entirely dependent on the dynamism in the classroom, which includes the learners' demands and the availability of instructional materials.⁴⁷ Contemporary teachers are more adaptable in terms of altering their teaching techniques to meet the needs of learners across a range of

⁴⁶ 2U Inc. Teaching Methods.

⁴⁷ Eric Gill, "What Is Your Teaching Style? 5 Effective Teaching Methods for Your Classroom," September 1, 2020, <https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/5-types-of-classroom-teaching-styles/>.

disciplines, themes, and modes of instruction. Gill highlighted five other instructional strategies that many teachers employ.⁴⁸ The researcher also analysed these fundamental teaching methods as follows:

The Authority or Lecture Approach

According to Gill, the authority model is a teacher-centred approach that includes numerous examples and requires learners to take lecture notes.⁴⁹ Gill continued by outlining the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy as follows:

(a) Pros: This strategy is more appropriate when working with a large group of learners. It requires auditoriums equipped with projectors and computers and is ideal for reading courses such as the English language and history.

(b) Cons: This strategy is ineffective for teaching learners in primary and secondary schools since students do not actively participate in the teaching process. There is less interaction between students and teachers, making it more suitable for mature pupils.

Demonstrator or coach style

This technique is similar to the authoritative style. However, teachers have a substantial role in demonstrating material understanding through demonstrations, presentations, and activities. Mathematics, sciences, and music studies are typically taught in this manner.

(a) Pros: This paradigm enables teachers to incorporate a variety of variables into their instruction through audio-visual presentations.

(b) Cons: It can be challenging to teach learners from varied backgrounds using this model, as students with special needs may not receive the attention. They require teachers due to the size of the classrooms.

The Facilitator or Activity Style

Gill defined this model as a teaching and learning approach that assists learners in developing their potential and enables them to learn autonomously.⁵⁰

(a) Pros: This methodology is well-suited for science instruction and fosters learners' capacity for critical thinking. Through investigation, learners are taught to ask more questions and acquire problem-solving skills.

(b) Cons: It requires teachers to engage learners and guide them toward exploration rather than delivering information and measuring knowledge via memorisation. As a result, it's impossible to quantify success in concrete terms.

The Delegator or Group Style

Gill noted that this methodology is most appropriate for curricula that include laboratory activities such as chemistry and biology and other disciplines that benefit from peer criticism, such as debate and creative writing.⁵¹

(a) Pros: Guided innovation and inquiry-based learning put the teacher as an observer, motivating learners to work collaboratively toward common goals.

(b) Cons: This current method of instruction is occasionally criticised for undermining the teacher's authority in the classroom. As a delegator, the teacher functions more as an adviser than in the traditional model of teacher-centred instruction.

⁴⁸ Gill, "What Is Your Teaching Style? 5 Effective Teaching Methods for Your Classroom."

⁴⁹ Gill.

⁵⁰ Gill, "What Is Your Teaching Style? 5 Effective Teaching Methods for Your Classroom."

⁵¹ Gill, "What Is Your Teaching Style? 5 Effective Teaching Methods for Your Classroom."

The Hybrid Approach

This method of teaching integrates teachers' characteristics and interests with the needs and curriculum of their students.⁵² A hybrid teaching approach involves giving some students face-to-face lessons in the classroom while giving other students online or distance learning instruction; there may be a 50/50 split.⁵³

The Blended Approach

Blended learning is defined as a type of instructional approach that utilises digital and online resources in addition to conventional face-to-face instruction.⁵⁴ Rao argued that the blended strategy is a method that offers cutting-edge educational solutions by skilfully fusing traditional classroom instruction with online learning and mobile learning for educators, trainers, and learners.⁵⁵ Technology has made learning possible outside the four walls of the classroom and facilitated improved access to educational resources. Traditional classroom instruction and cutting-edge eLearning are combined to create blended learning, which offers the best of both worlds. A teacher may engage all sorts of learners by covering all the bases, including those who learn best in a controlled atmosphere that involves a direct connection with an instructor and independent types who benefit from computer-based instruction.⁵⁶

Teaching and Learning Strategy during the COVID-19 Global Lockdown

The severity of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of schools in South Africa, as previously discussed. Teachers, DBE and other stakeholders had to devise innovative mechanisms to teach learners during the lockdown. Flipped-hybrid teaching strategy was adopted to assist learners. The DBE prepared online learning support programmes for learners and educators. Pre-recorded videos of subject content were broadcasted on three SABC TV and two (1KZN 261 and Soweto TV 251) DSTV channels. Thirteen (13) community and national radio stations with online support capabilities were used to teach learners in various subjects.⁵⁷

Teaching and Learning Challenges during the COVID-19 Global Lockdown

Teachers employed other means to complement the DBE support programme. Interactive high-tech platforms like WhatsApp, go-to-meeting, Zoom, YouTube uploaded videos, among others were used to teach learners away from the classroom to the comfort of their homes. This approach only benefited learners from affluent homes who could afford to buy online learning tools and internet data.⁵⁸ The larger population of learners from deprived communities and homes was left behind during the national crisis of COVID-19.⁵⁹ Learning and teaching using the media, such as listening to school programmes on the radio and watching television channels where different subjects are presented, was most beneficial for students with the necessary resources such as television, radios, and mobile phones with

⁵² Gill, "What Is Your Teaching Style? 5 Effective Teaching Methods for Your Classroom."

⁵³ Screencastify Squad, "Hybrid Teaching: Strategies and Tips for K-12 Education | Screencastify," 2022, <https://www.screencastify.com/blog/hybrid-teaching-strategies-and-tips-for-k-12-education>.

⁵⁴ Onke Gqokonqana, Odunayo Magret Olarewaju, and Melanie Bernice Cloete, "Blended Learning Challenges During COVID-19: A Case of Cost Accounting 2 Students at a Selected South African Higher Education Institution," *Research in Social Sciences and Technology* 7, no. 2 (June 26, 2022): 87–107, <https://doi.org/10.46303/ressat.2022.11>.

⁵⁵ V Chandra Sekhar Rao "Blended Learning: A New Hybrid Teaching Methodology.," *Online Submission* 3, no. 13 (2019): 2456–8104, www.jrspelt.com.

⁵⁶ ELM Learning, "What Is Blended Learning? Examples & More | ELM Learning," *Instructional Design*, August 27, 2022, <https://elmllearning.com/blog/blended-learning-everything-need-know/>.

⁵⁷ DBE. Containment/ Management of COVID 19 for Schools and School Communities: Circular No. 3 of March 15 2020, [Press Release].

⁵⁸ SADTU. Report for SADTU—*The challenge of going back to school*—Survey 2.

⁵⁹ Hoadley, "Schools in the Time of COVID-19: Impacts of the Pandemic on Curriculum."

internet data. Teachers could not reach all students outside of internet connectivity coverage in rural regions.⁶⁰

Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown Teaching and Learning Strategy at Basic Education

The easing of COVID-19 restrictions and low infection rate in South Africa has brought sanity into the education sector. This has resulted in restoring the conventional teaching approach in all primary schools across the country.⁶¹ The DBE has designed national Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) to recover lost instructional time. It is the official and recommended teaching plan for grades R to 12. The ATPs have altered the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in compliance with section 3(4)(l) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996).⁶² The strategic ATPs failed to specify in clear terms which teaching and learning approach to be adopted by teachers to drive the recovery plan at the basic schools.

Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown Teaching and Learning Strategy at Higher Education

Some universities and other education institutions have adopted the blended teaching method in pursuance of a tentative academic calendar re-opening plan adopted in 2021. Most tertiary institutions have resorted to the use of both virtual and conventional contact lecturing to keep up with the demand of the curriculum. Students from technologically deprived backgrounds face various obstacles as a result of this technological infusion into teaching and learning.⁶³

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) requires educational institutions in South Africa to extend their technological systems, introduce new teaching and learning methods, and eliminate barriers to innovation. The government's blueprints articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP) and White Paper 7 (2004) on e-Education should be operationalised. This will ensure that all teachers and learners irrespective of their geographical location, are trained in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the ICT infrastructural deficit in the education system.⁶⁴ The government and other stakeholders in education should provide equitable access to computer facilities for all schools. This will work in tandem with the provision of digital learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) such as laptops, desktop computers, tablets, smartphones and projectors. No teacher or learner should be left behind in this innovative paradigm shift in the global education system. The government should expand internet connectivity and gadgets to special and farms schools.

This paper recommends that the DBE should adopt blended teaching and learning strategy as part of the ATPs. The blended approach ensures that learners are taught in a conventional face-to-face classroom in parallel with high-tech digital Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM). This will adequately place the country on a pedestal which will help to mitigate the time lost in the education sector. This strategy will close up the gaps and the mishaps that ran through the spine of the education systems during the national lockdown. Schools will be prepared to deal with the occurrence of any eventualities like COVID-19 without disruptions to the academic calendar. Teachers in the modern era must build a teaching style that is responsive to the different needs of their students. A successful teaching style strikes a balance between gifted and slow learners and students with disabilities. A well-

⁶⁰ Kemi O. Adu et al., "Innovation and Technology: A Panacea to Teaching and Learning Challenges during the Covid-19 Lockdown in South Africa," *Research in Social Sciences and Technology* 7, no. 1 (April 19, 2022): 69–89, <https://doi.org/10.46303/ressat.2022.5>.

⁶¹ DBE. South Africa plans 'normal' school timetable for 2022 as it eyes rising COVID-19 cases (2022).

⁶² South African Government. Disaster management Act.

⁶³ Gqokonqana et al., "Blended Learning Challenges During COVID-19."

⁶⁴ UNESCO. One year into COVID-19 education disruption: Where do we stand? (2021).

articulated and differentiated teaching technique and a balanced mixture of methods can assist in reaching all learners in each classroom.

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ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Benjamin Damoah is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Walter Sisulu University in South Africa. He holds a PhD in Education. His research focuses on, Environmental Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Teaching and Learning, Teacher Development, and Curriculum Studies.

Dr. Bunmi Isaiah Omodan is a Senior Lecturer, at Walter Sisulu University, South Africa. He holds a PhD in Education Management and Leadership. His research focuses on Africanised Pedagogy, Decoloniality and Conflict Management.