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Interactive pedagogy elevating learners as producers of knowledge in the isiZulu classroom

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The modern era demands a radical pedagogical shift and a complete overhaul of traditional teaching methods that flaunt teachers as the sole producers of knowledge and learners as impetuous consumers of knowledge. In this article I propose interactive teaching methods and strategies as the pedagogical approach to be advocated by 21st-century isiZulu teachers so that learners are empowered on all cognitive levels as producers of knowledge. This pedagogical shift in the isiZulu classroom has the power to revoke the historical debt of the marginalisation of indigenous African languages, which native speakers of these languages inherited from the apartheid education system of South Africa. Used as the guiding theoretical framework, the transformative learning theory is set to challenge the status quo and disrupt the current instructional classroom practice that is regressive to change demanded by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The participatory action research methodology, reflecting the encounters with student teachers at a teacher education institution in South Africa, provides a critical analysis of how interactive teaching methods and strategies can be used in an authentic classroom environment.

Keywords: interactive teaching and learning pedagogy; isiZulu classroom; participatory action methodology; transformative learning theory

Introduction

The traditional teaching methods that elevated teachers as the sole providers of knowledge and learners as the consumers thereof might have been applicable in the olden days, but now, the calibre of learners have changed. Teachers in the modern era are dealing with a new breed of learners whose understanding of the world is influenced by the digital space. Shahroom and Hussin (2018:316) explain how the brain of the 21st-century learner functions:

They have their own particular manners of understanding and articulation. Advanced locals exploit the tremendous assets of the internet and computerized innovations to make something imaginative, inventive and expressive in spite of digital security issue. These techno-addicts and Wi-Fi generation likewise incline toward an intelligent way to deal with learning which mixes data through framework joining by means of an intricate montage of pictures, symbols, sound, video, recreation activity, diversions, and artificial intelligence (AI).

The onus is on us as teacher educators to embrace innovative ways of teaching students so that they are fully equipped to face the demands of the 21st-century learners in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Teacher educators, therefore, are tasked with the responsibility to redesign the curriculum and employ interactive methods and strategies that would awaken a sense of responsibility in future teachers because skills and knowledge should reflect our common values as society (Schleicher, 2019).

The emphasis on changing the mind-set of future educators to become advocates of change in their classrooms and embrace technological advancements highlights the symbiosis between human capital and the digital space where one cannot survive without the other. It, therefore, is imperative to note that technology cannot replace teachers in the classroom because there are things that technology cannot do, such as abstract cognitive reasoning, making sound ethical judgements, coding and decoding of complex contextual information, and building effective bonds with and among the learners (Taguma, Feron & Lim, 2018).

Interactive methods and strategies, if employed effectively in the classroom, could create a space for isiZulu teachers and learners to navigate between the physical, digital, and biological spheres (Schwab, 2017) and thus make learning and teaching of isiZulu congruent with the demands of the modern era. In this article I engage with the question: "How would the process of transformation of the traditional teaching methods to interactive teaching methods and strategies happen in the isiZulu classroom?" To answer this question, I use transformative learning as the theory guiding and informing the argument, and participatory action research as the methodological approach in presenting and analysing data of the lived classroom teaching practice of a lecturer of isiZulu and students of isiZulu at a South African teacher education institution.

Literature Review

The dynamism of teaching in the 21st century

In this section I succinctly explain the dynamism of teaching in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. To capture the relevant literature, this section is divided into three sub-sections, namely, understanding interactive teaching and learning pedagogy, understanding the implementation of the interactive learning pedagogy, and understanding the 21st-century learner and the benefit of technology and digital media.

Understanding interactive teaching and learning pedagogy

Interaction can be understood in a generic context “as a general term for various types of mutual action between two or more systems” (Pedagoški Leksikon, 2000:203). In a classroom environment, the interaction will then specifically mean verbal and non-verbal interjections between the teacher and the learners or learners among themselves.

The interaction between the teacher and learners or among learners happens effectively if the teacher understands the pedagogy he or she intends to follow as the guiding principle of the lesson. Peel (2020:1) defines pedagogy as

[t]he study of teaching methods, including the aims of education and the ways in which such goals may be achieved. The field relies heavily on educational psychology, which encompasses scientific theories of learning, and to some extent on the philosophy of education, which considers the aims and value of education from a philosophical perspective.

Hence, the philosophical learning method and strategy advocated in this article is interactive teaching and learning pedagogy. Interactive teaching and learning pedagogy demands that the teacher and learners know exactly what their roles are and develop a positive mentality towards achieving the common goal, which is mutual responsibility in generating knowledge. Since interactive teaching and learning pedagogy requires mutual action from a teacher and learners, it should always be “characterised with a high level of inclusion of the pupil” (Xhemajli, 2016:32) in the process of teaching and learning. The inclusion of learners in the process of generating knowledge is based on the philosophical framework and principles of the theory of social constructivism, which considers the learners’ prior knowledge that they have acquired from home or the communities from which they come (Xhemajli, 2016). The interactive teaching and learning pedagogy probes the multidimensional role of the teacher as a facilitator, trainer, assistant, coach, motivator, life-long learner, researcher, psychologist, assessor, and parent to surface so that learners can do the best they can in achieving the desired outcomes of the lesson (Musai, 2014).

Understanding the implementation of the interactive learning pedagogy

Teachers must know why they use interactive teaching and learning pedagogy and how to use it. Senthamarai (2018:S36) explains the significance of interactive teaching and learning pedagogy as follows:

The strategies aim to promote critical and reflective thinking, research and evaluation skills that will help students to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate for their own and other’s health, well-being and safety. Students use personal and social capability to work collaboratively with others in learning activities, to

appreciate their own strengths and abilities and those of their peers and develop a range of interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, teamwork, leadership and an appreciation of diverse perspectives.

The interpersonal skills mentioned above are essential in the Fourth Industrial Revolution because technology and AI cannot offer emotional intelligence and teamwork. For learners to learn the skills and values required in the 21st century, teachers must involve learners in classroom activities by posing stimulating questions to ignite robust discussion. They must encourage a variety of answers through brainstorming sessions, create an authentic scenario that will resonate with the learners’ real world or lived experiences, tap into their prior knowledge and skills, allow for a range of learning styles, promote both individual and cooperative learning, and exercise flexibility and innovation in using a variety of teaching aids, including technology and digital media. Teachers are professionals in their respective fields or disciplines. The onus, therefore, is on them “to use their professional judgement to review the suggested strategies and decide on the most appropriate for meeting the needs of their students” (Senthamarai, 2018:S36).

Interactive teaching and learning pedagogy requires of teachers to abandon how they were taught when they were school learners and become innovative in their practice. “Unlike traditional teaching where great attention is dedicated to the teaching contents, interactive teaching pays greater importance to the way in which knowledge is acquired” (Xhemajli, 2016:33). How knowledge is acquired directly affects how learners grow to become critical thinkers and problem-solvers rather than being consumers of knowledge. This allows learners to navigate through different spheres of reaching conclusions about the phenomenon as they “are expected to use their imaginations to redefine the problems from different perspectives and establish a connection between new material and previous experience, through discovery” (Meshram, 2015:3).

Understanding the 21st-century learner and the benefit of technology and digital media

The 21st-century teacher should know how critical it is to integrate technology into his or her teaching practice (Gumbi, 2019). The calibre of 21st-century learners is different to the previous generation because they have short attention spans, they are good at multitasking, they want instant results and have easy access to communication or information through using digital technology (Matulich, Papp & Haytko, 2008). Digital media and technology allow this 21st-century learner to be audacious, self-motivated, and to achieve the best results and set highly-challenging learning goals for

themselves (Doll, Spies, LeClair, Kurien & Foley, 2010).

In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution where technology dominates the space, teachers must ensure that they are self-motivated and technologically inclined so that their learners do not lose momentum. Teachers should use innovative teaching methods that are in line with their learners' curiosity and desire for more knowledge to cultivate a conducive climate suitable for effective teaching and learning (Darner, 2009; Kajee & Balfour, 2011).

It is imperative that the 21st-century teacher understands the calibre of learners he or she is teaching and that the 21st-century learners are attached to technology. Technology, therefore, should be used to achieve the goals of the lesson (Considine, Horton & Moorman, 2009).

As much as teachers acknowledge the significance of integrating technology in their classrooms, such knowledge may be worthless if not accompanied by essential technological application skills. A study by Gumbi (2019) indicates that the lack of training of isiZulu teachers, especially in the disadvantaged schools of KwaZulu-Natal, on how to integrate technology, is one of the reasons why most isiZulu teachers do not use technology in their classrooms. This, according to Gumbi (2019), is delaying the current agenda of intellectualisation of isiZulu and makes it hard for researchers to find substantial data to justify how technology is used in the classroom to enhance the learning experiences of isiZulu learners in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Gumbi (2019) concedes that there are other challenges such as the lack of infrastructure but insists that the lack of professional development of teachers in terms of technical and pedagogical support supersedes everything.

Gumbi might be correct considering the fact that the majority of 21st-century learners have access to smart phones that can be utilised as alternative devices instead of computers and iPads. Dlutu (2013), in a study on the impact of social network sites on isiXhosa-speaking learners in the Eastern Cape, discovered that learners in both rural and urban areas have access to smart phones. Dlutu (2013) offers a solution that government should rather invest in programmes to empower teachers and software programmers to develop teaching materials and programs that are downloadable and usable on cell phones instead of computers and iPads. Both Dlutu (2013) and Gumbi (2019) applaud government for developing policies that seek to advance the integration of technology in South African schools and advancement of African languages. These policies, however, are worthless if there is no empowerment of teachers and development of learning software that allow learners to use their cell phones as learning tools.

This is, therefore, the reason why it is still difficult to find data on how African languages such as isiZulu have advanced in the integration of technology (Gumbi, 2019).

A shift from traditional teaching methods to interactive teaching and learning can transform the classroom. The following section on the theoretical framework explains how it is imperative to transform the way of doing things so that people become progressive in what they do.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding the research reported on in this article is transformative learning theory. Transformative learning theory, as the term suggests, transforms how people think about the purpose of education. Frenk, Chen, Bhutta, Cohen, Crisp, Evans, Fineberg, Garcia, Ke, Kelley, Kistnasamy, Meleis, Naylor, Pablos-Mendez, Reddy, Scrimshaw, Sepulveda, Serwadda and Zurayk (2010:6) succinctly explain the three levels of educational outcomes as follows:

We regard transformative learning as the highest of three successive levels, moving from informative to formative to transformative learning. Informative learning is about acquiring knowledge and skills; its purpose is to produce experts. Formative learning is about socializing students around values; its purpose is to produce professionals. Transformative learning is about developing leadership attributes; its purpose is to produce enlightened change agents.

In this article I advocate the transformative learning theory because South Africa is in dire need of leaders who are enlightened agents of change. There is a need for leaders who can use reasoning, not petty partisan, ethnical, religious, and racial sentiments, in dealing with the social ills of the 21st century. There is no other space than the classroom where these leaders can be nurtured, and teachers must produce such leaders.

IsiZulu is often regarded as a regional language limited to the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and understood or spoken by some in other provinces such as Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape. This perception sometimes results in few South African student teachers choosing isiZulu as a major. The transformative learning theory, therefore, is a viable grounding framework aimed at changing the narrative around the teaching of isiZulu and the purpose of teaching it.

The aim of teaching isiZulu using the interactive teaching and learning pedagogy, grounded in transformative theory, is to prepare isiZulu teachers and learners who are critical social agents; not only locally but also globally connected and aware of local and global issues, with adequate competencies to deal with complex issues "from interdisciplinary perspectives, apply their learning across diverse areas and situations" (Enkhtur & Yamamoto, 2017:208). Information without transformation is inadequate, as there is no need for

filling the learners' containers with volumes of information instead of expanding the containers so that the learners can navigate different spheres of problem-solving and bring change to their communities and the world (Kegan, 2009).

Methodology

The participatory action research methodological design was employed to gather data on how interactive teaching and learning pedagogy was used in an authentic isiZulu classroom at a teacher education institution in South Africa. I worked with first-year student teachers who took isiZulu as their major and who were registered for the subject, isiZulu prose and introduction to literary theories in education. The module is presented in the second semester and it focuses on the theories and practical application of theories to teach literary work such as novels, short stories, and plays. The first-year students were purposively sampled because they had not had much exposure to how university lecturers conducted their classes. This was important because the interactive teaching and learning pedagogy taps into the principles of the theory of socio-constructivism, which stresses the significance of prior learning. The prior knowledge of these student teachers would help to transform their mind-set should they come from a background where their basic education teachers used traditional methods to teach isiZulu.

The participatory action research was chosen for this research because it is a "research methodology that combines theory, practice and improvement of practices in classrooms" (Niemi, 2019:651). As a lecturer of isiZulu at a teacher education institution, it was necessary to set an example to the young student teachers by demonstrating to them that researching our teaching practice should not be a daunting task or something that teachers or lecturers should be afraid of. The aim was to show student teachers that it was acceptable to make mistakes and learn from them after having received feedback from peers and the facilitator.

To avoid repeating the mistakes made by many researchers when conducting participatory action research, who, in most cases, tended to use traditional teaching methods in their teaching approach (Niemi, 2019), I used the interactive teaching and learning pedagogy. Interactive teaching and learning pedagogy was used because participatory research cannot work well if there is no interaction and collaboration between the teacher and the learners or learners among themselves. The emphasis on interaction and collaboration promotes learners' agency instead of the teacher's agency (Niemi, 2019). Learner agency means that the transformative learning theory works well with approaches such as interactive teaching and learning pedagogy and participatory

action research design in producing teachers and learners who are agents of change (Heikkinen, Huttunen & Syrjälä, 2007).

Participatory action research gives a narrative account of the functionality of the pedagogy, not the narrative of what students feel about the module. It, therefore, is a more practical approach where student teachers work in groups of four to eight to design lessons and present to the whole class on how to use interactive methods and strategies in an authentic isiZulu classroom. All student teachers enrolled for the module were included in the participatory action research although each member of the group had to participate individually.

Thorough engagement, after each group had presented, ensured that the data gathered were trustworthy and credible. The rigorous process on how the interactive pedagogy was used in practice was captured as an audio-visual recording by one of the students. One member of each group also recorded the group's presentation on a cellular phone and the recordings were forwarded to me via e-mail. I took time to analyse all the recordings and wrote a narrative account of how each group used the interactive teaching and learning pedagogy and how groups assessed each other after each presentation.

All data are presented using the thematic analysis approach. I used thematic analysis because it allows the data collected to be identified, analysed, and presented according to the patterns or themes of different interactive methods and strategies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis, because of its descriptive nature, provides the flexibility to decode, encode, and dovetail the data gathered from the isiZulu classroom (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). In the next section I provide practical examples of this and give a detailed analysis of how the student teachers used the interactive teaching and learning pedagogy in their envisaged isiZulu classroom.

Results and Discussions

IsiZulu student teachers were asked to use interactive teaching and learning pedagogies such as brainstorming, discussions, music, role-play, interviews, storytelling, and dramatized monologues during teaching. The activities that the student teachers designed required of isiZulu learners to use these pedagogies on a range of topics related to isiZulu literary books such as novels, short stories, and plays. The student teachers chose these genres as the module chosen for this research focuses on prose narratives. The book that most of the student teachers chose was the novel, *Bengithi Lizokuna* by Nakanjana Sibiyi. In my opinion the reason for this choice was that most of the participating students had read the book in Grade 12, as it was one of the prescribed books.

Since most of the activities designed by the student teachers related to this book, in the analysis, I used examples based on this novel. Data gathered are presented and analysed qualitatively using the thematic analysis.

In the modern era, isiZulu teachers are encouraged to use blended learning (i.e. mixed e-learning and face-to-face interactive teaching and learning pedagogy). The 21st-century learners do not only love technology, but they are also good at it (Considine et al., 2009). Teachers, therefore, should take advantage of the situation and ask their learners to use technology in all the interactive activities. A study by Rwodzi, De Jager and Mpofu (2020) reveals that the use of various digital platforms allows learners to work collaboratively, with the guidance of the teacher, and are able to join chat groups on Facebook or WhatsApp, Cartoon Club, spelling competition groups, and so on. The use of social media as tools of learning allows learners to engage actively in creating new knowledge “through recycling, remixing and legitimisation of the existing material” (Rwodzi, De Jager & Mpofu, 2020:a702). Learners are able to create and download YouTube videos, take and share pictures, view and analyse cartoons, texts, diagrams, tables and graphs (Rwodzi et al., 2020). All these digital platforms can be used rigorously with any of the interactive methods and techniques that are discussed in the following sections.

Using blended learning would ensure that the interaction between the teacher and learners and among learners themselves does not start and end in the classroom but is extended beyond the parameters of the physical classroom. Teachers and learners should know how to incorporate the ideas generated electronically and in the classroom to the face-to-face interactions for further interactive engagements.

The Value of Brainstorming in an IsiZulu Classroom
Brainstorming is a crucial pedagogical approach that isiZulu teachers can use to stimulate the brainpower of the 21st-century learner. Research shows that the cognitive repertoire of individuals and groups could contribute positively to generating a massive pool of ideas (Kohn, Paulus & Choi, 2011; Ritter & Mostert, 2018).

The first-year isiZulu student teachers were tasked to design lesson activities in which the pedagogy of brainstorming would be used as the teaching and learning approach.

The following are examples of questions that the student teachers designed for their envisaged isiZulu learners:

- 1) *Nicabanga ukuthi kuhle noma kubi ukuzishintsha ubulili? Sekelani izimpendulo zenu.* (Do you think transgenerism is good or bad? Support your answer.)
- 2) *Nicabanga ukuthi yiziphi izinselelo umuntu angaba nazo ngaphambi noma ngenuva kokuhlinzwa*

kokuzishintsha ubulili. (What do you think will be the challenges before and after having surgery to change your gender?)

These two examples of questions were chosen for this analysis because they summarise the primary theme of the novel, which is transgenerism.

Most of the tasks designed by the student teachers focused mainly on group brainstorming and neglected individual brainstorming. The activities required of isiZulu learners were to brainstorm in small groups and then do a presentation individually within the group. Researchers do not agree on the model of brainstorming that works best – group brainstorming or individual brainstorming. Some believe that group brainstorming might distract learners because they lose track of what is being communicated if they have to listen to each person in the group talking and by the time the group is done, they no longer remember what was articulated (Ritter & Rietzschel, 2017). Some researchers believe that individual brainstorming also has its disadvantages because it discourages shy and introverted learners to participate in the brainstorming session. Some scholars, therefore, advocate for the simultaneous use of individual and group brainstorming (Korde & Paulus, 2017). The hybrid ideation is favoured by Korde and Paulus (2017) because when individual and group ideation are used simultaneously in the classroom, several ideas that traditional individual brainstorming or group brainstorming cannot achieve, could be generated.

I do not aim to discuss which form or model of brainstorming is more effective than the other. My aim, however, was to highlighting why brainstorming was a crucial interactive teaching and learning pedagogy and how this technique can transform an isiZulu classroom. AlMutairi (2015:136) summarises the significance of brainstorming in the modern world as follows:

The globe is turning to be a small village, due to the developments in the scientific, economic and social aspects of life as well as the communication revolution results from the knowledge development and globalization. As a response to those developments and challenges, it was necessary to prepare a generation that [is] capable of confronting those challenges through changing the traditional methods of learning and teaching as well as focusing on providing students with the suitable training on different thinking styles.

Research by Balwanz and Hlatshwayo (2015), D Davis and Steyn (2012), Pillay (2014), Singh and Francis (2010) and Thomas (2009) shows that teachers are agents of change in their classrooms. Brainstorming, therefore, transforms learning by giving learners the power to use their creativity in solving problems. IsiZulu teachers can use this technique in any lesson; literature, language, creative writing, or any other theme associated with language teaching and learning. Groups may use

their cell phones to record the brainstorming sessions and then play their videos for the whole class to watch and reflect on.

The Power of Discussions in an IsiZulu Classroom
Research has shown that discussion is an effective pedagogical technique that could be used to promote the engagement of learners with the concepts that are being learnt in the classroom (Hackling, Smith & Murcia, 2011; Huang, 2005; Omatseye, 2007; Weaver & Qi, 2005).

The first-year student teachers were asked to design activities where discussion would be used as the teaching method. All groups could conceptualise topics based on prosaic genres such as novels, short stories, and novels. Following are example of the questions that were raised by one of the groups:

Umbhali wendaba, Bengithi Lizokuna, uNakanjani Sibiya usebenzise uMahlengi Ngidi njengomlingiswa ongasabi ukumela lokho akholelwa kukona. (The author of the book, *Bengithi Lizokuna*, Nakanjani Sibiya, has portrayed Mahlengi Ngidi as the character who is not afraid to fight for her beliefs.)

Sebenzisani ithiyori yokuhlaziya ubulili niveze lokhu okulandelayo (Use the gender criticism approach to analyse the following):

Yini umphakathi nomndeni obuyilindele kuMhlengi njengengane yomfana? (What were the expectations of the community and family from Mahlengi as the boy child?)

UMhlengi yena uphikisana kanjani nalokho obekulindelwe kuyena? (How does Mahlengi revolt against the expectations of the community and family?)

Research shows that group discussion as a pedagogical method is efficient in promoting team learning and student-led ideation and initiatives that will produce better performance outcomes and foster enthusiastic participation, self-confidence, and leadership qualities in learners (Perkins & Saris, 2001; Yoder & Hochevar, 2005). The discussion technique, therefore, is an essential approach for teaching and learning. Discussions can be used in any language-learning context and learners can use digital platforms such as chat groups on Facebook or WhatsApp and Cartoon Club to present, review, and engage with the concepts that are being learnt. From the above it is clear that language learners (isiZulu in this instance) will benefit from discussion as teaching and learning technique.

Transforming the IsiZulu Classroom through Singing and Songs

The pedagogical approach of using music to teach a language is scientifically effective – not only because young people love music but also because “music is a powerful stimulus for student engagement precisely because it speaks directly to our emotions while still allowing us to use our

brains to analyse it and its effects if we so wish” (Mejzini, 2016:107). The first-year isiZulu student teachers were asked to set activities in which they would use singing as the teaching and learning approach. Here is an example of the activity that one of the groups had created:

Umculo ngenye yezindlela ezinkondlozayo zokudlulisa umlayezo nokugcina ubugagu nesikompilo esizweni samaZulu. (Music is a poetic way of conveying a message and plays an integral role in preserving the culture of the Zulu people.)

a) *Emaqenjini enu, qambani iculo elichaza kabanzi ngemizwa kaNontobeko uma ethola ukuthi uMhlengi lo ayemthanda kanganga sewazishintsha waba nguMahlengi.* (In your groups, compose a song that will project the feelings of Nontobeko when she found out that Mahlengi, a man she loved so much, had surgically changed her gender and is now calling herself Mahlengi.)

b) *Manje, zinikezeni isikhathi nizilolonge ukuze iculo lelo nizolicala phambi kwekilasi.* (Now, take time to rehearse the song so that you can sing it in front of the whole class.)

The first part of the activity promotes collaboration and creativity among learners. In the second part of the activity where the envisaged isiZulu learners were expected to perform the song is based on the learning theory of behaviourism. The theory of behaviourism analyses the behaviour of learners when they imitate the sounds of the language through body movements so that they can connect emotionally, cognitively, and psychologically with the message that is being conveyed (Mejzini, 2016).

The teaching approach of using music, singing, and rhymes to ignite the creativity of learners can be used to teach any language topic. It can be used to teach literature, language, grammar, and creative writing. Džanić and Pejić (2016:51) explain the benefits of using music as a pedagogical method in teaching a language:

Songs can have a great impact on learners because of their multi-modal characteristics and may connect with the language in many different ways. Singing helps practise listening skills, vocalize the words and expressions and practice [*sic*] their pronunciation, and if students dance along with singing then it connects the language with gestures and movements. The readiness with which young children accept songs helps teachers include them as their classroom routine and create an enjoyable and inspiring atmosphere. Therefore, no matter what type of song representation or activity teachers choose, the research has proven that songs definitely influence language acquisition and enhance motivation. Thus, they should be a main component of any young learner’s language program.

The information provided above proves that songs, rhymes, and hymns could transform the classroom environment and it is recommended that any progressive teacher should try this approach in his

or her lessons. The technique of using singing and songs as pedagogy can be applied to any language-learning context and learners can use digital platforms such as YouTube to share their recorded songs with the class as their songs may be accessed at any given time.

Stimulating IsiZulu Learners' Desire to Engage in the Lesson through Role-play

A role-played lesson lives permanently in the minds of learners and improves their communication capabilities such as arguing a point, organising ideas, group discussions, and interpreting and inferring meaning (Zhang, 2010). IsiZulu student teachers were asked to design activities for their envisaged learners and the following extracts were taken from one of the tasks that were presented:

Indaba isifike kuvuthondaba lapho onke amaqiniso ezohlala obala. (The story has now reached the climax where the truth will be revealed.)

Hlanganisani umdlalo omfishane enizowuthulela ikilasi ogxile esiphethweni sale ndaba. (Write a script based on the ending of the story.)

This exercise will allow the envisaged isiZulu learners to use their creativity to write dialogue and put words in the mouths of the characters that were originally not furnished in the book itself. This does not only promote collaboration among learners but it also stimulates their creativity. They work as a team to achieve a common goal and average-performing learners can benefit from the help of high academic achievers. "The exercise is effective for both of them since strong students can increase their ability to explain the procedure to the weak students and the process would keep them socially prepared with concern for one another" (Rojas & Villafuerte, 2018:729). Role-play, as a learning approach, therefore, encourages all learners to be actively involved in the process of learning that further increases their opportunity to achieve the desired outcome (Laguador, 2014). Role-play can be used in any language-learning context and learners can create videos and share on digital platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and others.

Changing the Rules of Classroom Engagements through Interviews

Little has been written about using interviewing as a teaching technique. I am convinced that interviewing has invaluable benefits for both the teacher and the learners. The technique assists learners to go beyond what is in the textbook by elaborating on the concept. The teacher can assess whether the learners grasp the fundamental principles of the concept to readjust the teaching styles accordingly (Ebert & McKenzie, 1989).

IsiZulu student teachers were asked to design an activity for their envisaged learners using the

interviewing approach as learning pedagogy, and this is what one of the groups presented:

Wena usanda kushintsha ubulili bakho, waziguqula waba ngumuntu wesifazane, negama walishintsha wazibiza ngoMahlengi esikhundleni sikaMhlengi. Manje ubize isithangami sabezindaba ukuzochaza ukuthi yingani uthathe lesi sinqumo. (You have just changed your gender surgically from being a woman to a man and changed your name from Mhlengi to Mahlengi. Now you have called a media briefing to explain why you took this decision.)
Eqenjini lenu bhalani imibuzo enizoyibuza uMahlengi ezoveza onke amaqiniso ngesinqumo asithathile nanokuthi sizoba namiphi imiphumela empilweni yakhe. Nizobese niyazilungiselela-ke ukulingisa umsebenzi wenu ngaphambi kwekilasi. (In your group, write the questions that you will direct to Mahlengi to get all the details behind her decision and how this decision will affect her life going forward. Then, you will be required to dramatize the interview.)

The task requires of isiZulu learners not only to be creative but also to display their dramatic skills that further sharpen their verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Although this task was designed for a face-to-face interview presentation, learners can use other ways to deliver dramatization. Learners might prefer to use technology such as telephones, Skype, and emails, depending on whether teachers want to assess oral or writing skills.

Storytelling as a Teaching Technique that can Transform an IsiZulu Classroom

Storytelling as an educational technique does not need any fancy equipment or first-class facilities. The learners only need to use their imaginations by cultivating their listening and speaking powers to produce artistic images (Mokhtar, Halim & Kamarulzaman, 2011).

IsiZulu student teachers were asked to design a task for their envisaged learners using storytelling as a teaching and learning technique, and the following was produced by one of the groups:

Sebenzani ngamaqembu nibhale indaba elanda ngobuhlobo bukaMahlengi noXolani, niyiqale kusukela beqala ukubonana kuze kube yilapho uXolani ethola khona onke amaqiniso ngoMahlengi. Manje khethani oyedwa eqenjini lenu ozoyethula le ndaba ekilasini. (Work in groups to write a narrative account of the relationship between Mahlengi and Xolani – your story should start when they first met to when all was revealed at the end of the book. Now choose one person who will narrate the story in class.)

Learners could not engage in this activity unless they had read and understood the story, which means that through storytelling, learners can learn reading and comprehension skills. In addition to learning those skills, storytelling "can [also] encourage students to explore their expressiveness and can heighten a student's ability to

communicate thoughts and feelings in an articulate, lucid manner” (Mokhtar et al., 2011:164). The isiZulu learners would, therefore, benefit immensely from this activity, as they would be able to learn all four basic language competencies, namely reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Learners can also use any relevant digital platforms to present, review, and engage with the concepts that are being learnt.

How Dramatized Monologues can Transform the isiZulu Classroom

Using monologues in teaching a language is effective because it allows learners to dramatize what is being learnt and thus, making the lesson enjoyable. “Monologue is a generally uninterrupted speech or narrative that tells a complete story or expresses a complete line of thought” (Davis, J 2007:179).

IsiZulu student teachers were asked to design an activity where their envisaged learners would write monologues that they would recite for the entire class. One of the groups produced the following:

Indaba isifike esiphethelweni manje namaqiniso ngoMahlengi asavele ahlala obala. Wonke umuntu ushaqekile, amathe abuyele kwasifuba. Luqaqeke ulimi kuMahlengi, akhulume inkulumo yakhe ngayedwa eyiqondise kuwo wonke umuntu owayekhona lapho kungekho noyedwa omphazamisayo. (The story has reached its ending and all has been revealed about Mahlengi. Everyone is in shock and dumbfounded. It was Mahlengi who broke the silence and gave an uninterrupted monologue that was directed to everyone in the room.)

Bhalani inkulumo leyo emaqenjini enu bese nikhetha umuntu oyedwa ozoyethula ngendlela esamdalo. (In your groups, write the monologue and then choose one person who will recite it dramatically.)

The above activity required of isiZulu learners to compose a monologue that was not furnished in the novel. This exercise, therefore, requires of the learners to be creative, to show a deep understanding of the events in the novel and to connect those events in their own words. This retrieval mechanism has nothing to do with reproducing or reciting the exact words of the text, which is why it is conceived as an effective learning pedagogy (McDermott, Arnold & Nelson, 2014; Roediger & Karpicke, 2006). Monologues are effective because they compress dense information into an abridged narrative account, thus allowing learners to unpack the concepts in a short space of time. Although monologues are delivered by one person, they are a “personal and participatory speech act” (Davis, J 2007:179), which demands undivided attention from the spectators and engaging dramatic and oral skills from the presenter. Learners can also use any

relevant digital platforms to present, review, and engage with the concepts that are being learnt.

Conclusion

The article was conceptualised and contextualised at a South African teacher education institution. The transformative theory was used to frame the argument that interactive teaching and learning pedagogy is critical in transforming the learning space. Also that isiZulu learners would benefit immensely if their teachers could discard traditional teaching methods and embrace innovative and progressive interactive methods.

IsiZulu teachers should take cognisance of the fact that they work with a new breed of learners in their classrooms who are conscious of the world around them and who are techno-addicts. Twenty-first-century learners are easily distracted if the lesson is not stimulating and if technology is not integrated into the teaching and learning process. Traditional teaching methods, therefore, have no relevance for these learners, which Yukhimenko, Mefodeva, Belyaeva and Grigorieva (2017:61) found in their study.

Conventional teaching does not develop learners’ independence; non-adaptable authoritarian methods of teaching form a negative self-perception of the personality; lowering of self-esteem and lack of collaboration in the learning process do not promote students’ desire for interactive activity.

Interactive teaching and learning pedagogy is there to transform the way of learning because it is an approach that is grounded in the principles of the theory of socio-constructivism, which considers learners’ prior learning and experiences. So, interactive teaching and learning pedagogy does not merely emphasise the results as the ultimate product of learning but it emphasises the “how” part of getting to the final product (Gupta, 2011).

Education has no value if it is not transformative. The isiZulu student teachers, therefore, were asked to design lesson activities incorporating the interactive teaching and learning pedagogy into their envisaged isiZulu classrooms. Interactive teaching and learning pedagogies, according to Kutbiddinova, Eromasova and Romanova (2016:6560), can

... arouse the students’ interest, they encourage the active participation of everyone in the educational process, appeal to the feelings of each participant, contribute to the efficient absorption of the material being studied, have a multifaceted impact on students, allow giving feedback, form life skills and promote the behaviour change.

The participatory action research in which the student teachers and the author embarked revealed that all the interactive activities that the student teachers had designed could also be made enjoyable and purposeful if digital platforms such as video conferencing, Facebook, or WhatsApp

chats were infused into the learning process. These digital platforms do not only entice the learners' appetite to studying hard but are also in line with modern innovative ways of blended learning.

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