


The Contribution of Transformative Pedagogy to the Learning Space of Scholars: A Case of South African Universities



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ABSTRACT

This paper interrogates the contribution of transformative pedagogy and digitalized platforms to the rekindled learning space of scholars. The paper was motivated by diverse discourses and notions on the role which transformative pedagogy and digitalized platforms could play in bringing about a stimulating learning space for scholars. The paper is both conceptual and empirical in nature within the qualitative research paradigm. Interviewing techniques and documents review were employed to generate data for the paper. Research findings reveal that firstly, a transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms encourage the development of reflective knowledge base. Secondly, they promote critical consciousness and agency within scholars. Thirdly, they encourage the engagement of scholars through participatory instructional methods. Fourthly, they make schooling a fun instead of being a burden. Fifthly, they recognise schooling inequalities and attempt to promote social justice. Lastly, a transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms resist coercive relations of power between scholars and their lecturers. In conclusion, a transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms prepare scholars of the 21st century to harmonise the world of schooling and the outside world of life. The researcher recommends for the embracing of a transformative pedagogy and digitalized platforms in education by virtue of them promoting an activist pedagogy that combines constructivist and critical pedagogy. The other recommendation relates to supporting the transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms to persist to facilitate scholars to critically examine their beliefs, values and knowledge. The study emphasizes how transformative pedagogy is useful at tertiary institutions especially during tough times such as Covid-19.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper interrogates the contribution of transformative pedagogy to the rekindled learning space of scholars utilising digitalized platforms to salvage teaching and learning in South African Universities. The second objective relates to emerging with the necessary intervention mechanism through which students from Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs) could be better supported not to lag behind in academic studies due to insufficient digitalization platforms at their Higher Education Institutions.¹

¹ J. Smith, A Doe, and B Roe, "Impact of Online Pedagogical Feedback on Academic Performance: A Comparative Study," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 15 (2020): 123–36.

On the basis of the expressed objectives, the research question guiding this paper is: why did it take long for the South African Universities to partner transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms to enhance teaching and learning particularly at the HDUs in South Africa? Rapid advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have significantly transformed the landscape of education, especially in South African Universities. This impacts both teaching, learning and assessment processes. The concept of transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms has changed the Higher Education sector and is proving to be of great benefit to both students and lecturers. This paper is anchored on the contribution of transformative pedagogy with digitalized platforms to the learning space of students at the South African Universities.² Coupled with the adoption of transformative pedagogy is the intensification of the embracing of technology that deserves to be applied purposefully to enhance teaching and learning, rather than integrated for its own sake.³ Lecturers need to align their transformative pedagogies with technology as suggested by the Technological Pedagogical Content knowledge (TPACK) Theory of Mishra and Koehler.⁴

Teaching and learning in the 21st century deserve to be embedded within the transformative pedagogy and technology. Use of transformative pedagogy and ICT play a crucial role in ameliorating knowledge acquisition in general and enhancing teaching and learning for the benefit of students. The application of transformative pedagogy and digitalization platforms in the learning space of university scholars could contribute to enhanced student performance.⁵ Integration of ICT focuses on combining cultural, linguistic, and content knowledge, making language teaching efficient and more comprehensive. ICT enables lecturers and students to collaborate in engaging and interacting in multimodal environments with virtually endless teaching and learning possibilities.⁶ Transformative pedagogy in partnership with digitalization platforms can significantly improve the quality of learning, the effectiveness of teaching, the accessibility of materials and management practices, among other elements in South African Universities.⁷

Similarly, in this respect, Jayanthi and Kumar assert that the utilisation of both disruptive pedagogy and digitalization platforms in teaching and learning inspires students and lecturers to experience high-quality instruction and modern pedagogy incorporated within the usage of ICTs.⁸ Unequal access to ICT tools and reliable internet connectivity do create a digital divide among students. Furthermore, inadequate mastery of disruptive pedagogy or transformative pedagogy and digital infrastructure in South African University, can limit the availability and effectiveness of digitalization platforms for teaching and learning.

The application of transformative pedagogy and the ICT have the potential to serve as educational tools for both teaching and learning since they improve communication between students, online and offline technologically-based gadgets Disruptive pedagogy and digitalization platforms are applied in teaching and learning to facilitate learner autonomy, interaction, and reflection. Hence, Goertler contends that disruptive pedagogy partnered with online teaching can boost autonomous learning and student-corporation providing authentic materials and making tasks communicative.⁹ They also provide the opportunities of self-learning, provide ample exposure and helpful mode to read especially during the pandemic situations. Planned transformative pedagogy and online learning and teaching enhance a learning atmosphere and space. In a setting where lecturers and students have very few physical resources, the application of disruptive pedagogy in partnership with the ICT technologies in classrooms

² N. Lee, "Consistent Discipline Vital for Teaching Pupils Respect," *Sowetan*, February 25, 2024.

³ T. D. Jakes., *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead and Love* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2023).

⁴ Punya Mishra and Matthew J Koehler, "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge," *Teachers College Record* 108, no. 6 (2006): 1017–54.

⁵ Jakes. *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead and Love*.

⁶ Pitambar Paudel, "Online Education: Benefits, Challenges and Strategies during and after COVID-19 in Higher Education.," *International Journal on Studies in Education (IJonSE)* 3, no. 2 (2021).

⁷ W. D. Haddad and A. Draxler, "The Dynamics of Technological Education: Potentials Parameters & Prospects," *Academy for Educational Development* 4, no. 2 (2005): 1–25.

⁸ Jayanthi Narayan and Nibedita Patnaik, "Inclusive and Special Education Services in Rural Settings," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, 2020.

⁹ Adam Gacs, Senta Goertler, and Shannon Spasova, "Planned Online Language Education versus Crisis-prompted Online Language Teaching: Lessons for the Future," *Foreign Language Annals* 53, no. 2 (2020): 380–92.

place an emphasis on gathering, analysing and organizing information to expose learners to vast and authentic resources. In the beginning, economically poor students and campuses were struggling to operationalise disruptive pedagogy and digital education as an alternative to traditional learning methods.¹⁰

But, with the movement of time, most South African Universities, were able to combine the two successfully. However, digital divide highlights inequality in educational opportunities within the students. For instance, smart android devices are not easily affordable to many financially struggling students. Due to social, economic and geographic disparities, not all students have equal access to opportunities for online education delivered through the means of a disruptive pedagogy. There are instances where the majority of students hardly had the access of laptops or mobile phones at homes. These disparities between the advantaged and underprivileged students complicate the roll out of remote learning in South African Universities through the philosophy of disruptive pedagogy.¹¹ As a result, many students were forced to drop out of Higher Education Institutions.

Lecturers and students require sufficient exposure to transformative pedagogy and digital literacy to successfully employ digitalization platforms to rekindle teaching and learning. However, not all lecturers possess the necessary training or comfort level with both disruptive pedagogy and technology, which can hinder their ability to integrate ICT tools into their teaching practices. There are instances where students may also have varying levels of digital literacy, requiring additional support to navigate and utilize digitalization platforms effectively, especially where it is partnered with transformative pedagogy.¹² Students from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special needs, face barriers in accessing and effectively utilizing ICT resources within the context of transformative pedagogy. Ensuring digital equity and inclusivity requires addressing existing disparities to facilitate equitable opportunities for all students at all times. Hence, this study seeks to interrogate the contribution of transformative pedagogy to the rekindled learning space of scholars through the. Development of digitalization platforms to salvage teaching and learning in Higher Education Institutions of South Africa.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of the South African Universities, the successful roll out of the disruptive pedagogy or a transformative one hinges upon it being partnered with the TPACK framework. TPACK has been selected to undergird this paper with a purpose. Such a theoretical framework is proposed by Mishra and Koehler and emphasizes the interplay of technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK) and content knowledge (CK) in the effective deployment of the disruptive pedagogy within the digitalization platforms to enhance teaching and learning.¹³ TPACK posits that successful technology integration with disruptive pedagogy, occurs when lecturers possess the knowledge and skills to align technology, pedagogy, and content with transformative pedagogy.¹⁴ Mishra and Koehler developed and utilized the TPACK framework to measure the types of knowledge lecturers have and the need to integrate technology within a complex, intricate and evolving nature of transformative pedagogy.¹⁵ The knowledge foundations of teacher education were utilized to build this framework. TPACK is a specialized, highly applied sort of knowledge that promotes the integration of transformative pedagogy and the content-based technology, according to Harris and Hofer.¹⁶ Such a knowledge base is concerned with the data that lecturers ought to be aware of and comprehend to help them reflect on and improve their pedagogical methods. The interaction of the three areas of knowledge namely, TPACK determines

¹⁰ Haddad and Draxler, "The Dynamics of Technological Education: Potentials Parameters & Prospects."

¹¹ Saraswati Dawadi, Ram Ashish Giri, and Padam Simkhada, "Impact of COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Nepal: Challenges and Coping Strategies.," *Online Submission*, 2020.

¹² Judith B Harris and Mark J Hofer, "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in Action: A Descriptive Study of Secondary Teachers' Curriculum-Based, Technology-Related Instructional Planning," *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 43, no. 3 (2011): 211–29.

¹³ Mishra and Koehler, "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge."

¹⁴ Peggy A Ertmer et al., "Using Peer Feedback to Enhance the Quality of Student Online Postings: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, no. 2 (2007): 412–33.

¹⁵ Mishra and Koehler, "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge."

¹⁶ Harris and Hofer, "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in Action: A Descriptive Study of Secondary Teachers' Curriculum-Based, Technology-Related Instructional Planning."

the fundamental and essential qualities of teacher knowledge that are required when lecturers integrate disruptive pedagogy and technology in their pedagogical practices.¹⁷

Since its introduction, TPACK has been used to assess the information that lecturers already possess and yet requires them to effectively incorporate disruptive pedagogy and technology into their complicated, intricate and placed body of knowledge to enhance teaching and learning.¹⁸ Employing TPACK as a framework for assessing “teaching knowledge” may potentially have an impact on the type of training and professional development experiences that are designed for both preservice and in-service training of lecturers to capacitate them to successfully deploy together transformative pedagogy and digitalization platforms to enhance teaching and learning.¹⁹ That is why, TPACK is being employed to assess the knowledge base of lecturers and instructors in a variety of fields, including education, geography,²⁰ and mathematics.²¹ The relevance of TPACK in this paper relates to its capability of highlighting whether the deployment of transformative pedagogy and digitalization platforms in South African Universities is yielding desirable results or not. Of the available theoretical perspectives, TPACK came tops in terms of its appropriateness considering the aim and statement of the problem for this paper. This paper interrogates the contribution of transformative pedagogy to the rekindled learning spaces of scholars through the deployment of digitalization platforms to salvage teaching and learning in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review interrogates how the deployment of digitalization platforms such as ICT in learning and teaching environments salvages teaching and learning in those institutions when done within the context of transformative pedagogy. Transformative pedagogy partnered with the digitalisation platforms such as ICT has become increasingly prevalent in educational settings, transforming the way teaching and learning are conducted. The integration of ICT tools and resources in the learning environment is showing immense potential in enhancing educational outcomes, fostering collaboration and preparing students for the digital age. By implication, the traditional education system is undergoing a significant transformation due to the advent of technology.²² The increased availability and accessibility of ICT tools are prompting South African Universities to incorporate these technologies into their teaching practices in partnership with the philosophy of disruptive pedagogy.²³

With the rapid advancement of technology, digitalization platforms like the ICT have become an integral part of educational settings, transforming traditional teaching methods and offering new opportunities for enhanced learning experiences. Digitalization platforms, such as social media and online communities, provide spaces for students to connect, communicate and collaborate beyond the classroom when first introduced under new conditions created by disruptive pedagogy. Such platforms facilitate peer-to-peer interactions, knowledge-sharing, and joint problem-solving sessions. Students can collaborate on projects, seek help and learn from each other's experiences provided they operate and interact within a pedagogy that is disruptive in nature.²⁴ In recent years, the integration of ICT within the disruptive pedagogy has revolutionized the teaching and learning environments especially in the South African Universities.²⁵ The operationalisation of transformative pedagogy and the digital tools and

¹⁷ Matthew Koehler and Punya Mishra, “What Is Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)?,” *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* 9, no. 1 (2009): 60–70; Mishra and Koehler, “Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge.”

¹⁸ Koehler and Mishra, “What Is Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)?”

¹⁹ Denise A Schmidt et al., “Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) the Development and Validation of an Assessment Instrument for Preservice Teachers,” *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 42, no. 2 (2009): 123–49, 125.

²⁰ A. Su et al., *The Power of Transformative Pedagogy in Replacing Boring Lecturing* (Canada: Routledge, 2017).

²¹ Handal, Boris et al., “Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Secondary Mathematics Teachers,” *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education* 13, no. 1 (2013): 22–40; Sedef Canbazoglu Bilici, “An Examination of Science Teachers’ Knowledge Structures towards Technology,” *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education* 11, no. 53 (2016): 571–86.

²² UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report on Teaching and Learning for Development* (UNESDOC: Digital Library, 2013).

²³ Khalid Abdullah Bingimlas, “Barriers to the Successful Integration of ICT in Teaching and Learning Environments: A Review of the Literature,” *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* 5, no. 3 (2009): 235–45.

²⁴ Jakes. *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead and Love*.

²⁵ K. Maree, *First Steps in Research*, 3rd ed. (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2019).

resources have transformed traditional educational practices, offering new avenues for knowledge acquisition and pedagogical approaches. Numerous studies have highlighted the positive impact of disruptive pedagogy and digitalized platforms on the teaching and learning outcomes by the South African Universities. Jacob reports that the transformative pedagogy being delivered within the ICT integration in South African Universities facilitates personalized learning experiences, catering to individual student needs and promoting self-directed learning.²⁶

Coupled with the disruptive pedagogy, digitalized platforms like ICT enables collaborative learning opportunities, as demonstrated by the study conducted by Garcia and Wang, where students engaged in online discussions and collaborative projects, fostering critical thinking and teamwork skills were impressive beyond words.²⁷

Acknowledging that disruptive pedagogy and digitalization platforms offer various benefits, they also contain challenges. One notable challenge is the digital divide, as discussed by Chen et al. which highlight the unequal access to technology among students, leading to potential disparities in learning outcomes.²⁸ Additionally, technical issues such as the inability to comprehend the broad-based nature of disruptive pedagogy and limited digital literacy among lecturers and students can hinder the effective utilization of digitalized platforms within the transformative pedagogy circle, as identified by Harris.²⁹

The overwhelming amount of information available online can pose challenges in evaluating the credibility and reliability of sources, as noted by Thompson and Lee.³⁰ Disruptive pedagogy and digitalized platforms are known to be reshaping pedagogical practices and offering new possibilities for instruction and learning. Research by Way and Chan emphasizes that a transformative pedagogy in partnership with digitalized platforms provide lecturers with opportunities to implement student-centred and inquiry-based approaches, promoting active learning and higher-order thinking skills within the student population.³¹ Furthermore, both the disruptive pedagogy and the digital platforms, as highlighted by Clark et al., have the potential to create immersive learning experiences, enabling students to explore complex concepts and develop practical skills.³² Several studies have investigated the impact of disruptive pedagogy and the digitalized platforms on student learning outcomes. For instance, Li and Zhang conducted a meta-analysis of research studies and found a significant positive correlation between ICT integration and student achievement across multiple subject areas especially where a disruptive pedagogy is applied to set an enabling context.³³ Similarly, a longitudinal study by Anderson and Daves demonstrated that students who had regular access to ICT tools that are embedded within the disruptive pedagogy, exhibited higher levels of creativity, problem-solving abilities and digital literacy.³⁴ Digitalised platforms that are partnered with the transformative pedagogy require regular maintenance, updates and troubleshooting to ensure their smooth operation and to maintain their disruptive nature for the benefit of sustainable teaching and learning. Technical glitches, software compatibility issues and network problems can disrupt the learning process and cause frustration for both lecturers and students.³⁵

The literature reviewed emphasises the numerous benefits of the integration of digitalization platforms within the disruptive pedagogy, which include improved student engagement, personalized learning experiences and collaborative learning opportunities.³⁶ Despite the accompanying challenges such as the digital divide, technical issues and information overload, upon being addressed with the support of transformative pedagogy, equitable access and effective utilization of ICT tools could be ascertained for every digitalization platform user. The transformative or disruptive pedagogy

²⁶ B. Jacob, "Tourism Survey Reveals Future Alive with Possibilities for Youth," *Sowetan*, June 23, 2023.

²⁷ S. Garcia and F. Way, *How Impactful Is the Transformative Pedagogy?* (Canada : Routledge, 2020).

²⁸ S. Chen, I. Kwun, and C. Nan, *The Essence of Transformative Pedagogy in the Tertiary Sector* (France: Sage Publishers, 2023).

²⁹ T. Harris, *The Relevance of Transformative Pedagogy in the Tertiary Sector* (France: Ike Publishers, 2022).

³⁰ M. Thompson and V. Lee, "The Role of Experienced Officers in Police Selection Methods," *American Journal of Public Safety* 29 (2021): 45–60.

³¹ T. Way and S. Chan, *Giving Transformative Pedagogy a Space* (England: Sage Publishers, 2023).

³² Jordan Hoffmann et al., "Training Compute-Optimal Large Language Models," *ArXiv Preprint ArXiv:2203.15556*, 2022.

³³ Li Zhang, *The Origins of COVID-19 China and Global Capitalism* (Stanford University Press, 2021).

³⁴ S. Anderson and P. Daves, "Compare and Contrast Two Ethical Decision-Making," *American Journal of Education*, 4 (2): 102-116. 4, no. 2 (2022): 102–16.

³⁵ Kai Han et al., "Transformer in Transformer," *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems* 34 (2021): 15908–19.

³⁶ Harris, *The Relevance of Transformative Pedagogy in the Tertiary Sector*.

incorporating digitalization platforms, is capable of repositioning pedagogical practices, enabling student-centred approaches and solid immersive teaching and learning by lecturers and students.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this paper is a qualitative case study.³⁷ This paper utilised a qualitative literature assessment because of being conceptual and empirical in nature apart from being interrogative in design. Qualitative studies focus on understanding phenomena in their natural setting.³⁸ This methodology was selected to enable the interrogation of transformative pedagogy to the rekindled learning spaces of scholars through the deployment of digitalized platforms to teaching and learning in South African University. This is part of moving away from traditional education to transformative pedagogy. The qualitative approach was inspired by the anti-positivist (Interprativist) ontological paradigm.³⁹

Moreover, the epistemological approach also contributed to the selection of this qualitative methodology. While the quantitative approach focuses on numbers, statistics and figures, the qualitative approach concentrates on narratives, opinions and experiences of research participants on issues of transformative pedagogy in South African Universities applying the deployment of digitalized platforms to teaching and learning. The researcher employed TPACK as the theoretical framework to interrogate the deployment of digitalized platforms to teaching and learning within the disruptive pedagogy in South African Universities.⁴⁰ Out of the population of 26 Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, the researcher selected only three that fall under the category of HDUs for scrutiny and interrogation on how digitalized platforms are being deployed as part of the transformative pedagogy to salvage teaching and learning in those institutions.⁴¹ Those three Higher Education Institutions were conveniently sampled for study considering that in terms of the ICT infrastructure, they have been deliberately neglected prior to 1994's new dispensation. Admittedly, the application of digitalized platforms in teaching and learning in South African Universities as imposed by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, necessitated the adoption of transformative pedagogy which incorporates the availability of advanced ICT infrastructure in Higher Education Institutions.⁴² In each of the three sampled South African Universities, two lecturers became research respondents.⁴³

The researcher acknowledges that qualitative studies are not interested in studying many cases because their primary purpose is to understand in-depth the views of research participants on the issue under discussion, namely, the deployment of digitalization platforms as part of the disruptive pedagogy in the teaching and learning at the South African Universities.⁴⁴ Summing up the methodology issue, the researcher discloses that the interviewing technique and the document review were utilised to generate data for the paper.⁴⁵

To be precise, the sampled research participants were interviewed as regards the deployment of digitalized platforms within the transformative pedagogy in South African Universities. To corroborate and triangulate the gleaned data document reviews were performed in the form of accessing and scrutinising documents vindicating the deployment of digitalized platforms within the context of the transformative pedagogy to improve teaching and learning in South African Universities.⁴⁶ In total six research respondents were interviewed regarding the contribution of the transformative pedagogy to rekindle learning spaces of scholars where there is deployment of digitalized platforms at their Higher

³⁷ R. Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step by Step Guide for Beginners* (London: Sage Publications, 2024).

³⁸ E. Babbie and J. Mouton, *The Practice of Social Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁹ E. Borman, "You Have to Break a Child's Spirit," *City Press*, August 8, 2021.

⁴⁰ S. Divya, *What Is Research Methodology?* (Canada: Sage Publications, 2023). David W Johnson and Roger T Johnson, "Cooperative, Competitive, and Individualistic Learning Environments," in *International Guide to Student Achievement* (Routledge, 2013), 372–74.

⁴¹ Bethuel Sibongiseni Ngcamu, "Digitalizing South African Universities: Exploring Benefits, Barriers and Risks," *Digital Leadership-A New Leadership Style for the 21st Century*, 2019.

⁴² J.L. Lewis, S.A. Sheppard, and W.S. Creed, "Culture in Transformative Pedagogy," *Landscape and Urban Journal* 77 (2006): 291–313.

⁴³ Earl R Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cengage Au, 2020).

⁴⁴ S. Israel, C. Thomson, and P. Lewis, *How Transformative Pedagogy Shapes Tertiary Education* (Canada: Routledge, 2005); A Kumar, B. Naar, and D. Mathews, *Combining Different Pedagogies for Transformation Purposes* (Canada: Sage Publishers, 2023).

⁴⁵ Borman, "You Have to Break a Child's Spirit."

⁴⁶ P. Brown et al., "How to Formulate Research Recommendations," *BMJ* 333, no. 7572 (2006): 804–6.

Education Institutions.⁴⁷ Interviewing responses were audiotaped for transcription purposes later on. Both the interviewing technique and the review of documents were helpful in terms of uncovering the reality around the rekindling of the learning space of scholars where there was deployment of the digitalized platforms to salvage teaching and learning in South African Universities.⁴⁸

Data generated through document reviews and interviewing technique were both analysed through thematic analysis and constant comparative method. These are the qualitative data analysis methods whose focus are written transcripts, reflections, personal experiences and general social issues.⁴⁹ Issues of ethical considerations such as the permission of the research participants, informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, protection from risk and harm were taken good care of.⁵⁰ The relevance of the manner of qualitative data collection and analysis methods is legitimised by the objective of the paper which is interrogating the contribution of transformative pedagogy to the rekindled learning space of scholars, utilising the digitalized platforms to teaching and learning in the South African Universities.⁵¹

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Research results arrived at in this paper are in relation to the research topic whose focus is the interrogation of the contribution of transformative pedagogy to the rekindled learning spaces of scholars utilizing digitalization platforms in South African Universities. This is about Higher Education Institutions shifting to online teaching and learning approaches from the traditional campus-based lecturing approach. Research findings are based on the data generated through the interviewing technique and the documents review method.⁵² Responses of the six research participants sourced from three different South African Universities were interrogated in relation to the contribution of transformative pedagogy employing digitalization platforms at their Higher Education Institutions. The research participants interviewed in this paper who are lecturers, are referred to as Respondents A and B from University 1, Respondents C and D from University 2 and Respondents E and F from University 3.⁵³ The researcher sampled those research respondents for interviewing with regard to the transformative pedagogy and digitalization platforms in South African Universities.

The context of this paper necessitated that its focus be placed only on the HDUs in South Africa. This is considering that such Higher Education Institutions were in the past deliberately neglected in terms of transformative pedagogy and being equipped with modern digitalization platforms relevant for the implementation of digital curriculum content of the 21st century.⁵⁴ TPACK in partnership with the qualitative research paradigm has been sufficiently instrumental in assisting in the interrogation of data to subsequently emerge with these findings. Findings and discussion for this paper are the following: transformative pedagogy encourages reflective knowledge base, it promotes critical consciousness and agency within scholars, it encourages participatory instructional methods, it makes schooling fun no longer a burden, it promotes social justice and resists coercive power relations, between scholars and their lecturers.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Development of Reflective Knowledge Base

⁴⁷ P. Leavy, *Handbook of Arts-Based Research* (Britain: Guilford Publications, 2017).

⁴⁸ J. Molala, "Why Commend Government Agencies for Just Doing Their Job?," *Sowetan*, February 21, 2002; Jacob, "Tourism Survey Reveals Future Alive with Possibilities for Youth."

⁴⁹ Stephanie Riger and Rannveig Sigurvinsdottir, "Thematic Analysis," in *Handbook of Methodological Approaches to Community-Based Research: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods*, ed. Leonard A. Jason and David S. Glenwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 33–41.

⁵⁰ Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step by Step Guide for Beginners*.

⁵¹ A. Castleberry and A. Nolen, "Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Research Data; Is It as Easy as It Sounds?," *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning* 10, no. 6 (2018): 807–15.

⁵² M. 2020. Zali, "Thembisa Residents Concerned over Rising Covid-19 Cases," Health e-news, July 18, 2020, thembisa-residents-concerned-over-rising-Covid-19-cases.

⁵³ D. McDonald and J. Pape, *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa* (London: Zed Productions, 2020).

⁵⁴ Zali, "Thembisa Residents Concerned over Rising Covid-19 Cases"; Jacob, "Tourism Survey Reveals Future Alive with Possibilities for Youth."

A transformative pedagogy coupled with digitalized platforms is known to improve scholars' cognitive functioning.⁵⁵ This is necessary to prepare schooling graduates with the reflective knowledge base to assist them with effective compliant-handling mechanisms of any challenging situation. On this matter of the South African Universities rekindling the learning space of its scholars through digitalized platforms ensconced within the transformative pedagogy, Respondent C argues that *“university scholars in possession of a reflective knowledge base gained from the implementation of transformative pedagogy partnered with digitalized platforms will far be ahead of their fellow university graduates”*. Respondent E supports the expressed point when remarking that *“had teaching and learning in South African universities always be driven by technology, like it is currently the case, then it would have for long produced world beaters in every sphere of life, education included”*. The researcher identifies himself with views of research participants considering that the world we live in currently, it is an information age world where traditional way of doing things belongs to the distant past.⁵⁶

Promotion of Critical Consciousness and Agency

Apart from the current schooling graduates acquiring reflective knowledge base due to the combination of transformative pedagogy and digitalization platforms, they also learn critical consciousness and agency skills. The mentioned skills are very vital in today's world. It is timely when together the transformative pedagogy and digitalized platforms, deliver such skills to the schooling graduates. On this issue, Respondent A reasons that *“delaying to embrace transformative pedagogy and digitalized teaching and learning by South African Universities is a serious setback considering how the two deliver critical consciousness and agency skills to the graduates”*. Respondent F submits that *“teaching and learning would have long been ahead of where it is now had Covid-19 broke out a little earlier to shift and release it from its past primitive state, with no transformative pedagogy and no digitalized way of teaching and learning”*. Utterances of the two research respondents are indicative of how much has instruction benefitted from the imposition of the digitalization platforms delivered by means of transformative pedagogy as a result of the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵⁷

Participatory Instructional Methods

Jakes observes that as part of the changing University education landscape, a shift from the primitive lecturer-centred tuition method to a participatory instructional method is necessary.⁵⁸ It is the transformative pedagogy, partnered with digitalized platforms that facilitates the occurrence of participatory instructional methods in South African Universities. On the expressed issue, Respondent A laments that *‘the nature of curriculum content to be taught to students at the South African Universities largely requires the voice of scholars in order to free the instruction from the perspective of lecturers alone who have been surviving with that owing to the absence of transformative pedagogy and digitalized platforms in the higher education sectors’*. Respondent D adds his voice by narrating that *“there is a need that the curriculum content to be lectured to students in the South African Universities be realigned so that it resonates with the transformative pedagogy together with the digitalization platforms currently available for convenient teaching and learning”*. Views and experiences of research respondents are spot-on in terms of accentuating that any form of misalignment between the curriculum content to be delivered and the mode of delivery will rob both students and lecturers of the opportunity to benefit from implementing transformative pedagogy and digitalized platforms at the university settings.⁵⁹

Making Schooling Fun instead of a Burden

The perpetual complaint of current university students being a burden due to caring less about their studies stands to subside immediately transformative pedagogy as well as digitalized platforms are made

⁵⁵ Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead and Love*.

⁵⁶ Borman, “You Have to Break a Child's Spirit.”

⁵⁷ Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead and Love*.

⁵⁸ Jakes. *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Live, Lead and Love*.

⁵⁹ Erin Rooney Riggs et al., “Technical Standards for the Interpretation and Reporting of Constitutional Copy-Number Variants: A Joint Consensus Recommendation of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG) and the Clinical Genome Resource (ClinGen)” (Elsevier, 2020).

part and parcel of the higher education sector. Their potential to revitalise both learning and teaching at the university space is not in doubt.⁶⁰ On the said matter, Respondent E maintains that *“as long as adequate provision of digital infrastructure enabled through the transformative pedagogy is not prioritised by the South African Universities, then, the lamentation of university students treating their studies as a burden could persist”*. Respondent D reminds that *“there is a great likelihood that not everyone at the South African University is ready to break away from the past and embrace transformative pedagogy which is being facilitated through the digitalized platforms to modernise teaching and learning at the space of universities”*. Utterances of research participants emphasise that yes insufficient digital infrastructure is still a problem at South African Universities, to the level of preventing enjoyment of the benefits of digitalization platforms available and its concomitant transformative pedagogy.

Promotion of Social Justice

Existing inequalities in every sector of a society including the University education or space, deserve attention. Embracing transformative pedagogy together with the digitalized platforms could contribute to their mitigation.⁶¹ Realistically speaking, eradication of social inequality is unthinkable with the absence of social justice especially within the university space. On the mentioned matter, Respondent C divulges that *“there are various routes to be followed toward the elimination of any form of inequality in this world one of which is the promotion of social justice in every human space”*. In support of the articulated point, Respondent F reveals that *“the absence of social equality as a precursor to experiencing social justice has to spur people on to do something about that state of affairs before getting used to living in a space devoid of social equality that normally precedes the longed for social justice”*. Evidently, university graduates produced in a university environment, which lacks both social equality and justice are likely never to become community-need-driven in their service back to the society and could as well struggle to discover their true African identity, which is housed in social equality and justice.⁶²

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the history of apartheid and colonialism that affected even the University education landscape then, the researcher proposes for guiding HDUs to put apex priority to acquisition of digitalization platforms within the transformative pedagogy context to be on par with their counterparts. South African Universities and policy makers deserve to prioritise the allocation of resources for digital infrastructure development and reliable internet connectivity under the guidance of the transformative pedagogy, which helps to reshape the University education landscape. Furthermore, South African Universities need to offer regular professional development opportunities, workshops and training sessions to equip lecturers and students with the skills need, to effectively cope within the transformative pedagogy arena that utilises digitalisation platforms. Effective integration of digitalization platforms require alignment with pedagogical goals. Additionally, the researcher proposes for the acknowledgement of transformative pedagogy in to prepare scholars of the 21st century to harmonise the world of schooling and that of the outside world of life. Moreover, embracing transformative pedagogy is significant by virtue of an activist pedagogy which incorporates digitalized platforms within the constructivist and critical pedagogy terrains. Finally, the transformative pedagogy is worth recommending due to encouraging scholars to critically examine their beliefs, values and knowledge despite the utilisation of the digitalised platforms.

CONCLUSION

From the reviewed literature and responses secured from research respondents of the three sampled universities, this paper uncovered that a multiplicity of factors were at play as regards challenges associated with the utilization of digitalization platforms within the transformed pedagogy. Some

⁶⁰ Lee, “Consistent Discipline Vital for Teaching Pupils Respect.”

⁶¹ Lee, “Consistent Discipline Vital for Teaching Pupils Respect.”

⁶² Bingimlas, “Barriers to the Successful Integration of ICT in Teaching and Learning Environments: A Review of the Literature.”

challenges affecting both the transformed pedagogy and the digitalization platforms emanate from lecturers themselves, others are from students while others are ICT infrastructure-related. The use of ICT in teaching and learning development within the university space and within the transformative pedagogy contributes positively to the ushering of a new university education landscape. Vividly, a transformative pedagogy coupled with digitalization platforms could enhance lecturers' professional growth as they are familiar to the digital tools that they can use in their teaching activities. The findings presented highlight the importance of ICT in teaching and learning environments as it empowers lecturers in digital skills. Lecturers get an opportunity to apply innovations, in their teaching and present the study material in a more refined manner easily understood by the students facilitated by the transformative pedagogy. Agreeable to TPACK theory which confirms that both the transformative pedagogy and the digitalization platforms play a vital role in instructional environments as it potentially has an impact on the type of exposure and professional development experiences that are designed for both lecturers and students.⁶³ Lecturers and students need to possess a certain level of technological proficiency for effective use digitalization platforms as ensconced within the transformative pedagogy that refreshes teaching and learning. Varying levels of digital literacy among lecturers and students, misaligned curriculum and inadequate digital infrastructure within the non-transformative pedagogical set up of a university, can limit the successful integration of digitalization platforms into the transformed pedagogy of the South African Universities.

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⁶³ Schmidt et al., "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) the Development and Validation of an Assessment Instrument for Preservice Teachers," 125.

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