Exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for teaching and learning

by

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DECLARATION

I, <u>Frederik Willem Matthys Knoetze</u>, declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree at any other university. It has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education at the University of Stellenbosch.

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ABSTRACT

In an era of increasing enthusiasm for digital and Internet-mediated educational practices, and their implications for social justice and access to education, there remains a sense of weariness amongst public school educators when it comes to the actual practice of digitally facilitated teaching and learning. Amongst the many Web 2.0 social and creative platforms that are being advocated; blogging for learning seems to offer a bridge from traditional to more digital pedagogies. Given the fundamentals of Halliday's (1993) Language-based Theory of Learning, the question remains whether modern, South African teachers see the potential of blogging in their own educational practices. This study aims to explore pre-service teachers' perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning, with consideration of their professed understanding of the potential thereof compared to their own online writing over one year. To this end, working within a framework of integrated methodologies (layering Sociocultural Theory of Learning, Situated Theory of Learning, and Ecological perspectives of learning), a case study of the graduating class of Stellenbosch University's 2015 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme was conducted. Data from a semi-structured survey is compared to participants' own blogging practices (as recorded via observation) and -posts (artefact analysis). Numeric and narrative participant data are analysed for significance and correlation. Findings are discussed and conclusions drawn from participants' professed understanding and intentions compared to their actual blogging activities. Despite evidence of passive attitudes and consumption-focused practices in terms of online learning, data suggests developing possibilities of blogging for language and content learning. Avenues for further research are identified.

Keywords

Affordance, Blogging, Blogging for learning, Blogs, Communities of Practice, Digital Pedagogy, ICT, Language-Based Theory of Learning, Learning, Online writing, Perceptions of utility, PGCE, Semiotics, Teacher Training, Writing for Learning.

OPSOMMING

In 'n era van toenemende entoesiasme vir digitale en internet gemedieerde onderwyspraktyke en hul implikasies vir sosiale geregtigheid en toegang tot onderwys, blyk daar steeds 'n gevoel van traagheid onder openbare skoolopvoeders te heers wanneer dit kom by die werklike praktyke van digitaal gefasiliteerde onderrig en leer. Onder die vele Web 2.0 sosiale en kreatiewe platforms wat besing word; lyk dit of die skryf van blogs (ook genoem *blogging)* vir leerdoeleindes 'n brug van tradisionele tot meer digitale pedagogieë aanbied. Gegewe die grondbeginsels van Halliday (1993) se Taalgebaseerde Leerteorie, bly die vraag of moderne Suid-Afrikaanse onderwysers die potensiaal van *blogging* in hul eie onderwyspraktyke sien. Hierdie studie het ten doel om voordiens onderwysers se persepsies van die nut van *blogging* vir leer te ondersoek, met inagneming van hul beweerde begrip van die potensiaal daarvan, in vergelyking met hul eie aanlyn skryfwerk oor die tydperk van een jaar. Om dit te doen word 'n raamwerk van geïntegreerde metodologieë (Sosiokulturele Leerteorie, Gegewe Teorie van Leer en Ekologiese Perspektiewe van Leer) gebruik waarvolgens 'n gevallestudie van die graduerende klas van die Universiteit Stellenbosch se Nagraadse Onderwyssertifikaat (NOS) program in 2015 uitgevoer is. Data uit 'n semigestruktureerde opname word vergelyk met die deelnemers se eie blogpraktyke (soos aangeteken deur middel van waarneming) en publikasies (artefakanalise). Numeriese en narratiewe deelnemersdata word geanaliseer vir betekenis en korrelasie. Bevindinge word bespreek en gevolgtrekkings getrek uit deelnemers se beweerde begrip van en voornemens om blogs te gebruik, in vergelyking met hul werklike blog aktiwiteite. Ten spyte van bewyse van passiewe houdings en verbruiksgefokusde gebruike in terme van aanlyn leerpraktyke, stel die data voor dat die moontlikheid om te blog vir taal- en inhoudsleer aan die ontwikkel is. Moontlikhede vir verdere navorsing word geïdentifiseer.

Sleutelwoorde

Aanlyn skryfwerk, Blogging, Blogs, Blog vir leer, Praktyksgemeenskappe, Digitale Pedagogie, IKT, Taalgebaseerde Leerteorie, Leer, Persepsies van nut, NOS, Onderwyseropleiding, Semiotiek, Skryf vir leer, Vergunnings (*Affordances*).

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandparents:

- Frederik Willem Matthys & Othilje Knoetze,

- Lourens Andries Stephanus & Rachel Maria van Aswegen.

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1. Orientation to the study

1.1.   Introduction

The seemingly perpetual, rapid development and dissemination of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) worldwide (Annan, 2013; Duncan, 2013; Goundar, 2011; Mitrovic, Taylor, Sharif, Claassen, & Wesso, 2013) continues to pose ever greater opportunities for intercultural exchange and learning (Duncan, 2013; Warschauer & Liaw, 2011). Concurrently, increasingly affordable and available bandwidth, data, and internet enabled devices promise to grant more and more people access to the same[1] information (Goundar, 2011; Holmner & Britz, 2013; Olwal, Masonta, Mfupe, & Mzyece, 2013), irrespective of their social status, economic means or level of schooling[2]. Such unbridled, broad-based dissemination of nearly all human knowledge, information, and data artefacts could potentially democratise education – and narrow at least some sociocultural and digital divides (Deng & Yuen, 2012; Holmner & Britz, 2013; Mangeni, Hamdounm, Ennser, & Dwivedi, 2013; O'Brien & Scharber, 2008; Olwal *et al.*, 2013). It is therefore a reasonable assumption that access to, and participation in global trends in information exchange and -creation will increasingly transcend traditional boundaries of class, culture, gender, language and other socio-economic or geo-spatial restraints (Holmner & Britz, 2013; Mangeni *et al.*, 2013; Mitrovic *et al.*, 2013). Consequently, such developments could lead to the creation of new, and new kinds of spaces for learning and multimodal engagement. Among these, digital spaces for learning seem to be gaining in popularity, with both

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[1] In terms of Open Domain (freely available) content. Membership, subscription-based or single-use license costs, among others, may still reserve, protect, or isolate some information. (e.g. Government systems, financial institutions, for-profit content creators, curators, distributors etc.)

[2] Automatic translation services, text-to-voice and voice-to-text applications, and similar innovative advances have the potential to bridge literacy divides to greater or lesser degrees.

traditional universities (e.g. Michigan Institute of Technology[3], University of Oxford[4], Harvard University[5], Yale University[6], University of Stellenbosch[7]) and new, online providers (e.g. Khan Academy[8], Coursera[9], FunDza[10], Udacity[11], Lynda.com[12]) providing free[13] or 'more affordable' access to education via the Internet. While many of the available online courses include audio and video content (podcasts, live streaming etc.), readings and written work remain core aspects of online teaching and learning.

In this study, I explore the potential impact of online writing on learning in South Africa. I do this from the perspective of incoming 'field agents' of our Education system – a new generation of teachers. My intent with this study is to begin exploring possible language-based digital pedagogies as possible solutions to the educational disparities faced by many South Africans. I have to, however, acknowledge the reality that the best solutions in the world would be for naught if the implementation thereof was not supported and effected by our teachers. Notably, a common motivation for further exploration and pedagogical development in the use of technology, is "a concern that education may be becoming increasingly out of step" with modern-day social and economic practices (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 7). News-media coverage of the South African education system[14], its policies and its practices seem to underscore the

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[3] https://ocw.mit.edu
[4] www.conted.ox.ac.uk/online
[5] http://online-learning.harvard.edu
[6] http://oyc.yale.edu
[7] https://www.futurelearn.com/partners/stellenbosch
[8] www.khanacademy.org
[9] www.coursera.org
[10] https://live.fundza.mobi
[11] www.udacity.com
[12] www.lynda.com
[13] Not counting costs of access to ICT and connecting to the Internet.
[14] For an up-to-date overview, visit the News24 archive at https://www.news24.com/Tags/Topics/education

disparate ways in which institutions of learning are struggling to meet the needs and expectations of learners (Jansen, 2015; Mulder, 2015; South Africa's education crisis enough to make you weep, 2015; Koen, 2016; South Africa's education system is one of the worst in the world: report, 2017; Gossel, 2017). On the one end of the spectrum, learners are not provided with the basic necessities (e.g. shelter, books) for learning – and on the other end are learners whose expectations of education continuously change in the light of their digitally mediated lives and experiences. Knowing this, and keeping in mind that soon "entry into communities of learners may be dependent on electronic communication" (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 14), it is important for my research to pay attention to the perceptions of PGCE trainees as soon-to-be South African teachers towards online writing for learning. Given the scope of this dissertation, I am able to focus on a small study population from which valuable insights are to be gained in support of further research into writing- and/or language-based teaching and learning.

Believing that "learning through language[15]" (Wells, 1994, p. 42) might hold the key to making equal education a reality, some interesting possibilities seem to be staring us in the face. Lantolf, Thorne and Poehner (2015, p. 210) find language to be "the most pervasive and powerful cultural artifact [sic] that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves." A closer exploration of the literature supporting a language-based theory of learning follows in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Briefly, though, Halliday (1993, p. 93) explains how, from the development of the human faculty of language, "a new form of expression has evolved, that we call writing, and following on from this a new, institutionalised form of learning that we call education." Halliday claims that encoding the totality as well as each

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[15] Understood as referring to the human faculty of language, and not to any one particular language *per se*.

aspect of personal experience in semiotic[16] terms is a "characteristic of the human species" (Halliday, 1993, p. 113). John-Steiner and Mahn (1996, p. 192) also see semiotic mediation as "key to all aspects of knowledge construction." Language, as a human semiotic, is therefore not only the way in which humans learn to mediate their interconnectedness with different realities, but it is also the means by which this is achieved. In one of his papers on the development of a language-based theory of learning, Wells (1994, p. 42) starts off his analysis of both Halliday and Vygotsky's theoretical work by quoting Halliday:

When children learn language, they are not simply engaging in one type of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundations of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language. Hence the ontogenesis [the development or course of development] of language is at the same time the ontogenesis of learning (Halliday, 1993, p. 93).

As a human semiotic, ICT-mediated writing and content creation and distribution activities allow us to engage with the world, to recreate and share personal experiences and realities in increasingly novel ways. Such activities include the acts of creating, maintaining and/or publishing to: blogs (defined by Deng and Yuen (2012, p. 48) as "easy-to-update websites with dated entries presented in reverse chronological order"), microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Mastodon), social networking platforms, image sharing services, as well as vlog- (Gao, Tian, Huang, & Yang, 2010) and podcast hosting and distribution services (Beamish & Brown, 2012; Campbell, 2005; Heilesen, 2010). Evidently, machine- and network-mediated

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[16] Merriam-Webster defines *semiotics* as: "a general philosophical theory of signs and symbols that deals especially with their function in both artificially constructed and natural languages and comprises syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics" ('Definition of SEMIOTICS', n.d.)

expression and communication has altered the way we look at and think about ourselves, the world, and ourselves in the world. Chances are that such alteration and reconfiguration of our perspectives and sensibilities will continue to develop and evolve alongside – and possibly because of – technological development in future. The social re-attunement of the World Wide Web, and the rise and consequent proliferation of data-applications that access, draw from and publish to the Internet in increasingly varied and hereto unimagined ways, continue to impact upon human cultures across the globe. As such, the popularity of Web 2.0 platforms has already transformed the manner in which people express themselves and engage with one another (Doering, Beach, & O'Brien, 2007). It seems to me that the pervasiveness of such socio-technological transformations is rooted in, or even driven by the most basic, fundamental human technology: Language. The evolution of social networks into online platforms have, for example, changed how and how often groups or individuals with access to such networks engage with people anywhere on the planet. Communicating with a friend, family member or colleague in another country, on another continent, is now instantly possible. Not only is this communication possible, but the choices of the modality (text, voice, video etc.) and delivery (synchronous or asynchronous) of communication – neither of which need ever be fixed in one way or another – often lie (quite literally) in the hands of the interlocutors.

People are capturing, translating, and creating new, uniquely nuanced experiences into a variety of communicative artefacts – often expressly for the purpose of digital dissemination. Many private realities and experiences are connecting to, and disconnecting from, enormous amounts of information segueing into their lives via both solicited and unsolicited ICT-mediated data sources, aggregators and distributors. Through creating, transmitting (i.e. broadcasting, narrowcasting, netcasting, webcasting, podcasting, vid-casting etc.) and consuming what is essentially semiotic representations of human thoughts, experiences and interpretations of these (data and

metadata), we are changing how and why knowledge is created, found, learned, and taught. Advances in ICT and our use thereof is changing "our ability to participate, to belong, to negotiate meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 226). Building on Wenger's insights, it seems plausible that, for many people, 'who we are' has changed – and continues to change with every stroke of a keypad, click of a mouse, voice command, or tap on a touch-sensitive interface. Through digitally mediated interaction with each other, and through the artefacts produced in or as a result of this process, people may be learning more than even they themselves might realise or understand. A large number (though admittedly not the majority) of people's experiences are being digitised, interpreted, translated, curated and reworked into newer knowledge artefacts. Sometimes unthinkingly and, in the case of the developing world, probably in a second or foreign language which might be considered more internationally accessible than their first[17] language. It is therefore no surprise to learn that a "major driver of changing pedagogies has been an increased understanding of the skills and knowledge required of young people both for employment and for engagement in civic society" (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 12).

Following Packer and Goicoechea (2000, p. 227), who state that learning "entails transformation both of the person and of the social world", and Halliday's conviction that language is "the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience becomes knowledge" (Halliday, 1993, p. 94), I am curious as to both the possibilities of implementing digitally mediated teaching and learning practices across the curriculum; and to which extent modern pedagogies are considered useful by teachers for implementation in their own classrooms. Whilst the former curiosity might, in all

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[17] Also referred to as Home Language, Mother Tongue, Father Tongue, Native Language and so forth.

likelihood, develop into larger studies falling well beyond the allowances of a Master's dissertation; the latter informs the core of this study.

Furthermore, while the pursuit of both curiosities is bound to lead to interesting, even strange forays into learning theory and contemporary practices – the purpose of this study is not to formulate or propose a new theory of learning. Rather, in preparation and development of a framework and data collection instruments for this study, I explore existing theories that speak to machine- and network enabled pedagogies, as well as writing/language-based learning. To this end many educational theorists have been found facing off across a divide between positivist, input/output approaches; and relativist, more social approaches to learning. There are however those who attempt to bridge the gap, and argue for cognitive-sociocultural integration. One such theorist proposes the appropriation of Chaos/Dynamic Systems Theory as a means of accommodating both sociocultural and cognitive perspectives in teaching and learning. In this particular instance, Larsen-Freeman (1997, 2006) convincingly argues the applicability of Chaos Theory on language teaching and learning – specifically English as a Second Language (ESL). Having taken a dynamic sociocultural context as central to the development of cognition, Larsen-Freeman moves from a holistic awareness of language learning as a process of becoming (relativist, sociocultural view), and delves deeper into the fractality of the structures of human language (positivist, cognitive position). Interpreting her findings, I believe that the idea of relative self-similarity of the characteristics of constituent parts of other curricula being generally reflected in the macro- or global qualities of those curricula could be equally plausible. Convinced of the value of a (considered largely unrelated before Larsen-Freeman's work) theory from the domain of the Natural Sciences now applied to second language learning, it seems reasonable to explore the potentially reciprocal value of language learning theories for the teaching and learning of other subjects. The challenge is to consider Education as a whole, and to find units of analysis that

allow for the consideration of learning as being more than the combination of its constituent parts. Figure 1.1 illustrates the resultant idea of possible cross-curricular didactic reciprocity:
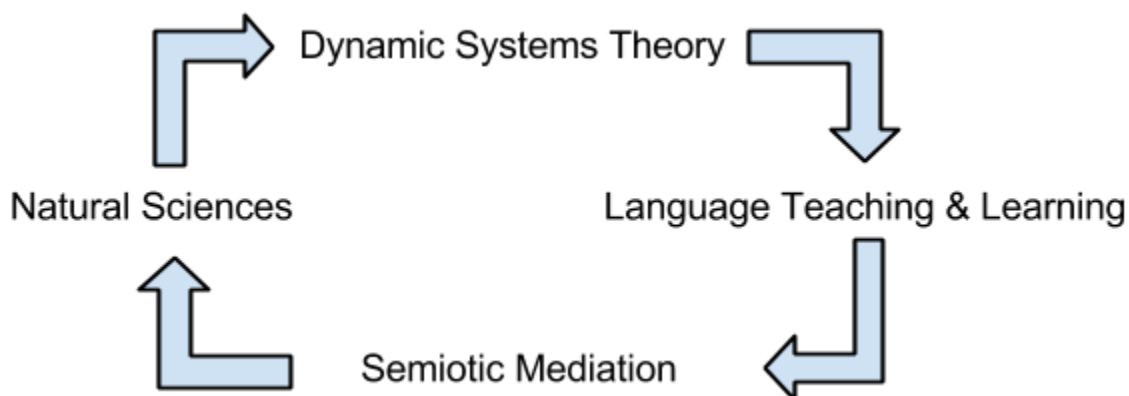
FIGURE 1.1 POSSIBLE LANGUAGE AND CONTENT DIDACTIC RECIPROCITY

Following a hunch on the potential reciprocity of learning theories and subject didactics leads me back to Halliday's Language-based Theory of Learning (1993). If we consider the human faculty of language as a tool used to facilitate learning and the creation of knowledge (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 12; Gee, 1994a; Halliday, 1993; Wells, 1994), then surely all forms of language use should have the same potential? I consider the modern communicative practices discussed earlier, Packer and Goicoechea's conclusion that "learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world [and] the result of guided participation or legitimate peripheral action" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 229), and traditional teaching and learning practices encountered in contemporary classrooms. This points my enquiry in the direction of, amongst others, Lave and Wenger's (1991) Situated Learning Theory; Van Lier's (2000) ecological perspective of language learning; and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996), as documented in Chapter 2,

section 2.2.1. What follows is a brief overview of the main ideas that guided the literature review process:

Zuengler and Miller (2006, p. 40) pay close attention to situated learning – or the situatedness of learning – as foregrounding "learners' participation in particular social practices, understood as habitual ways people (re)produce material and symbolic resources, often attached to particular times and places, and comprising communities of practice in complex, often overlapping ways." This conception of learning supports the idea of it (learning) taking place as a necessary and desired result of engaging with the world. (See Chapter 2 section 2.2.1.5.)

Van Lier (2000, p. 247) offers his own positivist/relativist bridge by stating that "cognition and learning rely on both representational (schematic, historical, cultural, and so on) and ecological (perceptual, emergent, action-based) processes and systems." Maintaining an awareness of the whole, Van Lier proposes an ecological perspective for researching, practising and conceptualising language learning. From this perspective, the language learner is described as being "immersed in an environment full of potential meanings" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 246). Again, the concept of the situatedness of learning as a necessary and desired result of engaging with the world is supported when Van Lier (2000, p. 246) states that the aforementioned potential meanings "become available gradually as the learner acts and interacts within and with this environment". Such interaction does not rely solely on the presence of a teacher or instructor, as learner-learner communicative interaction also constitutes an opportune learning environment brimming with potential, as do all intra- and interpersonal communicative interactions. These learning environments provide a semiotic budget within which interaction and activities involving or requiring meaning-making take place. Van Lier (2000, p. 252) describes a 'semiotic budget' as "the opportunities for meaningful action that the situation affords".

Whilst Van Lier focuses on language learning, I believe his ideas might prove equally relevant for most, if not all, learning. Having established that "semiotic mediation is key to all aspects of knowledge construction" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192), it seems logical that an environment's 'semiotic budget' might allow similar learning affordances for other areas of learning. One of Van Lier's major impacts on my exploration of pedagogical practices is his use of the term "affordance" as opposed to the more traditional focus on direct instructional input. Such direct inputs are expected to influence and effect certain expected outcomes in a linear model of teaching and learning. Affordances, on the other hand, offer opportunities for action (learning) based on the differing perceptions thereof by different agents (learners), or the same agent at different stages in the meaning-making process. One implication of such a perspective of learning might be that any semiotic action would probably lead to a variety of emergent outcomes (knowledge production) within any given social context. Much more so if influenced, facilitated or guided by "knowledgeable others" (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 12; Beliavsky, 2006; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192).

When considering the contributions of Sociocultural Theory, it is important to include Vygotsky's (1978) 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) as a vital part of the framework through which this study explores the educational potential of Web 2.0 platforms, such as blogs. The ZPD is a conceptual representation of any person's learning potential in that it juxtaposes the learner's ability to complete a task unaided, with that same learner's ability to complete the same task with the aid of another, more capable/knowledgeable 'other'. The ZPD thereby illustrates the continuously expanding learning potential of the learning individual. (In the light of what I've said before, this 'knowledgeable other' would also be seen as learning by virtue of her role in the process.) Attwell and Hughes develop the idea of how personal learning environments (PLEs) – enhanced by technology – could partly be seen as tools that provided access to more knowledgeable others, whilst simultaneously forming part of

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a larger "system to allow learners to link learning to performance in practice" (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 21). They further find that the information artefacts that are accessible via personal learning environments "may in turn generate new artefacts for others to use in a zone of proximal development" (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 21). Knowledge produced by learning could therefore be used for scaffolding other/further learning – in turn informing yet other, additional learning environments and networks of learners and learning communities.

Contemporary learners and learning communities' familiarity with internet-enabled, social technologies (Web 2.0 and beyond) opens up new opportunities and dynamic spaces of/for learning. In such learning milieux the sharing of knowledge for the purpose of collaborative learning has broken down "distinctions between knowledge and communication" (Attwell & Hughes, 2010, p. 23). Learning and communicative activities and artefacts have possibly become intertwined to such an extent that the language-based core of all learning may be discovered anew.

Consequently, the point of departure of this study is that developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) represent great educational affordances for language-based learning. The study is further conceptualised in agreement with Lai and Gu's (2011, p. 320) conviction that technology "constitutes an important learning space in the ecology of learning". (The connection to Van Lier's ecological perspective seems almost intuitive/instinctual at this point.) Of specific interest is the potential of a writing-based approach to learning via network enabled social technology. Can the act and culture of blogging be re-imagined as a possibly multilingual[18] vehicle and tool for learning? Consequently, how valuable is the potential for pedagogical practice to develop the affordances of communicative activities and reflective dialogue (Deng &

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[18] This aspect could prove to be a very interesting avenue for later research, but it is not explored in this thesis.

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Yuen, 2011) via blogging as scaffolding and possible integration of learning across the curriculum?

The use of blogging for educational purposes has been shown to reduce writing apprehension; to constitute a collaborative learning environment; to improve writing skills in learning (Amir, Ismail, & Hussin, 2011); and to shape writing practice and authorship (Rivens Mompean, 2010). These affordances are attributed to the "nature and quality of interaction with the discourse" (Rivens Mompean, 2010, p. 381) and the flexible nature of blogging (Amir *et al.*, 2011). The advantages of using blogs as writing tools are also listed as follows:

> *… encourages feedback and represents both writing and reading activity; critical analysis and encourages articulation of ideas and opinions; offers opportunities for collaborative learning; provides an environment in which students can develop skills of persuasion and argumentation; creates a more student-centred learning environment; and offers informal language reading (Amir et al., 2011, p. 538).*

Several pedagogical affordances of blogging for learning are also gleaned from literature related to blended learning (Halverson, Graham, Spring, & Drysdale, 2012; Moskal, Dziuban, & Hartman, 2013; So & Bonk, 2010) and the 'flipped classroom' (Herreid & Schiller, 2013; Tucker, 2012). The learning affordances of blogging could, for example, be argued to manifest in the utilisation of a ubiquitous, virtual platform (hosting service) to create additional, differentiated spaces (network of blogs) that allow for active knowledge making and the development of multimodal meaning. It could further be argued that blogging encourages interpersonal expression, inspires recursive feedback, builds on collaborative intelligence, allows the free exchange of ideas and knowledge artefacts, and promotes metacognitive activities. Fan

fiction[19] websites and blogs are prime examples of the educational affordances of such spaces for second language learning. Here English second language learners have been found to engage in recreational online writing activities, making use of the opportunity to "scaffold and promote their L2 [second language] literacy development and strengthen their identity as writers" (Lai & Gu, 2011, p. 320). In the case of additional language learning, Lai and Gu point to earlier findings when they state that technology, amongst other things: "opens up various potentials for language learning: access to native speakers and peer learners of the language around the world, easy 24/7 access to a wide array of instructional and authentic language learning materials and learning support, construction of and exposure to engaging learning experience and environments, and facilitation of the construction of positive learner identities," (Lai & Gu, 2011, p. 317). The same can conceivably be argued across the curriculum, where technology will conceivably open up similar potentials for learning, including: access to specialists and peer learners from across the globe (cf. ZPD), online and real-time access to vast collections of instructional and authentic learning materials (cf. virtual ecologies) and learning support (cf. communities of practice).

As a result of increasing enthusiasm for such digital and network-mediated, emergent educational practices and information systems, entirely new skillsets are required. This is not only applicable in the case of academic pursuits – but such skillsets are fast becoming general requirements for anyone hoping to integrate and function as contributing members of contemporary communities and societies. Socio-economic participation in both local and global communities already require a range of skills to create personal networks, online frameworks and to promote and enable continuous

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[19] Also *fanfiction, fanfic*: Often spontaneous and unofficial audience generated fiction regarding, developing or reimagining characters, settings and plotlines from popular, original works of fiction (e.g. comic books, novels, television series, movies).

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self-directed learning[20]. Seen from such a perspective, education in general – and not only the learning and teaching of language (Doering *et al.*, 2007) – has the potential to redefine, reposition and reconfigure itself; potentially revolutionising what it means to be and to get educated. Therefore, as indicated by O'Brien and Scharber (2008), the pedagogical adoption and adaptation of advances in ICT and related networks appear to be logical, necessary and desirable.

The conducted research explores the perceived usefulness of blogging (Deng & Yuen, 2012) for learning amongst pre-service teacher trainees[21] enrolled in a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) programme, at a South African university. It does so as a precursor to more developed understandings of digital pedagogies (Pangrazio, 2014), and as part of the requirements of the M.Ed. by full thesis programme at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. In light of the foregoing, the research question for this study is formulated as: What are the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices?

1.2.   Contexts informing the study

Where it has been argued that "constructivism and interpretivism amount to the same thing, or at least stand in a relationship of mutual entailment" (Hà, 2011, p. 195), I was persuaded in a workshop on Smeyers, Bridges, Burbules and Griffiths (2015) to consider interpretation as a meta-paradigmatic underpinning of all research. In short:

> *... interpretation is central to all kinds of educational research and enters into it at every stage of the process. The selection of the focus of inquiry depends on a certain reading, an interpretation, of the arena of policy and practice and of the existing research and other literatures as well as*

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[20] The concept of self-directed learning as used here, is understood as per Olivier (2016).
[21] See Section 2.2.4 regarding the value of studying the perceptions of pre-service teachers.

of the interests of the researcher. The formulation of a research question or questions draws upon conceptual and value assumptions that frame a particular version or interpretation of the world. (Burbules, Bridges, Griffiths, & Smeyers, 2015, p. 3)

In light hereof, I explicitly include some elements that may appear reminiscent of autoethnography in both my research design and my report. It is clear to me that my perceptions and interpretations of contexts, theoretical and pragmatic approaches, digital tools, and pedagogical possibilities (amongst others) are all coloured and influenced by my own set of beliefs, constructs, experiences and presuppositions. Rather than try to divorce myself from my own perspective, I opted to insert myself as part of the researcher/researched dynamic, and in so doing explore what I bring to the study (professional context).

Similarly, I unpack my interpretation of both the University (organisational context) and South Africa's educational realities (national context) in an attempt to provide an open and honest foundation of understanding, for the benefit of those who are to interpret my work in future.

1.2.1.   Professional Context

Looking back on my experiences of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from a perspective informed by Larsen-Freeman (1997, 2006), Van Lier (2000), and Zuengler and Miller (2006), some very interesting correlations emerge – as do certain questions that beg further exploration. In the context of kindergarten[22] EFL classes with three-year-old learners simultaneously learning Taiwanese Home Language (HL) and Chinese First Additional Language (FAL), an uninitiated English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher could find herself immersed in an environment bursting with

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[22] Also referred to as "Kindy"

raw linguistic potential (Van Lier, 2000). Without the appropriate training, such a teacher might start off without the necessary tools or cross-cultural competence to tap into or control this environment. This was the case for myself and several foreign (i.e. Western) university graduates (so called 'native speakers' with at least a three-year Bachelor's Degree in any field) I encountered while teaching English and living in Taiwan.

After unsuccessfully attempting to employ every linear-instruction trick in the book that I was aware of, I was left no other option than to give up on the traditional methods of teaching as I thought I understood them. I had to make do with what was readily available to me. Class decorations, music, plant and animal life, dancing and eating became affordances (Van Lier, 2000) of meaningful interaction where communicative teacher-learner, learner-learner, learner-parent and parent-teacher interactions became the stuff of learning. It was no longer a matter of emulating my previous teachers in trying to teach a foreign language, but rather one of becoming a socially aware and sensitive mediator that created or seized opportunities for interaction, collaborative exploration, investigation and meaning making. These opportunities for communicative interaction became the keys that unlocked teaching and lead to learning.

Teaching at different schools and after-hours language centres offered me the opportunity to experiment with teaching at different levels and stages of learning. Through the progression of grades and levels of complexity, language skills emerged in what I experienced as a seemingly random process, at unexpected intervals and in astounding ways. Through what I perceived to be some miracle of nature (more likely related to relative-constructionist qualities of dynamic and complex systems), those EFL learners managed to glean and make meaning out of our interactions, and proceeded to learn to speak, read and write English quite successfully – often to an

even greater degree than that which they were exposed to in our (Westerners) classrooms. It seemed a sensitivity for the similarities within and amongst languages, however tenuous, could be extracted, scaled and applied to new communicative situations as a form of inter-ecological semiotic budget, similar to both Larsen-Freeman (1997, 2006) and Van Lier's (2000) proposals. These learners exhibited dissimilar patterns and efforts to master the language, and developed increasingly effective ways of dealing with the different worlds and meanings that they were exposed to.
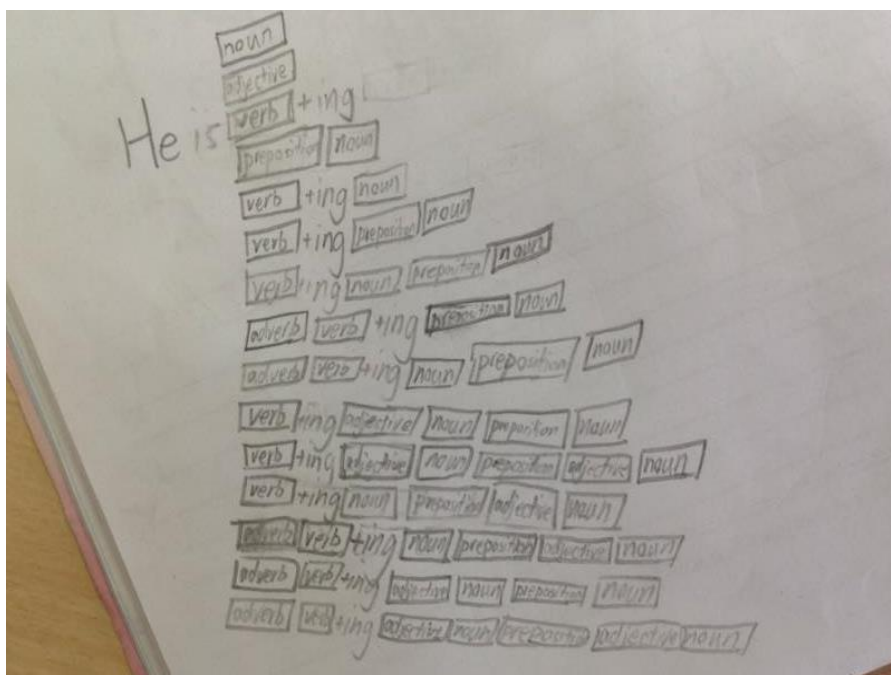
FIGURE 1.2 SNAPSHOT OF A GRADE 2 EFL LEARNER'S EXPERIMENTS WITH SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION (PRINTED WITH PERMISSION)

Learning happened, and I came to believe that it was plausible to expect increasingly effective teaching and learning theories and methodologies to evolve from such a developing understanding of learning as an organic, inherent and emergent aspect of sentience. As was to be expected, new ideations lead me to new questions, some of

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which seemed to yearn for a sort of pedagogical String Theory. Such emergent curiosities stimulated different ways of thinking about teaching, and researching learning. For instance, if natural learning was nonlinear and organic, should teaching remain linear? What would the implications for language teaching be, if it was accepted that using a language (discourse) constructs or co-creates (shapes) that language before, while and after it was taught? Van Driel and Berry (2012) provided interesting insights on the first, broader question when reviewing literature on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The second, more focused question on language teaching motivated my decision to further my studies in Education, and laid the foundation for my studies in language education, which eventually contributed to the focus of this dissertation.

After nearly four years of teaching EFL in Taiwan, where I had the opportunity to teach grades K through 12 and adult classes, I returned to South Africa to pursue a career in formal Education. My own experience and reported issues of access to Education in South Africa motivated my pursuit of possible means of bridging at least the gaps in learning languages of access, such as English. Learning a language of access was not going to be enough, though. During the course of my studies, one realisation had been that addressing any learning issues needed: to cover all immediate bases (meeting learners' present needs); to be both progressive and retrospective; and to be available to all learners throughout the country. This is an enormous task, which I have attempted to break down into more focused, smaller and (hopefully) manageable goals which include the exploration and development of digital pedagogies; and exploring teachers' perceptions of – and therefore likelihood to implement – modern ICT-mediated educational practices and/or strategies.

The aforementioned work (Leo Van Lier, 2000; Zuengler & Miller, 2006) on situated learning as a learning theory in language learning research captures something of

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what I understand to be at the heart of language learning: the inherent urge and emergent motivation to grow and develop within dynamic social settings. This appears to speak to the situatedness of learning – but extends beyond language learning into language-based learning of content subjects. Considered from this particular perspective, a recurring and attractive idea seems to be that learning takes place as a necessary and desired result of engaging with the real world. Real world engagement that can be augmented and/or delivered via Web 2.0 technologies. Drawing inspiration from Piaget and Vygotsky (Blake & Pope, 2008; Piaget, 1964; Vygotsky, 1978; Vygotsky & Kozulin, 2011), I am beginning to think that in and through authentic interaction and real communicative experiences, an individual becomes aware of the unknown/vaguely familiar yet puzzling, and wanting to understand more, do more or achieve some form of mastery, learns. In cases where the desire is to be sufficiently understood and to understand others in return, a form of language is required and either acquired, learned or developed. In cases where the desire is to understand the world, forms of knowledge are required and subsequently constructed (Attwell & Hughes, 2010; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). I wish to align myself with the aforementioned authors in pursuing the argument that it is possible for increasingly effective teaching theories, ICT-enabled methodologies, and digital pedagogies (Pangrazio, 2014) to be developed from such an understanding of language-based learning (Gee, 1994a; Halliday, 1993; Wells, 1994).

1.2.2. Organisational Context

Where modern day First World learners (erroneously[23] called 'digital natives') are popularly believed to eagerly adopt more technology-driven forms of creativity,

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[23] Bennett, S., Maton, K., & Kervin, L. (2008). The "digital natives" debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *39*, 775–786. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8535.2007.00793.x

communication, expression and learning; their educators are perceived to be more reluctant to do the same (Doering *et al.*, 2007), especially in the case of evolving new pedagogies to make the most out of these opportunities (Goundar, 2011). Lai and Gu (2011, p. 317) state that classrooms "have proved to be most resistant to change due to the various constraints that formal instructional contexts are subject to". The nature of these constraints deserve attention, especially considering that the generation gap implied between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' in more developed world scenarios translate into socio-economic gaps and great digital divisions in developing countries.

One approach to gaining insight into the constraints and supporting forces related to technological advances, and resistance or adoption thereof in pedagogical practices, is to measure the pulse of modern teaching practitioners in terms of their perceptions of the efficacy, utility or potential of such educational technologies. The importance of teacher, teacher-trainee and learner buy-in is emphasised where "impediments to online participation have less to do with the accessibility of technology, and more to do with users' motivation and interest" (Deng & Yuen, 2012, p. 48). Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2005, p. 341) base their study of young adolescents' motivation and quality of experience partly on the basis of "a disturbingly consistent finding associated with middle school [being] a drop in students' intrinsic motivation to learn". In turn, Deng and Yuen (2012, p. 49) define motivation as "the causes that engage people in an activity", underscoring the importance thereof in the act of teaching and learning. Deniz (2010, p. 1269) elaborates on this by stating that "motivation is an internal drive, stimulating power, wish, or desire" to achieve. Accordingly, the importance of student-teachers' motivation – especially where Web 2.0 platforms hope to be employed – is seen as critical (Deng & Yuen, 2012).

It is hoped that the exploration of potential components of digital pedagogies might motivate further interest, development, and creative experimentation in practice. My focus is fuelled by Amir, Ismail and Hussin (2011, p. 541) who find that learners experience blogging as an "exciting and motivating learning environment" where they have "a sense of ownership and readership." I further believe my research to be an important step in order to explore possible avenues for addressing inequalities in basic education amongst learners in underserved and unserved communities (Olwal *et al.*, 2013) in South Africa.

The opportunity to explore current experiences of blogging within the Education Faculty at Stellenbosch University allows my research to follow in the pursuit of effective digital pedagogies for teaching and learning in a modern, educational context. Annually a large number of graduates enrol in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme offered by the Education Faculty of Stellenbosch University. PGCE students' teacher training is currently steered and developed by the respective departments of Curriculum Studies, Education Policy Studies, Educational Psychology, and Sports Science. This writing-intensive programme is presented over one academic year, with one full term of school-based teaching practicum, and is designed "to provide educators for the Further Education and Training Band" (Stellenbosch University, 2015, p. 27).

The expectations and requirements of student writing in different University Faculties varies significantly between disciplines. This means that the sheer amount of writing, as well as the nature of extended academic writing expected of Education students, often shocks and confuses graduates coming from other faculties – especially those coming from outside the Social Sciences. In stark contrast to the kind of writing expected from graduates in the Natural or Actuarial sciences, for example, postgraduate Education students are immediately required to adhere to often

unfamiliar, strict and rigorous citation and formatting requirements in all their academic writing. These requirements are compounded by the PGCE programme's expectations of students (in terms of language ability and extended expository writing proficiency), where proof of learning and performance in assignments, tests and exams rely heavily on student-initiated research and synthesis of different practice-based and academic sources into coherent written artefacts. Such writing based teaching and learning practices are presumably employed in large classes (180+ students) to facilitate more efficient and critical engagement with learning theories and subject content.

Unfortunately, such large classes provide students with limited opportunities for one-on-one contact with lecturers and tutors. Consequently, discussion of students' comprehension and revision of written work is not always sufficient to address the needs of individual PGCE students in a largely writing-based, condensed teacher training programme. This presents some PGCE students with potentially crippling barriers to meeting deadlines, formulating and maintaining conceptual arguments in writing, and achieving success in their studies.

1.2.3.   National Context

Teachers throughout the education system are faced with an ever-growing challenge to engage and encourage learners to participate in the teaching and learning process. Few more so, I believe, than high-school teachers who have to compete with the increasingly diverse and complicated social, intellectual and biological interests and realities (puberty strikes!) of their learners.

As touched on by Doering, Beach and O'Brien (2007), and suggested by the reported realities of current South African practices in multilingual education (Heugh, 2013), both digital and English literacies seem to be largely considered as requirements for

both locally and internationally relevant education, as well as access to online information. In terms of language learning, it has been found that:

> *the Internet gives L2 learners immediate access to such a wide range of L2 Web content, communication channels and communities that it would be surprising indeed if they were unable to engage their own real interests and identities via this medium at some level. From a motivational perspective, such engagement needs to be shaped and driven by students themselves if learning is to be autonomous and effective, yet it is clear that teachers must play a significant role in mediating this process (Ushioda, 2011, pp. 206–207).*

Ushioda's sentiment is reflected in popular media and reports on official statements and government-led initiatives – such as Project Isizwe[24] and the Ukufunda Virtual School co-launched by cellular chat-service provider Mxit[25] – which plans to provide ICT access and education to all South Africans (SA: Statement by the City of Cape Town, City's broadband roll-out achieves major milestone, [s.a.]; Alfreds, 2014). The link between English, digital literacies and ICT in Education is further grounded in literature (Doering *et al.*, 2007; Holmner & Britz, 2013; Mitrovic *et al.*, 2013; Pangrazio, 2014) aimed at developing frameworks to bridge the gaps between traditional education practices, and the Internet's potential for improved teaching and learning.

The precondition of an accessible, affordable, efficient, functional and ubiquitous ICT infrastructure (Moskal *et al.*, 2013) remains a significant limitation in the exploitation of blogging affordances in digital instruction throughout South Africa. The realities of even the largest South African metropoles are marked by undependable ICT infrastructure at best. Moving outwards across peri-urban and into rural areas

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[24] http://projectisizwe.org/
[25] http://get.mxit.com/ukufunda/

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coincides with increasingly limited and often costly access – if any – to information and communications technology. Furthermore, limited availability of context specific research in the educational use of Web 2.0 platforms in South African schools indicates a significant knowledge gap. Such a limitation in existing literature poses serious questions – and possibly threats – to the realisation and implementation of ICT in Education projects and policies in South Africa.

The described settings and circumstances (both formal and informal) serve as the impetus and foundation of the research question: What are the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices? The following sub-questions guide this exploration of the perceived utility of online writing in developing effective learning strategies:

1. What are PGCE students' perceptions in terms of writing based learning?
2. How do these perceptions compare to PGCE students' expectations of writing in emerging digital pedagogies (e.g. blended learning and the flipped classroom)?
3. What are PGCE students' experiences of blogging during the first semester of their teacher-training?
4. How do PGCE students expect to utilise blogging in their teaching practice, if at all?

1.2.4. Theoretical Angling

Originally operating from a theoretical background of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) within a constructivist paradigm, I became aware that I was drawing extensively on a broader theoretical framework – one that made sense in the light of my interpretation of Smeyers, Bridges, Burbules and Griffiths (2015) (see Section 1.2 above). The empirical research, on which this document reports, is therefore conceived within a framework for integrated methodology (Plowright, 2011), drawing on certain cognitive constructivist aspects of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of

learning (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192), Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory, and the ecological perspective of learning as developed by Van Lier (2000). Underscored by my own teaching experiences in EFL and heavily influenced by theorists from ESL and SLA (Second Language Acquisition), including Larsen-Freeman (1997, 2006) and Zuengler and Miller (2006), this framework is constructed on the basis of compatible ontological and epistemological assumptions related to the development of language and learning. Briefly put: Reality is understood to be co-constructed through interaction, and learning is understood to develop alongside such interactions.

The main streams from the academic landscape (Chapter 2) informing my argument for blogging as a network enabled Web 2.0 tool in language-based teaching and learning practices, could be graphically represented as follows:
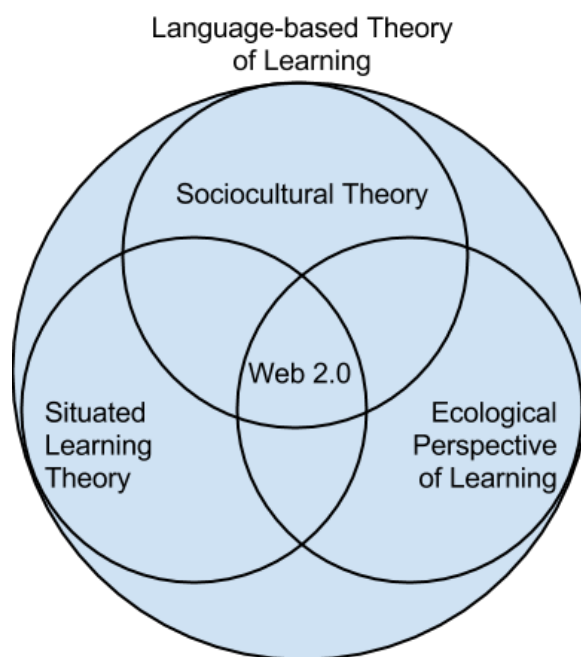
FIGURE 1.3 THEORETICAL STREAMS

Fishing from an ICT-enabled perspective in one of the pools where the abovementioned theories come together, certain ideas seem to harmonise in a way that favours the development of Web 2.0 related ways of looking at the world of teaching and learning. One example would be how the "way that the construction of knowledge is internalised, appropriated, transmitted or transformed in formal and informal learning settings" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 196) could speak to the study of blogging for teaching and learning. Here, a collaborative blog could facilitate learners' internalisation of "sociosemantic functions of the specific modes of discourse" (Wells, 1994, p. 76) mediating certain learning tasks through posting and commenting on posts as both a practice of, and making meaning of these functions. Effective pedagogical application hereof could lead to greater ability to engage in different tasks amongst learners in school. Considering Wells' interpretation that "the zone of proximal development is not an attribute of the individual learner but rather a potential for his or her intramental development that is created by the intermental interaction that occurs as the learner and other people cooperate in some activity" (Wells, 1994, p. 63), blogs could be seen as virtual, responsive and interactive zones of proximal development. That is to say that blogs could be conceptualised as semantic spaces between formal and informal learning settings. Participation in such interstitial communicative environments, through acts of collaborative blogging, could transform both intra- and interpersonal semiotic mediation, meaning making, knowledge creation, and therefore learning. It is also important to point out that the user-friendly architecture and relatively low cost of most blogging platforms has all but negated economic barriers to entry. With the necessary ICT infrastructure (Moskal *et al.*, 2013) in place, starting a blog is relatively cheap and easy.

Lai and Gu (2011, p. 320) refer to an ethnographic study that finds online writing to strengthen English language learners' "identity as writers." Amir, Ismail and Hussin (2011) also find that the accessibility of blogs "not only affected how students can

publish and distribute their work to a wider audience but also how the students see themselves as authors". Here, authorship is understood to imply both a sense of achievement in writing, and a sense of authority in taking ownership of and expressing their unique understanding and contributions to a learning community, and to society at large. Cook-Sather (2002) underscores the importance of the latter in authorising students as legitimate participants in shaping their own education. Ushioda suggests that "students themselves may not necessarily recognise such connections between their personal use of technology and the possibilities for exploiting it" (2011, p. 207) for learning, and that this presents innovative educators with incredible teaching opportunities. This idea harmonises with Wells' language-based understanding of learning:

> *Through engaging with written texts in relation to the topics that they study in school, therefore, children gradually reconstitute their lexicogrammar in the more abstract written mode; at the same time, they reinterpret their experience according to the semantic structures that are characteristic of these written texts." (Wells, 1994, p. 81)*

It now seems possible to imagine divergent classrooms, connected through networks of blogs, forming interactive learning communities where each collaborator contributes to the meaning making and combined understanding of the group – irrespective of initial differences in any learner's understanding or pre-knowledge of the area of learning.

1.3.   Case Selection

It is quite fortuitous that, in the transition period (specifically during the year 2015) leading up to structural changes to the PGCE programme (Stellenbosch University, 2015), I was charged with overseeing a section of the compulsory, semi-self-study

Computer Use 774 module ("45810 Computer Use (ED) [PGCE]" (Stellenbosch University, 2015, p.85), resorting under the Department of Curriculum Studies).

As an optional, extra-curricular exploration of writing based learning in the digital landscape, I proposed a completely voluntary and ungraded 'learning experiment' in the form of an online writing network made up of a semi-collaborative group blog; individual blogs; individual Twitter accounts; and a dedicated hashtag (#PGCEmix) for identifying and categorising relevant blog posts and tweets. Seeing the opportunity that the class work had for my research, I was pleasantly surprised when that PGCE class indicated that they would like to participate in such a study. Their eagerness to participate reminded me of Halliday's idea that:

> *Teachers often have a powerful intuitive understanding that their pupils need to learn multimodally, using a wide variety of linguistic registers: both those of the written language, which locate them in the metaphorical world of things, and those of the spoken language, which relate what they are learning to the everyday world of doing and happening. The one foregrounds structure and stasis, the other foregrounds function and flow. [A] complimentarity… exists… between these two grammatical modes, the congruent commonsense grammar of daily life and the metaphorical grammar of education and of the workplace. This dynamic/synoptic complimentarity adds a final critical dimension to the adolescent learner's semantic space (Halliday, 1993, p. 112).*

Agreeing with the abovementioned excerpt by Halliday, I believe it to be imperative that teachers maintain and successfully translate their pedagogical strengths and intuitive understandings when bringing such dynamic/synoptic complimentarities to digitally-mediated spaces of teaching and learning. Such a feat might confound, frustrate and/or intimidate teachers who are not a) knowledgeable or b) convinced of

the value and sustainability of especially social technology in modern educational practice. Wells reminds us, though, that "Vygotsky's argument is that [in] appropriating the resources of the culture through participation in social action and interaction, the individual both transforms those resources and is transformed in the process" (Wells, 1994, p. 78). An implication might be that teachers who gain experience in blogging can eventually, having gained some form of mastery of the tool, tailor these practices to suit their own needs and purposes, as well as the needs of their learners. It is therefore important that this study includes participants with knowledge of blogging, and at least some experience thereof. This class practically selected itself as case for this study.

1.4.   Methods of Data Collection

The investigation of the PGCE class of 2015 fits comfortably within a case study design. This particular design further lends itself to a mixed methods approach to data collection. The group administration of an electronic questionnaire, artefact analysis, and asynchronous observation of participants' online writing activity promised to provide comparable sets of both numeric and narrative data. These data-sets were analysed comparatively to determine the correlation of student-teachers' blogging experiences on their perceived utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices.

Blog posts in the public domain were monitored over the duration of the 2015 academic year, including the student-teachers' full term of school practice. Volunteered blog posts were analysed in terms of content, and the electronic survey was administered to the whole group at the start of their final academic term.

1.5.   Data and Data Analysis

Triangulation for validity and reliability included continuous analysis of participants' online writing (see Section 3.4.2.3); quantitative-qualitative data correlation (see Chapter 4); as well as comparative survey and documented activity datasets (see Sections 3.4.2.1 and 3.4.2.2). Section 3.5 further details the process of data analysis.

1.6.   Justification for the study

When blogging via a public platform, the published texts are immediately available to anybody with Internet access and the literacy skills required to engage with it, anywhere in the world. Learners now have an instant connection to a worldwide audience of potential 'knowledgeable others'. This connection is not only instant and direct, but also dynamic. Readers can be allowed to comment directly on a post and/or get into direct contact with the author(s). These characteristics, among others, can have great advantages for learning. Amir, Ismail and Hussin (2011, p. 542) put it quite clearly when stating that L2 learners "can practice the language using different skills, especially in writing, in an authentic learning environment." Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010, p. 185) explain that blogging "promotes an awareness of audience… in the students" that heavily influences the ways in which they present themselves. Rivens Mompean (2010, p. 381) finds that the sense of ownership blogs affords their authors creates "a completely different motivation for expression''. The authenticity of blogging as communicative language use is presented as a determinant of motivation for language use. I expect this motivation to also lie at the heart of all language-based learning, and would suggest that higher instances of investment might correlate with improved learning, by virtue of which more positive perceptions of such pedagogical utility may be expected.

In anticipation of the need for applicable, theoretically sound and grounded pedagogical interventions based on the work of Halliday, Wells (1994, p. 85) suggests

that further research "must not only be based on this language-based theory of learning – but equally importantly – carried out in collaboration with teachers in relation to issues arising from the particular historical and cultural conditions in which they work". Including the PGCE students' school practicum is an attempt at including at least a simulated sense of similarly situated collaborations.

1.7.   Ethics

Various ethical considerations underpin the conception, development and implementation of the entire study. These are not only of personal importance, but are also required for ethical clearance and permission to conduct the research. Compliance to University regulations and procedures were observed throughout the duration of the study (see Addendum 1). Major areas of consideration are discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.7.

1.8.   Consolidation

It has been shown that blogging could be considered to constitute an authentic form of engagement with the world, and could therefore accommodate the situatedness of especially language learning (Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Blogging activities could furthermore be seen as facilitating processes of becoming (Larsen-Freeman, 1997) by offering semiotic budgets (Van Lier, 2000) for various conceptions of learning and being. The variety of social and educational engagements (affordances) available via Web 2.0 technologies could arguably be considered fractal: where microblogging and social networking easily reflect in, and form part of blogging, vlogging, podcasting, and vice versa. With these activities (and particularly blogging) involving "both representational… and ecological… processes and systems" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 247) of expression and engagement, it is reasonable to expect manifestations of self-similarities in multimodal, communicative interactions amongst and across different Web 2.0 platforms. These dynamic and complex systems (Larsen-Freeman, 1997) are

expected to positively affect both the motivation for, and the realisation of networked-enabled learning.

Furthermore, it seems likely that authorising both teachers and learners (Cook-Sather, 2002) through blogging could enhance their enjoyment, investment, perceived utility, and rate of development in mastery and achievement across the curriculum. The possible benefits of blogging for language-based learning also seem to extend to learning both independently or informally, and as part of formal instruction in compulsory or nationalised systems of education.

1.9. Chapter outline

Following this chapter (Chapter 1), where I provide an overview of the proposed study and its rationale, I delve into a survey of the academic landscape (Chapter 2).

In surveying the academic landscape, Chapter 2 develops an integrated understanding of learning theory and scholarly work in support of the proposed research. The process of literature exploration gives rise to a rhizomatic mapping of concentrated scholarship in the fields of learning, language, and ICT-mediated educational praxis.

Chapter 3 represents a similar approach towards developing the methodology for this study – albeit from the inside of the rhizome looking outwards, in search of connections. Here, the metaphor of exploration and mapping (apart from rekindling a personal fascination with cartography) translates into an argument for and integrated methodological approach and study design.

The data of the resultant study is documented and interpreted in Chapter 4.

This dissertation draws to a close in Chapter 5, where my research findings are discussed in light of the chapters that precede it. This discussion addresses the

research question, and then looks beyond it. After reflecting on the study as a whole, areas for future research are suggested alongside a cautionary note or two.

In a similar fashion to my childhood experiences of exploring and mapping unknown landscapes with my father, the adventure is not over just because the map is drawn. While the documents may be drawn up, filed and submitted – there is no rest in the final conclusion. What remains are hints and promises of further adventures through the woods, over the mountains, and down whatever rabbit holes might open up along the way!

2. Surveying the academic landscape

2.1. Introduction to the survey process

Building on Cooper's Taxonomy of literature reviews (Randolph, 2009), this contextualising chapter is written for an audience of interested scholars, but should be accessible to most practitioners and decision makers in basic and higher education. The contextual analysis of scholarly writing and reporting (the literature) in this chapter is focused on practices and applications of writing for learning – particularly blogging as a form of online writing – in the pursuit of pre-service teacher-training. Apart from developing a clearer understanding of the "bigger picture" through the consideration and integration of relevant research in the field; this survey attempts to address the task of "linguistic bridge-building" (Randolph, 2009, p. 3) by establishing a foundational (at least for the purposes of this dissertation) understanding of key concepts and intersectional vocabulary through bridging the language used across related fields. This activity is undertaken in order to explicate the line of argument embedded in this study in a coherent manner.

2.1.1. Rationale behind the review

In conducting this contextual survey, I identify influential research and prominent scholars across various fields and disciplines – ranging from linguistics and learning theories to studies on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) – in order to delineate an appropriate, academic area of operation. Adopting such a "research family" (Randolph, 2009, p. 2) grants me, as a novice researcher, access to the knowledge, successes, failures and recommendations of "more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 3). In this instance, taking up and exploring various strands of research lead to the unearthing of potential nodes of interest where previous studies appear to intersect in meaningful ways. Working these nodes allows me to find possible connections between emergent threads of knowledge from different

disciplines, in so doing weaving a rhizomatic web (Angen, 2000; Attwell & Hughes, 2010; Cormier, 2008; Le Grange & Beets, 2005; Le Grange, 2011; Waghid, 2014) delimiting 'the field' in which I position this study. The benefits of locating my study in such a specified field range from methodological recommendations to cautionary tales of unsuccessful approaches. My rationale for conducting and presenting an effective contextual survey of the academic landscape is therefore to support, guide and warrant my inquiry into the perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning.

2.1.2.   Questions to the literature

Deconstructing the primary research question (of some PGCE students' perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning) shines the spotlight on several underlying assumptions. These assumptions are: that the perceptions of PGCE students are worthy of academic consideration; that blogging is suggested as an educational strategy; that writing is an effective educational practice; and the implication that there is a fundamental connection between human language and the learning process. The interrogation of these assumptions is formalised through the following questions to the extant literature:

1. What is said to be the connection between human language and learning?
2. How has writing been found to influence learning?
3. What claims are made with regard to blogging (as a writing activity) for educational purposes?
4. Why do the perceptions of pre-service teacher trainees matter in respect of innovations in educational technology and pedagogy?

These questions also serve as a rough map of the journey of academic inquiry into existing work, as well as forming an outline for the structure of this chapter. First, I investigate the possible connections between human language and learning as

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revealed in selected theories of learning. Narrowing the focus from general language use for learning, I zoom in to focus on studies related to writing for learning, particularly (and importantly) paying attention to both writing for learning language (often referred to as WLL in the literature) and writing for learning content (in turn referred to as WLC in the literature). Recognising blogging as a form of online writing, my exploration of the academic landscape leads to the consideration of scholarly writing focused on blogging for learning in particular.

Having established a line of reasoning which underscores the validity of the practice of blogging for learning, I turn to the significance of teachers' perspectives – particularly the perceptions of pre-service teacher-trainees – for the realization of the proclaimed utility of innovations in pedagogical practices. Considering blogging for learning to be an innovation in pedagogy, I argue that the value of student-teachers' perceptions of such a practice is vital to the implementation and realization of its potential in modern educational settings.

2.2.   Contextual survey

In popular culture and opinion, the essence of academic enquiry in educational research might appear to be relatively fixed on questions surrounding or involving teaching and learning. In 21st Century education, however, the nature of the questions we ask of the world are changing. An increased concern with "the interrelationship between humans and nature, humans and technology, and their mutual functionality and adaptability" (Kramsch & Lam, 2002, p. 142) has been reported. Of particular interest to me is the growing understanding of the environmentally mediated mind; be it mediated by the natural, built, digital[26] or psychological environment. The "advent of intelligent machines like the computer" (Kramsch & Lam, 2002, p. 142) and the

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[26] Enabled by Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

proliferation of 'smart' electronic tools that followed, ushered in an era of broadening transcultural awareness of global events, ideas and connectedness.

Kuhn (1964) would suggest that these changing questions, ideas and foci in research are the results of changes in our epistemological paradigms. Looking into the literature coming from modern day researchers in education – whilst also looking up at the world around me – I am inclined to agree. While I am not in the position to say whether or not we are witnessing a (too often proclaimed yet so rarely supported) paradigm shift, it seems to me that the world of learning is changing.

To try and understand this change, albeit in a particular context, I consider the fundamental insights of six paths of research in contemporary learning theory: Constructivism, Sociocultural Theory, Constructionism, Language-based Theory of Learning, Situated Learning Theory, and Ecological Perspectives of learning based on Ecological Systems Theory. Emboldened by the possibility of onto-epistemological agreement between these branches of learning theory, I am able to construct a focusing framework of lenses to investigate first the foundations of writing for learning; then the potential of blogging (as online writing) for learning; and finally, the significance of student-teachers' perceptions for the realisation of such potential. I conclude this chapter with a consolidated argument supporting the relevance and importance of the study of pre-service teachers' perceptions of the utility of blogging for teaching and learning.

2.2.1. Learning theory

Coming from a background informed by undergraduate studies in Information Science, and constructed through years of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), I view myself more as a learning teacher than a serious academic. To be honest, the idea of having to write a Master's dissertation in Education is frightening. Having furthered my education and training in pedagogy and didactics, I realise that my

personal understanding (if not conviction) in terms of teaching and learning is entirely personal, and largely subjective, being a product of, and situated in, my own life experience. What I believe about the world is a result not only of my schooling, but also of my experiences of and interaction with others and other places. Having experienced or closely encountered the worlds of social activism, mental illness, addiction, spirituality, dogma, economic instability and cultural alienation, amongst others, I have come to understand something of the realities around me. I believe that cognising[27] individuals do not, and cannot live in one perfectly universal Reality. By the simple act of being a 'self' that is (even in the tiniest way) different from 'another', I am convinced that each person has and is part of a related yet different, uniquely personal, physical and psychological reality (Riegler, 2012). Furthermore, all of these realities are, or were at some time, equally valid.

As a teacher, this perspective of my learners' differing realities influences how I work with a class as a whole, as well as with each student/learner individually. Trying to engage with the different ways in which they might think and experience the world is a gamble to allow for learning to take place. How exactly this happens is a question for greater, or braver minds than my own.

A scholarly investigation into learning, however, does not begin and end in reflection on one's own onto-epistemological musings or fearfully fading into neutrality. "Educational research cannot afford to be neutral: too much is at stake" (Van Lier, 2002, p. 51). Critically investigating the work of what I consider greater and/or braver minds in learning theory is essential to guide the pursuit of learning innovation. The question is how to do it. In the case of this study, I am encouraged and guided by the following advice:

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[27] Sentient, growing in both awareness and experiences of knowing.

There are many ways into any theory. The key is to find an idea or a metaphor that resonates with one's own experience of tacit theories of the world, and then to follow the connections made by the author to less familiar, more challenging ideas. Linearity is not required. (Fettes, 2002, p. 31)

Whilst the concept "academic landscape" is not new, this metaphor hits home in a personal way. Having grown up as the son of a Land Surveyor, I spent a lot of time exploring the hills and valleys of South Africa alongside my father. Few things fascinated me more about his work than seeing how the terrain we had traversed could be rendered as topographical maps. To be honest, I still get a kick out of 3D wireframe renderings of landscapes. It seems only fitting, then, for me to visualise a literature review as a survey of the academic landscape – and to use a metaphoric lens of climbing the "mountains" of authoritative scholarship and exploring their roots and connecting features (hence the choice of a rhizomatic methodology).

Intrigued by claims that the processes of language learning are essentially the same as those of learning in other domains (Fettes, 2002; Gee, 1994b; Halliday, 1993; Riegler, 2012), I consider contributions from both research streams (i.e. cognition-based learning theories and language learning theories) in this survey. I choose to include language learning theories based on the belief that "Language is so closely bound up with human psychology and culture that efforts to understand it in isolation risk neglecting factors of vital importance" (Fettes, 2002, p. 44). Finding a significant degree of similarity and interchangeability amongst the included theoretical contributions' views on epistemology[28] – and significantly ontological[29] change

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[28] "Epistemology is the systematic consideration, in philosophy and elsewhere, of knowing: when knowledge is valid, what counts as truth, and so on." (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 227)

[29] "Ontology is the consideration of being: what is, what exists, what it means for something – or somebody – to be." (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 227)

(Packer & Goicoechea, 2000) – adds to the complexity of interweaving perspectives that inform my enquiry.

Dressed in the aforementioned metaphor, I set out to explore the area where two rivers of theory meet, i.e. theory on the development of cognition (River Cognition), and theory on the development of language (River Language). I start out on this exploration by climbing the most prominent mountain on my journey along the River Language, that of Constructivism. From one of its peaks I can see the two rivers of theory carving through the landscape, crossing each other in the distance. Staying between the rivers, which inevitably requires the fording of occasional streams and rivulets, I make my way down the ridge of Constructionism to the mountain of Sociocultural Theory (SCT), on the banks of the River Language. Here I follow the shore to where both rivers meet at the foot of two mountains; those of Situated Theory, and Language-based Theory of Learning (LTL). Following the banks of Cognition back towards Constructivism, I explore the mountain of Ecological Theory of Cognition before drawing a map of the lay of the land. This journey not only helps me position my research in terms of existing scholarly work, but it also informs my choices in terms of research design, data collection and analysis. After climbing the mountains of existing research, I arrive at a vantage point where I am able to make sense of my research data. The figure below (Fig. 2.1) is a three dimensional, artistic interpretation of the academic landscape explored in this study. Its sole purpose is to serve as a visual anchor for the metaphor of this research journey. No claims of its scientific accuracy are made or implied. To map out this visualisation, general 'areas of academic investigation' are clustered together to form mountains on the landscape. The relative footprint of each mountain is based on its estimated 'age' in terms of published research. In turn, the relative height of each mountain is based on its prominence (aggregate citations) in the literature.
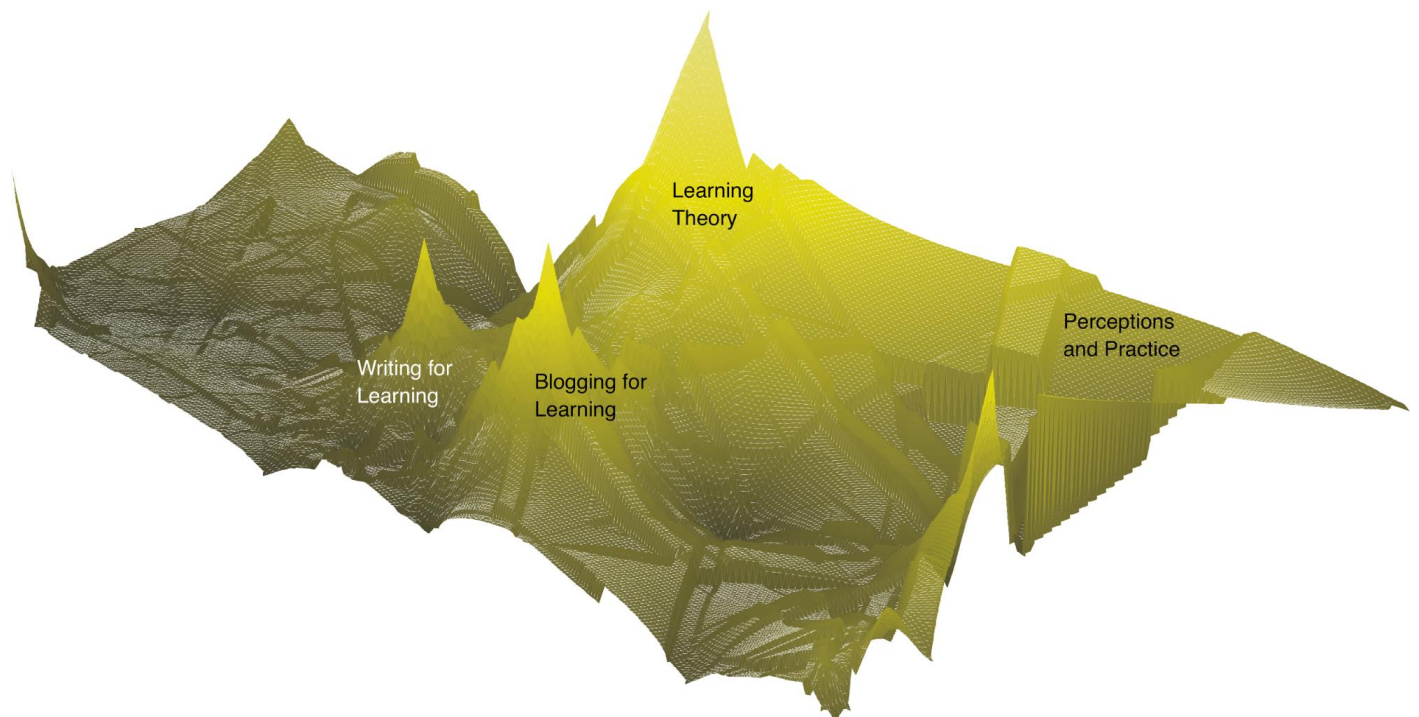
FIGURE 2.1 A TOPOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION OF THE ACADEMIC LANDSCAPE

2.2.1.1. *Constructivism*

The basic tenet of Constructivism seems to be that "reality is constructed" (Riegler, 2012, p. 237). Built on the foundational efforts of the psychologist Jean Piaget, Constructivists traditionally employ a dualist ontology, where "although space and time and the objects of our experience are a priori[30] structures of our experiencing, not the way things exist in themselves, [Constructivists] nonetheless infer the independent existence of a material realm underlying such appearances" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 228). Traditionally, Constructivist views on ontology – that which is – do not

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[30] Relating to or denoting reasoning or knowledge that proceeds from theoretical deduction rather than from observation or experience.

stray far from the acceptance that the physical, independent reality remains unchanged despite the development of human cognition. For them, the development of human knowledge (a function of cognition) solely affects the psychological realities of human individuals, considered a cogito[31], or epistemic persons "fundamentally unchanged by the construction of knowledge" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 228).

Here, the cognising individual does not process information from the 'material realm', but rather generates information (Riegler, 2012) from experience of such a realm, in so doing constructing a dependent reality through the adaptive function of cognition. In other words, cognition organises the experientially generated information that constructs an individual's subjective reality. Ontological discovery, or the uncovering of an objective reality, is not considered to be a cognitive function (Riegler, 2012). This stance is clarified in the following statement:

> *Therefore knowledge about the world is and can only be knowledge about our own experiential reality rather than an ontological mind-independent reality. Reality is a network of concepts that so far have proven to be viable in the light of the experiences of the subject because they have repeatedly served as a tool for successfully surmounting problems of life or for assimilating complexes of experiences. (Riegler, 2012, p. 245)*

Contrary to the existence of an a priori reality, knowledge is understood to be constructed on the basis of an individual's experience – which is subjective in essence. This process of knowledge construction requires active, cognitive participation of the individual, and cannot be "acquired" (Riegler, 2012, p. 236) passively. "To know is to modify, to transform the object, and to understand the process of this transformation,

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[31] The principle establishing the existence of a being from the fact of its thinking or awareness.

and as a consequence to understand the way the object is constructed" (Piaget, 1964, p. 176).

Packer and Goicoechea (2000, p. 228) state that "learning is the resulting construction and qualitative reorganization of knowledge structures." Learning, in other words, is a result of the learner's active, cognitive effort – what Piaget (1964, p. 176) refers to as "interiorized action" or operation. This cognitive effort is made possible and informed by the learner's own framework of experiences (network of linked operations) and previously constructed knowledge structures. This supports the belief that no two people are likely to ever truly share the same psychological reality. By extension, no two people are likely to share an identical understanding of any particular object, process, content or idea.

> *These operational structures are what seem to me to constitute the basis of knowledge, the natural psychological reality, in terms of which we must understand the development of knowledge. (Piaget, 1964, p. 177)*

Piaget (1964) identifies four factors that play a role in learning, these being maturation, experience, social transmission, and equilibration. Social transmission here includes linguistic transmission and education. In looking for the connection between language and learning – particularly in terms of writing for learning – to further educational praxis, the factor of social transmission (teaching and learning) stands out as the most relied upon factor of contemporary education practices.

Social transmission first of all requires a shared medium of communication in order for the transmission (teaching and learning) to be effected. Communicative skills such as listening and reading/viewing (passive skills), and writing and speaking/presenting (active skills) are however not enough for social transmission to lead to learning or the construction of knowledge. For learning to take place, the learner has to have already developed the necessary knowledge structures (Piaget, 1964) to make sense of what

is being transmitted. In other words, "to receive the information he must have a structure which enables him to assimilate this information" (Piaget, 1964, p. 180).

It is important to note that Constructivists (particularly classic constructivists, as opposed to their more liberal descendants, the radical constructivists) believe that learning, especially in the case of education, is "provoked, in general, as opposed to spontaneous. In addition, it is a limited process – limited to a single problem, or to a single structure" (Piaget, 1964, p. 176). Many of these assumptions are contested, to varying degrees, by the other learning theories informing this study. The belief that our knowledge of reality is constructed, however, remains as a fundamental assumption of all these theories – and this study.

2.2.1.2. Constructionism

My interest in semiotic mediation of cognition and learning is made manifest in this study's focus on blogging as a form of writing for learning, mediated by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It is therefore important to clarify that I do not consider blogging to be a "machine-based" practice, but rather a practice redefined by "machines" (in the broadest sense of the word). Nevertheless, I believe that theoretical work surrounding machine-based models and computer assisted instruction/learning offers valuable insight for this study. I am especially drawn to the principles of Seymour Papert's Constructionism:

> *Constructionism – the N word as opposed to the V word – shares constructivism's connotation of learning as "building knowledge structures" irrespective of the circumstances of the learning. It then adds the idea that this happens especially felicitously in a context where the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a public entity, whether*

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it's a sand castle on the beach or a theory of the universe. (Papert & Harel, 1991, p. 1)

Papert's theory resonates "with the constructivist bias toward learning by doing, with the situationist critique of dissociating knowledge from a context of use and with the cognitivist insistence on understanding the concepts behind the skills and facts" (Papert, 2000, p. 722) that form the core of schooling. He singles out Piaget's belief "that the development of ideas in children's knowledge systems parallels, not in detail but in general form, the way ideas develop historically" (Papert, 2000, p. 724) as the father of Constructivism's most influential and powerful contribution to learning theory.

The core principle of Constructionism seems to be that learning is a result of doing and thinking about what is being done (Papert, 2005). Constructionists view cognising individuals as "constantly engaged in inventing theories about everything, including [themselves], schools and teachers" (Papert, 2005, p. 35). Learners are definitely not seen as empty, passive receptacles of schooling. Constructionism's main epistemological contribution to learning theory is its focus on the impact of computers on the mediation between learners and ideas. "The most important (and surely controversial) component of this impact is on the child's ability to articulate the working of his own mind and particularly the interaction between himself and reality in the course of learning and thinking" (Papert, 2005, p. 35).

For Papert and Harel (1991), the greater significance of computer technology in education becomes clear once it is allowed to modify and/or redefine the very nature of learning processes. Only after computers are allowed to change our educational practices from the transmission of knowledge to learners (in the hope of transference), to the construction of knowledge by learners, can we begin to truly explore the affordances of ICT-mediated learning (Papert, 2000).

2.2.1.3. Sociocultural Theory of Learning

Sociocultural theorists build on the constructivist notion of constructed reality (Riegler, 2010), adding that "not just our knowledge but we ourselves, and the objects we know, are constructed: What counts as real varies culturally and changes historically" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 232). Sociocultural Theory (SCT) further represents a fundamental shift away from Constructivism's dualist ontological stance, by employing a distinctly nondualist ontology where "the person is constructed in a social context" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 228). Not only is there no longer a differentiation between ontological stability and individual epistemological change; but reality and all knowledge thereof are seen as unfixed, social coconstructions (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Here an epistemological change of any magnitude is argued to lead to an ontological change not just of the person, but also of the social world (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

There exists, then, an "interdependence of social and individual processes in the construction of knowledge" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 191); with the key to "all aspects of knowledge construction" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 192) being semiotic[32] mediation. Lantolf (1994, p. 418) defines mediation as "the introduction of an auxiliary device into an activity that then links humans to the world of objects or to the world of mental behavior [sic]", be it by physical or symbolic means. The introduction of symbolic tools for the mediation of mental processes (e.g. maps, schemata, diagrams, algebraic and numeric systems, and especially language) is seen as a significant contribution to our understanding of the development of cognition, the (co-)construction of knowledge, and learning (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993; Fettes, 2002; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf *et al.*, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978).

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[32] Semiotics being the study of signs and symbols and their use or interpretation.

Focusing on human learning, Sociocultural theorists presuppose "a specific social nature and process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 39), also referred to as a process of "enculturation" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Knowledge is thereby understood to be both socially and culturally situated; which means that learning activities are to be situated in a similar fashion (activity, context, culture) in order to be effective. Learners, through engaging in learning practices, therefore not only construct knowledge through mediated cognition[33] – but do so whilst increasingly becoming part of the intellectual life of the communities they belong to, and strive to belong to, effectively coconstructing those communities in the process. As Packer and Goicoechea put it: "Learning – gaining knowledge or understanding – is an integral part of broader ontological changes that stem from participation in a community" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 234).

Chang-Wells and Wells' insistence that "education must be thought of in terms not of the transmission of knowledge but of transaction and transformation" (Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993, p. 59) harmonises with the understanding of learning as a result of participation in social, cultural and practice-based communities. Building on this conviction, John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) reiterate Wells' (1994) conception of learning activities as internal knowledge construction processes that build on existing intramental[34] abilities (e.g. internal speech), rather than the duplication of external, intermental processes as modelled or transmitted in the case of traditional instruction.

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[33] "Cognition is culturally mediated by material and semantic artifacts such as tools and signs, it is founded in purposive activity, and it develops historically as changes at the sociocultural level impact psychological organization." (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 229)

[34] "... with the concept of inner speech, Vygotsky was able to establish the nature of the intramental domain of verbal thinking and, at the same time, both trace its developmental antecedents in external speech and suggest how intramental verbal thinking could continue to be influenced by the intermental thinking that occurs in social activity." (Wells, 1994, p. 62)

Whilst emphasis on the significance of language as a symbolic tool for the mediation of mental processes seems intuitive, Vygotsky (1978, p. 39) explicitly states that the "acquisition of language can provide a paradigm[35] for the entire problem of the relation between learning and development." Lantolf (1994) expounds on Vygotsky arguing that externalised mental activity is primarily mediated through language (whether spoken or semiotically) be it for transmittive or collaborative purposes, and that internalised mental activity (thought[36] would be similarly mediated.

2.2.1.4. Language-Based Theory of Learning (LTL)

Running with the Sociocultural insight of learning as a result of enculturation and semiotic mediation, I am drawn to Halliday's earlier work, where he conceptualised a language-based theory of learning. The following quote introduces a core insight into a fundamental premise of this dissertation:

> *When children learn language[37], they are not simply engaging in one kind of learning among many; rather, they are learning the foundation of learning itself. The distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of making meaning – a semiotic process; and the prototypical form of human semiotic is language. Hence the ontogenesis of language is at the same time the ontogenesis of learning. (Halliday, 1993, p. 93)*

Whilst not offering a theory of learning in general, Halliday proposes a threefold perspective of "learning language, learning through language, [and] learning about

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[35] Presumably more a *framework* than a paradigm (c.f. Kuhn, 1964; Riegler, 2012)

[36] See also Lantolf, Thorne, and Poehner (2015, p. 221)

[37] Note: Not "a language" but "language".

language", and petitions for the consideration of such "a structural continuity running through all components and processes of learning" (Halliday, 1993, p. 113).

Halliday and his supporters argue for an intertwined onto-epistemological approach to knowledge and learning. Locating human beings simultaneously in a material realm as well as a semiotic realm of existence, Halliday (2007) claims that all regions of the human experience are influenced by both realms. Any human knowledge or experience of the material realm is interpreted and understood by means of the semiotic which, in turn, allows us to affect and effect change in/of the material realm. To illustrate (itself being an act of semiotic mediation): I am able to "know" what a brick is, and to understand its characteristics, because of the names (e.g. weight, shape, density) and stories (e.g. Newton's laws) I have associated with the material object. At the same time, because of the stories, signs and symbols I already understand, I am able to build a material structure made out of bricks and call it a building. The challenge is to gain knowledge in and of both these realms, and to make meaning thereof.

The key to meaning making is language (Byrnes, 2011; Gee, 1994a; Halliday, 1993, 2007; Wells, 1994, 2007). In language "it is the **combination of the experiential and the interpersonal** that constitutes an act of meaning. All meaning – and hence all learning – is at once both action and reflection" (Halliday, 1993, p. 101). It is important to note that, according to Halliday, language "is not a domain of human knowledge (except in the special context of linguistics, where it becomes an object of scientific study); language is the essential condition of knowing, the process by which experience **becomes** knowledge" (Halliday, 1993, p. 94). The notion that "all human learning is essentially semiotic in nature" (Halliday, 1993, p. 93) is arguably one of Halliday's greatest influences on this study.

Halliday believes that a theory of learning should see "learning itself as a semiotic process: learning **is learning to mean**, and to expand one's meaning potential"

(Halliday, 1993, p. 113). He conceives of signs and symbols (and by extension sign/symbol systems) as evolving through the enactment of social interaction, and through the interpreting of experience into meaning. Halliday underscores the importance of meaning making by describing it as "the construction of human experience" (Halliday, 2007, p. 63).

Wells (1994) sees Halliday's theory not only as one of language, but also as one of achieving understanding through reflection of experiences. He asserts that reflective "activities are carried out with the resources of language as a tool[38]" (Wells, 1994, p. 65) for thinking and meaning making. Gee (1994a, p. 33) offers insights in terms of the "sociohistorical and… sociocultural nature of thinking and knowing", as well as the observation that the interactional nature of language is what makes language inherently social. Language, as a social semiotic, allows cognising individuals to engage in meaning making activities with each other and their environment(s) by facilitating communication, understanding and the continued negotiation of meaning. The following extract illustrates the fundamental reasoning for including these language-based theoretical contributions in this study:

> *Whatever the culture they are born into, in learning to speak children are learning a semiotic that has been evolving for at least ten thousand generations. But in some cultures, including those comprising the Eurasian culture band, during the past hundred generations or so the nature of this semiotic has been changing: A new form of expression has evolved, that we call writing, and following on from this a new, institutionalized form of learning that we call education. Children now learn language not only in home and neighbourhood but also in school;*

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[38] It is important to clarify that the use of the term 'tool' in the context of this study is understood to refer to (at least some) language ability as a necessary condition for the mediation of thinking, learning and meaning making activities – but not as a fixed, mechanistic device.

> *and with new modes of language development come new forms of knowledge, educational knowledge as distinct from what we call common sense. At the same time, the process of language development is still a continuous learning process, one that goes on from birth, through infancy and childhood, and on through adolescence into adult life. (Halliday, 1993, p. 93)*

Halliday describes language as both a system of meaning, and "the leading edge of meaning, even if not all types of human semiotic are necessarily realized by language" (Halliday, 2007, p. 59). Apart from making meaning (which he describes as both ideational and interpersonal), the enterprise of conveying meaning is also described as being dependent on the selection, arrangement, interpretation and explanation thereof. Language, therefore, remains the indispensable "tool of tools" (Wells, 1994, p. 46) amongst Vygotsky's sign-based psychological tools for the mediation of mental activity.

Wells (1994, p. 84) adds to Halliday's definition of learning as a semiotic process with the inclusion of "learning to do as well as to mean – to expand one's potential for meaningful action as well as one's potential for meaning through language." Here, Wells includes the development of proficiencies that enable active, effective and creative participation in "practical, social, and intellectual activity" (Wells, 1994, p. 84).

The proponents of a language-based theory of learning (LTL) agree that all learning is actively mediated by language, whether directed outwards or inwards; and that theories of language learning could inform theories of learning across disciplines and in general. The importance of these contributions to this study lies in the value of semiotic mediation of learning through writing – especially in as far as educational practice is concerned.

2.2.1.5.Situated Learning Theory

Proponents of Situated Learning Theory agree with those of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) that cognitive development is facilitated by experiences gained through social and material activities. Lantolf, Thorne and Poehner elaborate on this agreement by situating such developmental processes in, amongst others, "cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life and peer group interaction, and institutional contexts like schooling, organized sports activities, and workplaces" (Lantolf *et al.*, 2015, p. 207). In other words, learning is understood to be embedded in activity, context, and culture; where it is construed as being both formal and informal. Formal and informal learning is brought about via cognitive apprenticeships, authentic activities, and actual participation in, or experiences of discipline or domain-specific work (Lantolf *et al.*, 2015).

"To learn to use tools as practitioners use them, a student, like an apprentice, must enter that community and its culture" (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989a, p. 33). This means that domain specific learning is essentially a process of enculturation into an actual community of practice. As is the case in SCT, human learning is seen as "an integral part of broader ontological changes that stem from participation in a community" (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 234). Brown *et al.* (1989) provide a compelling argument that school enculturation – regardless of attempts to bring authentic material and activities into the classroom – in no way resembles real world disciplinary enculturation. They argue that school enculturation means learning to succeed in school, which bears little similarity (if any) to life outside of school.

The solution to such a dilemma is proposed as giving learners "the opportunity to observe and practice" (Brown *et al.*, 1989a, p. 34) domain specific cultural practices

and behaviour in situ[39]. Such opportunities are claimed to successfully lead to the appropriate enculturation, or real-world learning. "The ease and success with which people [enculturate] (as opposed to the intricacy of describing what it entails) belie the immense importance of the process and obscures the fact that what they [learn] is a product of the ambient culture rather than of explicit teaching" (Brown *et al.*, 1989a, p. 34).

Lave and Wenger (1991) develops the model of a *Community of Practice* (CoP) from the social constructivist position on learning through shared experiences. Wenger, White and Smith (2009, p. 3) introduce Communities of Practice as "Communities where the learning component is central." Within such a community, knowledge and skills are shared and developed through the practices, activities, context and culture of that community, where "learning [is seen] as an integral part of life" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 4); creating a shared knowledge-base and ensuring the continued development (survival) of that community. Wenger *et al.* (2009) argue that different Communities of Practice (CoPs) "have different orientations toward the process of learning together", defining an orientation as being "a typical pattern of activities and connections through which members experience being a community" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 69). Teachers in a specific high school are therefore likely to have different processes of 'learning together' than, say, high school English teachers (as a separate community) in the same district as the aforementioned high school. In this example, the English teachers from one high-school can therefore be seen as belonging to different communities: the school itself, their department within the school, and any English-teaching networks or bodies within their district and beyond. In truth, it is highly unlikely that these teachers all belong to the same communities.

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[39] Lit. "in its original place".

"The ties of relationship and awareness engendered by genre and discourses are fundamental to community; yet a community where the same set of genres or discourses is universally shared can only exist as a theoretical model, given the diversity of interests, points of view, roles and abilities that characterizes the members of any real community, even a small one" (Fettes, 2002, p. 43).

Essential to this study are findings that a CoP is "considered [to be] an effective platform for the personal development of teachers" (Darling-Hammond *et al.* 2009). Furthermore, it is argued that CoPs "offer a useful perspective on technology because they are not defined by place or by personal characteristics, but by people's potential to learn together" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 11). Conversely, conceiving of teaching-and-learning environments (habitats / communities / ecologies) as mutually defining relationships between participants and the spaces they participate in seems entirely reasonable:

Similarly, communities of practice need habitats to learn together. These habitats have to provide the places and support the ways in which members experience togetherness. Increasingly, these community habitats include technology based connections and places in addition to physical ones. By digital habitat we refer to the portion of a community's habitat that is enabled by a configuration of technologies. (Wenger et al., 2009, p. 38)

Wenger *et al.* (2009, p. 11) further use the term Digital Habitats (see Section 2.2.1.6) to refer to spaces (in the broadest sense of the word) "where community and technology intersect". Collaborative learning in virtual communities here "implies that technology will help us find learning partners and engage with them meaningfully" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, pp. 3–4). Zandi, Thang and Krish (2014) elaborate on meaningful

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engagement as interaction via both online and face-to-face modes, where learning partners are able to share experiences, insights, knowledge, problems and possible solutions from actual practice within a community. They further state that teachers and educators are likely to benefit from engaging in online/virtual CoPs. Wenger *et al.* (2009) believe that, especially in the case of Digital Habitats, voluntary community involvement and close collaboration amongst members enables a CoP to discover, share and invent new affordances of ICT and other technologies that are available to them.

Linking all knowledge (Brown *et al.*, 1989a) and learning back to language, Wenger *et al.* (2009) use the example of blogging as a tool for the development of Digital Habitats. Here, blogging "is often described as a public journaling technology. Yet it also gives people new ways to discover what they have in common, possibly leading to the formation of new communities" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 4). The great attraction of ICT-mediated, productive interaction in virtual CoPs is attributed to the affordances of learning networks. Zandi *et al.* (2014) found that a teacher's blog "represented a space for the teachers to expedite online discussions of teaching… [and provided] the opportunity… to have interaction with peers which not only made them aware of the usefulness of technology but also helped them to learn how to integrate the technology to support teaching" (Zandi *et al.*, 2014, p. 535). They concluded that the provision of such an opportunity to participate in a CoP lessened teachers' sense of isolation, and augmented their experience of collaborative problem solving. The structure of learning is found to be implicit within the experience of learning, which is claimed to be enhanced through online communicative interaction in a virtual CoP. The following figure draws on Wenger *et al.* (2009) to illustrate how such virtual CoPs may, through the semiotic exchanges and interactions of developing/established practitioners in a particular domain of learning, be brought into being:

FIGURE 2.2 THREE FUNDAMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

2.2.1.6. *Ecological perspectives*

When describing Digital Habitats, Wenger *et al.* (2009) employ the following definition of a habitat:

> *A habitat is usually defined as an area that incorporates all the environmental and biological features required for the survival and reproduction of a species (or a "community" in the ecological sense). What makes the habitat work is not just a set of physical features, but also the ways in which the species has learned to take advantage of*

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> *these features for its survival. In many cases, the species itself contributes to shaping its habitat. A habitat is not fixed. As new elements are introduced, the species needs to adapt to environmental changes. A habitat, therefore, is a dynamic, mutually-defining relationship between a species and a place. (Wenger et al., 2009, p. 37)*

Looking at Digital Habitats so defined, I am drawn to developments based on the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner in ecological constructivism. His Ecological Systems Theory lays the foundation for ecological perspectives on learning theories – many of which are especially prominent in the field of language learning. To that end, Kramsch and Lam (2002) identify the ecological metaphor as an attempt "to capture the interconnectedness of psychological, social and environmental processes in SLA[40]" (Kramsch & Lam, 2002, p. 144).

Van Lier describes language learning environments as complex, adaptive systems, integrating insights from several of the learning theories already discussed in this survey. He conceives of the mind "as the totality of relationships between a developing person and the surrounding world; and learning as the result of meaningful activity in an accessible environment" (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, p. 20). Van Lier (2000) also relates Bronfenbrenner's 'proximal processes' of learning to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and frames them as key aspects to unlocking the affordances of interactive learning ecologies. Taking a semiotic perspective, Van Lier (2002) suggests that an educational environment provides a 'semiotic budget' – similar to the 'energy budget' of an ecosystem – which affords the active learner opportunities to engage in a variety of meaning making activities. Such activities may include access

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[40] Second Language Acquisition

and direct or indirect interaction with less, equally, or more capable individuals; with the educational environment itself; or various combinations of these.

The inclusion of sociocultural and ecological processes alongside psychological processes in learning theory challenges the assumption that "language, cognitions, memories, and intelligence are uniquely contained inside the brain" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 257). Knowledge structures, or schema, are no longer considered to be "neatly delineated concepts imposed upon the world, but fuzzy and open-ended heuristic devices developed and continuously adjusted by each individual" (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, p. 19). Again, the construction and development of these devices are mediated; involving changes in already complexly interconnected cognitive systems that are thoroughly integrated in personal ways "of living in the world" (Fettes, 2002, p. 34). Learning not only changes what the individual knows, but also what the individual is (Fettes, 2002; Leather & Van Dam, 2002).

Ecological perspectives on language learning view the cognitive processes of the individual as "inextricably interwoven with their experiences in the physical and social world" (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, p. 13). Development is seen as a continuously emergent process, where learning is always greater than the sum of its constituent 'parts', i.e. learning processes. With learning and cognition no longer exclusively situated in the brain, all forms of learner experience, activity and interaction, whether verbal or nonverbal, are "central to an understanding of learning" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 246). These processes not only facilitate learning, but can fundamentally be seen as learning. With specific relation to language, theorists operating from an ecological perspective believe that the "context of language activity is socially constructed and often dynamically negotiated on a moment-by-moment basis" (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, p. 13). Recognise that the context of language activity, as referred to here, involves more than just the interlocutors and linguistic artefacts involved. Here, context

includes the entire ecology (e.g. environmental processes, nested environments, sociocultural milieu) in which such activity takes place.

The learner is seen as being immersed in environments "full of potential meanings" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 246). The active learner gradually gains access to these meanings by acting and interacting with and within this environment. Such processes of making meaning develop "increasingly effective ways of dealing with the world and its meanings" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 247). This means that learning and cognition cannot be seen as relying on either representational (semiotic) or ecological processes – but on both:

> *The premise that most clearly characterises an ecological approach to language acquisition is that language behaviour always involves more than can be captured in any single frame or script. An ecological approach aims to avoid unjustifiable appeals to normativity – in both research designs and the interpretation of data. All settings, we suggest, will on closer scrutiny turn out to be discoursally [sic] and socioculturally complex. (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, pp. 13–14)*

Leather and Van Dam (2002) draw on the work of Vygotsky to support their assertion that learning is an inseparable part of living, and that the material and semiotic realms of human activity are inextricably intertwined. Van Lier (2000) also draws on Vygotsky to illustrate the interdependence of thought and language in learning and "the development of higher mental functions" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 254). In the context of education, Van Lier goes on to state that "Ecological educators see language and learning as relationships among learners and between learners and the environment. This does not deny cognitive processes, but it connects those cognitive processes with social processes" (Van Lier, 2000, p. 258). The assertion remains that the complex relations between cognising individuals and their contexts contribute greatly

to the mediation of learning in general, and individual linguistic development in particular:

> *From all the complex phenomena that may occur in interaction, the notion of negotiation of meaning is highlighted as being indicative of learning processes at work, or at least as a likely candidate for learning opportunities. The reason is that in negotiating meaning a piece of language that was not comprehensible before, now becomes comprehensible as a result of negotiation work and can thus be incorporated into the learner's target-language repertoire. (Van Lier, 2000, p. 247)*

This argument is furthered when Fettes identifies thought as "not just a *linguistic* capacity: [but rather] a more fundamental *cognitive* capacity that underlies our use of language" (Fettes, 2002, p. 35). To illustrate the intersection of language and knowledge, Fettes also agrees with Brown *et al.* (1989) that concepts – even well-defined, abstract / technical concepts – are not universal "public devices" (Fettes, 2002, p. 37), but rather "private schematic networks underlying individuals' use of public language devices" (Fettes, 2002, p. 37). In other words, the discussion (mutual exploration and interpretation or comparison) of concepts serves to enrich and build personal schematic networks – "not discrete, but interlinked with other networks derived from all of our encounters with the world" (Fettes, 2002, p. 38) – instead of solidifying any one 'universal' entity.

Van Lier (2000) suggests uniting several established perspectives on language learning through an ecological approach as discussed so far, specifically in educational settings:

> *A number of researchers in developmental psychology see the context in which development and learning take place as crucial and even*

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defining. This trend, which diverges from the highly acclaimed cognitive revolution that started in the 1960s, has led to a debate between cognitive and situative (or contextualized) perspectives on learning research... The former are often called constructivist, Piagetian, or neo-Piagetian approaches that place an emphasis on the computational processes that happen in the brain, whereas the latter are social-constructivist or constructionist approaches that see a strong role for social and other contextual processes. Bakhtin's dialogical view of language, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and the various manifestations of ecological theory are at the contextual or situative end of the spectrum, even though they do not necessarily deny a central role to cognitive processes. (Van Lier, 2000, p. 254)

Expounding on the nature of educational ecologies, Leather and Van Dam (2002) state that classroom discourse is, in principle, far more complex than recitation or question-and-answer exercises. According to them, classroom discourse – involving multiple participants engaged in collaborative meaning making using multiple codes – can "embed all the discursive forms, participation formats and genres that are found in the culture as a whole" (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, p. 17). The introduction of computers, ICT, new media (and now social media) compounds this complexity. These technologies enable learners to participate in, engage with, and create their own learning communities across the globe. Again, complexity comes into play where, in "communication with remote interlocutors (whether or not in a distance learning programme) students have to compensate for the lack of visual feedback and shared knowledge of a situation" (Leather & Van Dam, 2002, p. 17). It remains important to realise that such technologies mediate learning, and do not represent learning in and of themselves. Fettes highlights that, "whereas our machines can get by on the representation of ecological information… actually dealing with that world demands a

different kind of awareness" (Fettes, 2002, p. 35). Whilst the exact definition of such an awareness lies beyond the scope of this study; it seems sufficient to understand it as active, cognising learners' growing insights into their developing, increasingly interrelated knowledge structures and experiences (schema) of their interactive ecologies and communities of practice, culture and thought.

2.2.1.7. Consolidated theoretical stance

Looking back at the landscape of learning theories traversed, the mountains of theory are found to have several features in common. In an attempt to explore their similarities and harmonies, I identify the most prominent of these with beacons, which I proceed to thread together in search of meaning. The resultant latticework of learning theory highlights the following insights: (1) Knowledge of reality is constructed and personal; (2) Learning is the interrelated processes through which knowledge is constructed; (3) Human knowledge is co-constructed socially through semiotic mediation; (4) The most prominent semiotic tool for learning is language.

Humans are able to learn through doing (activity) and thinking about what is being done (cognition and metacognition). For this reason, a learner is understood to be an active, cognising individual, simultaneously existing and operating in both the material (physical) and semiotic (psychological) realms. Furthermore, human knowledge is understood to be socially and culturally situated, with learners striving to make meaning through both action and reflection in, of, and through their environment(s). Learning to do and learning to mean are interrelated activities that cognising individuals engage in, within learning ecologies brimming with meaning potential:

> *A semiotic and ecological view of language and of learning entails that the context – physical, social and symbolic – is a central element in teaching and learning, and that issues such as embodiment of language*

> *and spatio-temporal structures are instrumental in the creation of learning opportunities. (Van Lier, 2004, p. 79)*

In terms of the focus of this study, blogging teacher-trainees (learners) are understood to engage in learning through semiotic interaction with less, similarly, and more knowledgeable others in digital ecologies of practice-based communities. What value these pre-service teachers attach to theories on writing for learning, or the practice of blogging for learning in their self-constituted communities of practice, remains to be explored.

2.2.2. Writing for learning

Building on the assumption that all knowledge is constructed through semiotic mediation, alongside the conviction that the most powerful and pervasive social semiotic is language; it stands to reason that all knowledge representations are constructed from, and can be reconstructed through some form of language. In various educational traditions, representations of knowledge can be found in the form of language artefacts such as books, dissertations, formulae, recordings, annotated charts, graphs and maps, to name a few. Whereas these artefacts represent instances of meaning-making, encoded and presented for the purposes of sharing knowledge – gaining access to such knowledge requires the decoding and reconstruction thereof. One form of language use seems eminently suitable for the coding and decoding of meaning, as well as the creation of meaning-bearing artefacts to document and facilitate learning: writing.

Although Bangert-Drowns, Hurley and Wilkinson (2004) disagree, Byrnes (2011, p. 147) insists that "learning to write and writing to learn are fundamentally inseparable because educational knowing itself occurs at the intersection of language, learning, and knowledge." Despite this disagreement, both parties consider writing for learning to be an important area of study. Narrowing the focus of this theoretical inquiry (from

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general language use for learning) accordingly, I investigate studies related to writing for learning (Bangert-Drowns *et al.*, 2004), particularly (and importantly) paying attention to both writing for learning language and writing for learning content.

As is the case with classroom discourse (Leather & Van Dam, 2002), writing – as a form of language use – is described as being "embedded in a complex web of relationships between writers, readers, the text and reality" (Paltridge, 2004, p. 89). The inherent dialogical nature (Van Lier, 2000) of language, language use and language products (or artefacts), necessitates an acknowledgement of the relationship between interlocutors – even if that relationship is self-reflective in nature. That is to say any manifestation of language requires a relationship to someone/something with the potential to recognise it, in order for the language to entice meaning and have some form of value. Paltridge (2004) not only emphasises that these relationships exist, but that they are always changing. Ortega (2011) illustrates the potential variety of interlocutor relations during the act of writing by focusing on the different roles of readers (audience). Imagine, for instance, the shifting dynamics between writer and reader where the produced text aims to persuade the reader to accept a particular point of view. For starters, the reader may already hold the desired point of view, and could therefore engage with the language artefact in an entirely different manner than someone of an opposing view. This is merely an example of differences in audience at the start of the engagement – imagine the complexity involved in changing the reader's opinion, and how the relationship between the author and the audience could fluctuate during this process. Canagarajah (2011, p. 130) reminds us that "writing is not just constitutive, it is also performative", in this instance manifesting as "rhetorical negotiation for achieving social meanings and functions" (*ibid.*).

Byrnes (2011, p. 135) identifies the "central task in writing" as being "that of *linking meaning and wording in extended texts.*" Language use not only enables

communicative interaction, but also the active interpretation of experience and any acts of meaning making. Writing in particular is considered to be an effective semiotic tool for the mediation of meaning making activities. In this regard, Wells (1994) emphasises that writing connects cognising individuals with each other, their environments/ecologies, and processes in both the material and semiotic realms. In elaboration hereof, he furthers Halliday's argument that the relationship "between culture and text" (Wells, 1994, p. 58) is to be explicated; describing text "as both the process... and the product... of interaction in a specific setting" (*ibid.*). Writing can therefore be understood to be both the activity (act and processes involved in writing) and the artefact (written product). The process is reflected in the product, and the product influences the process through which it is produced.

Recall that both process and product are necessarily situated in a particular system (ecology), within which meaning potential (semiotic budget) is actualised (Leather & Van Dam, 2002; Paltridge, 2004; Van Lier, 2000; Wells, 1994). Written artefacts can therefore be understood to represent particular instances of meaning made by their authors in contexts of specific ecological circumstances. It follows that evidence of the complex relationships between writers, readers, texts and realities are, to some degree, enshrined and made manifest in the resulting written artefacts.

For writing to fulfil any descriptive, interpretive or communicative function, the writer requires more than relevant vocabulary or grammatical knowledge. In order to convey or represent (through symbolic mediation) meaning; metalinguistic awareness of abstraction and conceptual relation is required (Bangert-Drowns *et al.*, 2004; Brown *et al.*, 1989a; Chang-Wells & Wells, 1993; Halliday, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1994, 2007), as is some understanding (or at least anticipation) of the intended audience's abilities. Wells elucidates:

Because of the more abstract nature of written language, both with respect to its use of a second-order symbolism and with respect to its tendency to make use of words that refer to abstract entities (i.e., "other wordings"), in learning to read and write, children have to reconstitute their meaning potential in a new, more abstract mode. (Wells, 1994, p. 69)

In schooling, the active learner engages with a variety of educational artefacts related to the topic/subject being taught. Wells attributes learners' reinterpretation of their own experiences "according to the semantic structures" (Wells, 1994, p. 81) that are characteristic of especially the written texts in question. Reading about the human body's physiological reaction to mosquito bites begins to make sense to the learner because of their own experiences of biting or being bitten. That association allows for greater understanding when it becomes nuanced in terms of experiences of mosquito bites. In turn, discourse in the Biology classroom gives the learner access to more layers of meaning (varieties of blood cells, anticoagulants, allergic reactions and so on), further deepening their understanding of the text. The message here is that both the written artefacts and their related classroom discourses develop learners' higher cognitive functions and abilities to make increasingly nuanced meanings of said artefacts and discourses. Wells argues that this is the result of "the appropriation of the systematically related concepts that correspond to the more abstract semantic structures found in written texts" (Wells, 1994, p. 82). The insight that learning to write and writing to learn are inseparable, is one that Byrnes (2011, p. 144) finds to be "particularly persuasive when writing is framed as an intellectually engaging, highly nuanced process of text-oriented choices in wording for meaning-making."

2.2.2.1. *Writing to Learn Language (WLL)*

Where Ortega (2011, p. 240) values the role of writing "as a site for language development" – Manchón (2011b) considers writing as a tool for language learning; where writing is seen to be a psycholinguistic product/process through which learners examine and consolidate developing language learning structures (knowledge). Such analysis is purportedly effected through writing by virtue of learners' closer attention to the quality of their language use (grammar[41] and lexis[42]), *as well as* their collaborative and individual reflection (cf. *metatalk*) of their language choices – what Swain (2006) calls *languaging*. This process of meaning-making through language is considered to be a constitutive part of learning. "Languaging about language is one of the ways we learn language" (Swain, 2006, p. 98). In other words, talking and thinking about our language choices in writing develops our proficiency in that (those) language(s). This is attributed to the functions of noticing and *reprocessing* (Manchón, 2011b). The reprocessing function is described as the mediation of further individual language use by virtue of prior collaborative knowledge building. The accompanying focus on – and attention to – language use and understanding is further said to enhance the conditions for "deeper levels of noticing" (Manchón, 2011b, p. 66) in terms of appropriate/better/correct language use and conventions in especially collaborative writing.

Manchón (2011b) also synthesises support for the argument that the inherent problem-solving nature of the act of writing – especially in collaborative writing – contributes to the generation and consolidation of linguistic knowledge. In terms of learning outcomes, evidence suggests that the depth of the processing function during writing is crucial for the development of greater (albeit short-term) gains in language

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[41] System and structure of language (e.g. syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics).
[42] Vocabulary available in the target language; all words in a language.

learning. The emphasis on writing is argued to trigger more elaborate and deeper processing of the discrete grammatical form, resulting in longer-term learning gains.

Significantly, Manchón not only considers studies focused on writing, but also "those that apply to the language learning that may derive from processing feedback" (Manchón, 2011b, p. 74) on writing. She reports on evidence identifying the "degree of explicitness" of received feedback, and the "depth of processing of feedback" (*ibid.*) as variables for effective learning. More explicit feedback, processed at deeper levels, are linked to greater understanding and longer-term learning gains.

The mechanisms through which writing contributes to language learning also move beyond the foci on form and feedback. Vygotsky, for example, viewed writing as a symbolic tool for the semiotic mediation of mental processes, and the (co-)construction of knowledge, learning, and understanding of cognitive development (Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf *et al.*, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). Running alongside its function of mediating the construction of knowledge structures (Piaget, 1964), writing (being both product and process of communication) also functions as a shared medium required for Piagetian social transmission and assimilation of information. Communicating our thoughts, experiences, knowledge and information via writing therefore reinforces and contributes to our language awareness (on both the levels of noticing and understanding – Manchón, 2011b), in turn supporting the language learning process itself (Klein & Boscolo, 2016).

The encoding of learning into a symbolic system not only requires semiotic mediation, but also captures aspects of the sociocultural milieu within which it takes place. Writing can therefore not only be seen as a record of thoughts and learning, but also as a key to unlocking an understanding of the ecology that gave rise to its creation. Therein also lies a promise for language learning: writing as a record of language learning.

2.2.2.2. Writing to Learn Content (WLC)

Developing the Constructionist principle that learning is a result of doing and thinking about what is being done (Papert, 2005), I am inclined to believe that writing about what is to be learned should also foster learning. By the same token, languaging[43] (Swain, 2006) about *content* could be argued to be another way that content is learned. Learners are hereby understood to explore their understanding of content in the process of writing, developing their knowledge thereof as they progress. Not only is the writing process seen as important for the development of knowledge, but also "for generating a personal response to something, for clarifying ideas, and for constructing knowledge" (Rivard, 1994, p. 970).

Ortega (2011, p. 246) supports such a "more authentic explanation for what written communication does, namely linking language and content in ways that mediate the interpretation and organization of human experience." This is what Hirvela (2011) refers to as learners 'connecting the dots' between different courses' content in writing across the curriculum; conceiving of writing "as a mode of discovery or negotiation to acquire greater knowledge of content, culture, or language" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 37).

Canagarajah (2011) elaborates on this notion by employing an example of the diverse ways in which knowledge is shaped through different genres and forms of writing, applying Swain's (2006) languaging to discourse and genre. He underscores an acceptance of the rhetorical nature of knowledge, and reiterates the notion that "knowledge derives from the interpretive play of linguistic, textual, and rhetorical frames on social and material life" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 112). Here he broadens our view of the kind of knowledge that can be developed through writing as encompassing

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[43] Defined as "the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (Swain, 2006, p. 89).

more than disciplinary knowledge; including cultural assumptions and ideological values in his approach. In doing so, Canagarajah (2011, p. 111) builds on an approach that emphasises "the close interaction between writing and the exploration and clarification of ideas."

Mirroring Hirvela's (2011, p. 49) conception of writing operating "as a kind of support system that allows rethinking about content subject matter during the act of writing", Canagarajah (2011) conceives of learning as a process of discovering, exploring, and realizing knowledge, content, ideas and meaning. Bringing these together would locate the power of writing in the way it encourages the active learner to consciously think about what is being done, what is being learned, and how it is understood.

> *Writing to learn helps students think about content and find the words to explain what they comprehend, reflect on how they understand content, and consider what their own processes of learning involve. (Knipper & Duggan, 2006, p. 469)*

As is evident in the above quote, Knipper and Duggan (2006) believe that writing, as is the case with reading, "stimulates passive learners to become active learners" (Knipper & Duggan, 2006, p. 468). They argue that the effort of translating their thoughts and knowledge (through semiotic mediation) into words and symbols on paper requires equal participation of all learners – even those less prone to voluntary participation. This is attributed to the belief that "Writing-to-learn strategies invite students to think about and interact with texts, encouraging more thoughtful reading while creating more conscientious learners" (Knipper & Duggan, 2006, p. 469).

It would seem that the literature suggests that the following are primary ways in which writing for learning in content areas can be implemented productively: (1) laying an exploratory foundation in preparation of new work; (2) revisiting and consolidating new understandings of developing knowledge; (3) reformulating experiences and ideas in

expanding frames of reference; (4) recording and monitoring the development of understanding and learning (Hirvela, 2011; Knipper & Duggan, 2006).

2.2.2.3. Consolidated views on writing for learning

Hirvela (2011) summarises findings related to writing for learning in educational settings. Starting from the assumption that "the primary purpose of any writing assignment… is to learn" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 39), writing is foregrounded as a "heuristic device" (*ibid.*) that operates as "a tool for learning while students negotiate meaning and acquire disciplinary knowledge" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 37). Writing is said to enhance learning by allowing learners to organise their "knowledge of the world and extending it" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 39), unifying it into new, reliable and coherent knowledge structures.

In relation to pedagogy, increased attention to the value of writing for learning has led to the development of several writing-based approaches to the teaching and learning of both content and language. Movements such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) – especially prevalent in North American first language (L1) environments – and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – in turn more prevalent in European second language (L2) environments – have evolved Content-Based Instruction (CBI/CBLT) approaches into interdisciplinary learning practices. The central role of writing in all school subjects seems obvious: learners are expected to prove both content and language learning/mastery in some form of writing, usually for the purposes of assessment.

Looking at the contemporary ICT-mediated context "in which literacy is enacted across both print-based and computer-based domains" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 44), we find that "both print-based and computer-based literacy skills are required as students move across the spectrum of content courses", and that "writing can function as a heuristic

device for learning in each domain" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 47). Having said that, it is notable that relatively little research is available on the relationship between writing for learning – especially in the content areas – and ICT-based literacy. What we do know is that writing helps to enhance and consolidate learning through linking new knowledge structures with existing knowledge frameworks, and to structure, record and show evidence of learning (Canagarajah, 2011; Hirvela, 2011; Klein & Boscolo, 2016; Manchón, 2011a; Rivard, 1994). It is evident that "meaning-making and languaging in writing together exemplify core features of learning and educational knowing" (Byrnes, 2011, p. 136).

There are, however, conditions influencing the degree of success of writing for learning praxis. Rivard (1994) points out that, e.g. science learning is enhanced through writing practices when "teachers tailor tasks to attain meaningful curricular goals, when learners possess the necessary metacognitive knowledge, and when the instructional environment sustains a view of scientific literacy that embraces deep conceptual understandings rather than encyclopedic [sic] knowledge" (Rivard, 1994, p. 978). Canagarajah (2011) also refutes cognitive process studies' side-lining of knowledge in writing activities, and argues that pre-constructed knowledge does not precede writing as a foundational, necessary condition. Ortega (2011) further elaborates on the complexity of cross-curricular writing for learning "when developing writers are emergent L2 users [who] may be simultaneously (a) learning and creating content, (b) learning to write about it, and (c) learning to use new language both to learn and to create the content and to write about it" (Ortega, 2011, p. 245). Bangert-Drowns *et al.* (2004) capture this realisation eloquently when stating:

> *Writing can be expected to enhance learning in academic settings, but it is not a potent magic. Contextual factors – including the intensity of the intervention, the nature of the writing tasks, and the ability of the students*

to take best advantage of writing's operation – moderate the influence of

writing on learning. (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004, p. 53)

2.2.3.   Blogging as online writing for learning

Recognising blogging as a form of writing online, my exploration of the academic landscape leads to the consideration of scholarly writing focused on blogging for learning. For the purposes of this study I consider 'learning' to include learning by learners as well as learning by teachers/teacher-trainees. (Focusing on students graduating from a Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme somewhat blurs the lines between the traditional roles of learners and teachers.)

As Salaberry (2013) points out, Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) has allowed us to purposefully engage with others (and digital artefacts) in 'real time' (synchronously) and/or more structured, process-oriented (asynchronous) ways – redefining how we act on and think about our relationships to each other and the world. In fact, Kramsch and Lam (2002, p. 144) state that the "shift from interacting *with* computers to interacting with people *via* networked computers has been hailed as a second computer revolution." What emerges is a clear, reciprocal link between technology and thinking: "we get the computer to do things and in turn the computer affects our capacity to imagine the feasible" (Kramsch & Lam, 2002, p. 143). The same link applies to learning by extension. This relationship has evolved alongside developments in computing, computer networking and advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Remarkable changes in terms of the social dimensions of especially learning have been reported and attributed to CMC (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), alongside claims that online education practices could empower learners, and enhance, amongst others, the collaborative aspects of writing classes. Here, computers are seen as tools that mediate semiotic interaction/engagement in the digital/virtual environments created by

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networked computers (Kramsch & Lam, 2002). Today we include the ever-increasing variety of ICT-enabled platforms and devices, such as cellular telephones and 'smart' tablets (a.k.a. Smart devices), in this digital tool-environment matrix where:

> *E-mail, Internet-relay chatrooms, websites, and list-servers are extending reality beyond its traditional boundaries and blurring the distinction between the person writing and the person being written about. (Kramsch & Lam, 2002, p. 144)*

Focusing on writing, Hyland and Hyland (2006) discuss educational applications of synchronous and asynchronous writing. Synchronous writing activities are said to include 'real time' communication amongst learners, and between learners and teachers (and/or other knowledgeable others) via Internet Relay Chat sites (IRC) or other instant discussion software and platforms; as opposed to asynchronous writing activities such as composing and replying to email, posting to online bulletin board servers (BBS), blogging and other forms of delayed communication. Blogging in particular is said to provide language learning – especially English language learning – opportunities by virtue of the variety of semiotic and meaning-making tasks learners engage in when setting up and posting to blogs (Amir *et al.*, 2011). Referring to studies of blog-writing, students (including those with low proficiency levels) were shown to "write constructively by using blogs" and that "blogs improved the students' writing skills in learning" (Amir *et al.*, 2011, p. 538). It seems the field of language learning shows one of the more significant ways in which the connective potential of this digital tool-environment matrix has been developed.

It is becoming evident that not only our tools for writing are changing with advances in technology, but so is the very nature of both the purposes, processes and products of writing (Paltridge, 2004; Zandi *et al.*, 2014). Blogs are increasingly considered to be "hybrid tools" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 63), innovatively combining publication and

participation in reifying and distributing[44] knowledge artefacts. (Amir *et al.*, 2011, p. 538) list the advantages of blogs as writing tools – that mediate "habitat enabling activities" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 39) – as follows: "encourages feedback and represents both writing and reading activity; critical analysis and encourages articulation of ideas and opinions; offers opportunities for collaborative learning; provides an environment in which students can develop skills of persuasion and argumentation; creates a more student-centred learning environment; and offers informal language reading." The potential of blogging to allow for the intermingling of our private, public, professional and/or academic selves also bridges the gap between our everyday and more specific/specialist literacy practices (Paltridge, 2004). Herein lies great potential for student-centred, authentic learning approaches. With individuals or groups of learners taking ownership of a publishing platform such as a personal/class blog (Thorne & Payne, 2005), making the most of the interactive and collaborative affordances thereof, learning can become an increasingly public yet equally personal experience. The dichotomies of *me* and *them* are diluted when engaging with technologies that support "discrete activit[ies] in a community [or communities] … or bridges different types of activities" (Wenger *et al.*, 2009, p. 39). Such practices have the potential to result in networks and ecologies where *others* are able to find *familiars* in holistic as well as increasingly more complex learning networks.

In terms of learning Communities of Practice, Churchill (2009, p. 179) suggests that learners "can use blogs to publish their own writings, discuss group assignments, peer review each other's work, collaborate on projects and manage their digital portfolios." Focusing on teacher training, Zandi *et al.* (2014, p. 530) show that utilizing "the theory of community of practice and through observing blog activities of teachers… [their]

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[44] Comparable to what the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for languages identifies as the skill of *writing and presenting*.

sharing of their practices within the communities facilitates collaboration and sharing of knowledge that benefits both the teachers and their students." Blogs are thereby promoted as habitat enabling (Wenger *et al.*, 2009) tools that have "a positive effect on teacher learning within a community of practice" (Zandi *et al.*, 2014, p. 530). That being said, it is vital to realize that these developments have also "created divisions between people who have access to new technologies and those that do not" (Paltridge, 2004, p. 97). Finding ways to address this "digital divide" (Deng & Yuen, 2012; Holmner & Britz, 2013; Mangeni *et al.*, 2013; O'Brien & Scharber, 2008; Olwal *et al.*, 2013), although outside the scope of this study, deserves urgent and serious attention.

The use of blogs allows teachers and learners to create collegial, participatory and affirming learning environments where all participant needs and contributions are recognised and addressed (Churchill, 2009). The benefits of participation in such environments range from personal development to collaborative learning in virtual communities of practice. These benefits are, however, not a given. While there is little doubt in the literature that meaningful engagement can develop via blogging; Rivens Mompean (2010, p. 392) highlights the fact that "some very distinct criteria concerning the way to provide feedback and correction need to be taken into account in order to improve its pedagogical potential". Some of these conditions include encouraging learners through "(1) regular learning tasks which require [learners] to present outcomes in their blogs, (2) blogs being an assessment requirement and (3) regular blogging of a teacher" (Churchill, 2009, p. 183) and consistent feedback (Rivens Mompean, 2010).

On the following page, Table 2-1 consolidates scholarly views and claims speaking to the value and potential of blogging for learning, where the following affordances stand out:

TABLE 2-1 PROMINENT AFFORDANCES OF BLOGGING

Identified affordances of blogging:	Related studies:
Promotion of learner autonomy and self-directed learning;	(Amir *et al.*, 2011; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Rivens Mompean, 2010; Zandi *et al.*, 2014).
Promotion of collaborative meaning making and thinking (critical, creative, analytical) skills;	(Amir *et al.*, 2011; Luo, 2010; Zandi *et al.*, 2014).
Access to recommended and supplementary content and ideas;	(Amir *et al.*, 2011; Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Luo, 2010; Rivens Mompean, 2010; Zandi *et al.*, 2014).
Virtual communities as audiences, learning support and information resources;	(Amir *et al.*, 2011; Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Luo, 2010; Rivens Mompean, 2010; Zandi *et al.*, 2014).
Differentiation of learning practices and experiences;	(Amir *et al.*, 2011; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Rivens Mompean, 2010; Zandi *et al.*, 2014).
Documenting and reflection of learning over time.	(Amir *et al.*, 2011; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Rivens Mompean, 2010; Thorne & Payne, 2005; Zandi *et al.*, 2014).

Interestingly enough, similar affordances of blogging are proclaimed for school, university and professional (including teacher) learning and development. It is not clear whether these claims are universal, however, as all of the existing research comes from studies in 'first world' countries.

2.2.4.   Perceptions and Praxis

Having established a line of reasoning which underscores the validity of the practice of blogging for learning, I turn to the significance of my interest in teacher[45] perspectives – particularly the perceptions of pre-service teacher-trainees (Baydas & Goktas, 2016a) – for the realization of the proclaimed utility of innovations in ICT-mediated pedagogical practices (Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Ertmer, & Tondeur, 2015). Considering blogging for learning an innovation with great potential for pedagogy, I argue that the value of student-teachers' perceptions of such a practice is vital to the implementation and realization of its potential in modern educational settings. I am further emboldened by the findings of Sherman and Howard (2012) where they state that:

> *Teachers' beliefs have been shown to play a critical role in their decision to utilize technology in their classrooms, but few studies have examined those beliefs amongst South African teachers. (Sherman & Howard, 2012, p. 2098)*

Imagining the availability of ICT in learning environments as a given, the exact application thereof greatly depends on teachers' underlying beliefs and assumptions related to its pedagogical potential (Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Jacobs & Farrell, 2003;

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[45]While I focus on pre-service teachers (PGCE students), I do not consider the perspectives of in-service teachers to be any less valuable. A study of in-service teacher perspectives falls outside the scope of this thesis, as a lot of additional factors will need to be considered.

Ottenbreit-Leftwich *et al.*, 2015; Sherman & Howard, 2012; Zandi *et al.*, 2014). There are various reasons (Jacobs & Farrell, 2003) why technology like blogs might not be used by teachers and other learning facilitators. Amongst these are a lack of training (Ottenbreit-Leftwich *et al.*, 2015); a lack of awareness of blogs or their potential (Zandi *et al.*, 2014); distrust or fear of technology and technical difficulty (Hyland & Hyland, 2006); and weariness of additional strain on personal and institutional resources (Sherman & Howard, 2012).

2.3.   Consolidated Argument

The literature has been found to suggest that all knowledge and, by extension, all learning is mediated by semiotic systems and practices. The foremost semiotic tool for the co-creation of knowledge and the communication thereof is said to be human language. Claims for language-based approaches to learning have consequently been found to be supported by strong onto-epistemological agreement. The most prominent form of language use in the pursuit of learning has been found to be that of writing – both writing to learn language as well as writing to learn content.

Furthermore, learning has been shown to be socioculturally situated, and fostered within communities of practice. At the same time learning has been shown to be ecologically situated, provoked and enacted. Learning ecologies have also been shown to consist of material and semiotic environments, including virtual environments (mediated by Information and Communication Technologies) where communities of practice are allowed to operate in digital habitats. Such virtual environments are fundamentally semiotic in nature, and are therefore optimally positioned to facilitate practices of writing for learning.

The success of online writing (blogging) for learning practices is, however, not guaranteed. Apart from technical provisions in terms of infrastructure, attitudes and perceptions in terms of the utility of blogging for learning have been found to be pivotal.

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If stakeholders and decision makers in education are not convinced of the powerful opportunities and value of blogging for learning – blogging for learning is unlikely to be implemented to full effect. It is therefore of fundamental importance to investigate the perceptions of those in the business of teaching and learning regarding any technological or pedagogical developments. In terms of my topographical/map metaphor, we are now at a vantage point from which my own movements in the landscape, as well as the movements of others can be evaluated.

3. An integrated methodology

3.1.   Introduction to the methodology

The contextual analysis of scholarship reported in chapter two of this dissertation focused on practices and applications of *writing* – particularly blogging as a form of online writing – *for learning*. As a guide for the exploration of extant literature, the primary research question was defined as: *What are the perceptions of PGCE[46] students regarding the potential utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices?* A deconstruction of this question revealed the necessity to re-examine the assumptions that: the perceptions of PGCE students were worthy of academic consideration; blogging was considered as an educational strategy; writing was an effective educational practice; and that human language was a fundamental component of learning.

A survey of the academic landscape revealed significant support for the aforementioned assumptions. Briefly put, the literature was found to suggest: that all knowledge, and by extension, all learning was mediated semiotically; that writing was the most prominent semiotic tool used for learning; that blogs were fundamentally semiotic spaces optimally positioned to facilitate writing for learning; and that the attitudes and perceptions of pre-service teachers (e.g. PGCE students) were pivotal to the successful implementation of approaches to learning, and therefore worthy of research (Deng & Yuen, 2012; Farr & Riordan, 2014).

This chapter reports on the development and implementation of a research strategy, informed by the literature and focussed on addressing the aforementioned primary research question. The following notes (with some repetition aimed at refreshing our

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[46] Postgraduate Certificate in Education

understanding) were included to facilitate an informed understanding of the format and language used in the construction of this study's methodological framework:

3.1.1.   Research paradigm

Where it has been argued that "constructivism and interpretivism amount to the same thing, or at least stand in a relationship of mutual entailment" (Hà, 2011, p. 195), I was persuaded in a workshop by Smeyers (on Smeyers, Bridges, Burbules and Griffiths, 2015) to consider interpretation as a meta-paradigmatic underpinning of all research. In short:

> *... interpretation is central to all kinds of educational research and enters into it at every stage of the process. The selection of the focus of inquiry depends on a certain reading, an interpretation, of the arena of policy and practice and of the existing research and other literatures as well as of the interests of the researcher. The formulation of a research question or questions draws upon conceptual and value assumptions that frame a particular version or interpretation of the world. (Burbules et al., 2015, p. 3)*

In light hereof, I explicitly included some elements borrowed from autoethnography in the research design. Rather than try to divorce myself from my own practice and perspective, I opted to purposefully insert myself as part of the researcher/ researched dynamic. Having been both researcher and participant (in the role of lecturer) at the time of the study, I formally acknowledged that my perceptions and interpretations of factors, instruments, processes, data and metadata (amongst others) were inevitably coloured and influenced by my own set of beliefs, constructs, experiences and presuppositions. Having acknowledged this lens as integral to my research into the similarly layered perceptions of others, the location of this study in a Constructivist paradigm (Creswell, 2003; Riegler, 2012) seemed appropriate.

3.1.2. Methodological framework

The conducted empirical research was conceived within a Framework for Integrated Methodology (Plowright, 2011, p. 3) "aimed at supporting the *integration* of different elements of the research process to ensure the effective and successful study of social and educational phenomena". This framework builds on Mixed Methods research and provides "a way into" (Fettes, 2002, p. 31) research methodology. Integration here means to combine and structure different elements of the process into a unified, coherent whole. Perhaps most important of all, it gives equal consideration to each element without privileging one element over any other (Plowright, 2011).

Further moving to reframe our beliefs about research methodology, Plowright's Framework for Integrated Methodology (hereafter referred to as: the FraIM) manifests a rejection of the Quantitative-Qualitative dichotomy through the abolition of not only the words '*quantitative'* and '*qualitative'*, but also "the concepts and meanings, expressed through those words, that channel our thoughts, actions and understanding" (Plowright, 2011, p. 3). Instead, the FraIM promotes the use of value neutral (as far as possible) adjectives such as '*numerical'* and '*narrative*' for representations of data. Much data could be represented either numerically or in narrative form without losing the essence of that which is represented. Similarly, the freedom to apply numeric and narrative tools of analysis on the data provided a sense of stability in the research.

3.2. Research design

While answering the primary research question (i.e. *What are the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices?*) was the main purpose of this research project, secondary aims did come into play. Not only did I want to find out what PGCE students perceptions of blogging were, but I also wanted to expand my understanding of online writing for

learning. This study therefore also served a personal agenda in as far as it was meant to inform and develop my own digital pedagogy. Additionally, as a lecturer in the process of developing a module related to computer use in Education, the opportunity to improve my own practice was too good to miss. In pursuit of these goals, I looked for complementary research methods that not only followed the "research questions in a way that [offered] the best chance to obtain useful answers" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, pp. 17–18), but also allowed for the inclusion of multiple sources of different kinds of information that illuminated the behaviours and practices that underpinned the study.

Having been given access to Stellenbosch University's PGCE class of 2015 for both training and (voluntary participation in) research, the following were at my disposal:

1. 190 Potential participants from the same academic program, sharing a common working environment and engaging in several sets of interrelated activities (e.g. attending classes, working on assignments, participating in group activities, undergoing formative and summative assessment etc.);
2. Up to 190 new, learning-focused blogs;
3. A timeframe of roughly six months for participation;
4. Opportunity for direct- and participant observation;
5. Cohort perspective and insight into both expected and unexpected variables.

Seeing the PGCE class as a bounded system helped narrow down the options in suggested research designs. The opportunity to study this bounded system over time, using multiple research instruments (i.e. observation schedule, questionnaire, artefact analysis), decided the matter in favour of a case study design. As for its suitability to study perceptions of blogging as an innovation in writing for learning, the following excerpt sealed the deal:

> *Indeed, case-study research is a study of practice. It is a study of all the players, or practitioners, involved directly, or indirectly, in the innovation. Further, it is a study of the practitioners' [sic] actions and the theories they hold about their actions. (Corcoran, Walker & Wals, 2004, p. 11)*

Thinking about ways to determine and seek understanding of student-teacher perceptions of blogging raised several concerns. Chief among these were how interpretations of their professed perceptions could be supported. The possibility of observing and documenting participants' blogging behaviour over time seemed promising. It also seemed reasonable to expect an investigation into both behavioural trends (posting) and written artefacts (posts) in participants' pursuit of learning, to betray some identifiable support for their claims. The further inclusion of scale-based reporting of participants' understanding of *writing for learning* promised to provide further insight into both their practices and their responses. Integrating all of these potential sources of data into a coherent research design required additional guidance from literature on mixed methods research methodologies. The choices that structured the resultant research design are discussed below.

3.3. Design considerations for integrating methods

Reasons for the integration of numeric and narrative methods of data collection included: (a) data-source triangulation; (b) seeking result complementarity; (c) expanding the breadth and depth of research; (d) testing the credibility of responses; and (e) pursuing possible explanations of results. This study also employed a "*within-stage mixed-model design*" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20), which allowed for the mixing of numeric and narrative approaches to data collection within each

instrument employed in the data collection phase. Consequently, I was able to develop the following research instruments[47]:

1. A questionnaire that incorporated both open-ended and closed-ended questions, as well as matrix and contingency questions;
2. An observation schedule sensitive to the variety of both expected and unexpected data-types and -occurrences over the duration of the study; and
3. A framework for the documentation and representation of the various multimodal artefacts generated by participants in the course of the study.

Integrating the expected strands of data (as collected by the different research instruments) required specific choices in terms of their level of interaction, timing, relative priority, and procedures for mixing (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 64):

1. The strands of collected data were not expected to remain distinct (i.e. traditionally qualitative or quantitative), separate and independent of each other. On the contrary, direct interaction between the data strands was understood to be inherent in the research design. Not only were the data in each strand already mixed during collection, but the strands themselves directly interacted with each other at different points during the research process. All data sets were also intended to be analysed together.
2. While overlap did exist between the implementation of the different data collection instruments, no distinct phases were distinguishable as far as independence of temporal relationships were concerned. The combination of sequential and concurrent timing over the lifespan of the study also supported methodological triangulation in as far as it allowed time and space for the use of more than one method to collect data.
3. Equal emphasis, or equal priority, is implicit in the already mixed nature of the data strands. All data strands were consequently given equal weight in analysis.

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[47] See section 4.2 for more detailed descriptions of the instruments used in this study.

4. Numeric and narrative methods were purposefully embedded in the case study design from the start (see Section 3.2.1.).

5. Analysis and interpretation of the mixed-model data was facilitated through the layering of observations (or 'field notes'), statistics, narrative themes, and contextual information relevant to the PGCE programme, the host module, and the participants.

3.4.   Research methodology

In the pursuit of the reliable collection and study of student perceptions data, I hoped to add to the scholarly conversation rather than test it. Having constructed a framework of lenses based on findings and reasoning in the literature, I moved forward in selecting and integrating research approaches, methods and tools of academic enquiry.

3.4.1.   Exploratory case study

Amir, Ismail and Hussin (2011) found a mixed methods survey design as part of "practical-deliberative action research" (Amir *et al.*, 2011, p. 539) to serve their purposes of investigating blogging in education. Case studies have also been found particularly useful in research of *online* educational practices (Doering *et al.*, 2007; Ranker, 2015; Toven-Lindsey, Rhoads, & Lozano, 2014). The flexibility of the case study format to "accommodate a variety of research designs, data collection techniques, epistemological orientations and disciplinary perspectives" (Corcoran *et al.*, 2004, p. 10) further convinced me of its suitability to my research. A *within-site*, embedded design mixed method case study-format was adapted in order to best integrate the research approach, goals, and methods discussed earlier. The resultant *Integrated Case Study* elaborated on mixed methods research designs by integrating numeric and narrative approaches to research, and combining the different research methods into a strategic framework of data collection and exploration. These were:

documentation and observation of student blogging activity; a mixed-model questionnaire; and artefact analysis of the produced blog posts. A census method was combined with asynchronous observation and content analytics to ascertain participant perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices.

3.4.1.1.Formulating the case study

The in-depth exploration of the perceptions of PGCE students at Stellenbosch University during 2015 regarding blogging (bounded case) was undertaken in the real-world context of the PGCE teacher-training programme at Stellenbosch University, in the Western Cape province of South Africa. This research was conducted through the collection of detailed information via integrated data collection procedures, spanning the duration of the first three terms (out of four) of the 2015 academic year. Answers to the primary and supporting research questions were developed through statistical, thematic and contextual analysis and description. The unit of analysis is defined as participating PGCE students, from the perspective of their blogging practices.

3.4.2.   Research Instruments

When discussing a *mixed methods* approach, Creswell states that the "researcher bases the inquiry on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of a research problem" (Creswell, 2003, p. 21). Creswell continues to describe a two-phase approach, starting with a population survey, and followed by detailed qualitative enquiry. Re-imagining such an example from an *integrated* angle, I looked for possible tools that would support each other both in the process of data collection, and through the collected data itself. "Research based on the FraIM argue[d] that there [were] three types of methods of data generation and collection" (Plowright, 2011, p. 15), i.e. asking questions, artefact analysis, and observation. In order to construct comprehensive, reliable and relevant data strands

that informed the study, an instrument was developed or adapted for each of these method types.

3.4.2.1.Asking questions: Online questionnaire

Using closed, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions, the online delivery of a questionnaire showed potential to provide internally consistent, self-substantiated data. With a mixture of numeric and narrative responses from participants, data provided in one section of the questionnaire could be used to check data from another section in the same questionnaire. Such data were expected to inform and verify analysis and interpretation of data from concurrent observation and sequential artefact analysis, both data collection methods with higher degrees of structure (Plowright, 2011) than the semi-structured questionnaire.

3.4.2.2.Artefact analysis: Blog posts

Moving from the position that learning ecologies include virtual environments (see Section 2.2.1.6) where communities of practice are allowed to operate in digital habitats – and that such virtual environments are fundamentally semiotic in nature – I believed that participants' blogs would contain vital data regarding their perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning. Data collected from the analysis of participants blog posts was expected to either support or contradict data from the questionnaire. In turn, data from the questionnaire were expected to inform the analysis of the blog posts (artefacts). The construction of these artefacts was envisioned to encapsulate reliable data by encouraging, as far as possible, "language that is unconscious, not self-monitored; in context, not in a vacuum; observed, not elicited" (Halliday, 1993, p. 94). "In fact, as the production is owned by the author, we can therefore anticipate that we will encounter meaningful interactions, in the sense that they are not compulsory and

guided by the teacher but rely on a real interest in the topic being developed" (Rivens Mompean, 2010, p. 379).

3.4.2.3. *Observation: Blog activity (asynchronous)*

At the onset of the study, I participated both directly and indirectly as motivator and instigator of blogging and posting – particularly through writing prompts early on in the study, and supportive comments on posts later on. Concurrent observation of blog activity was however not of particular interest, seeing as how an initial period of reactivity, 'settling in' and adoption of blogging as writing behaviour was anticipated, with the potential to skew the data in terms of *perceived utility*. Instead, the trajectories of adoption, and the development of habits and trends was expected to be more valuable indicators of participants' *real* perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning. A more detached (apart from personal experiences of collating the data) approach was conceived whereby I would be able to observe asynchronously the entire recorded collection of 'immediate' participant *activity* over time.

By observing the electronic metadata of participant blogs *after the fact*, I was able to eliminate participant reactivity; obtain full observer (non-participant) status; and maintain complete access to participant contributions in their original, "natural" form, setting and sequence/order. The drawback of 'outsider' knowledge (or lack thereof) of the research setting was also avoided by virtue of my own knowledge and experiences of the PGCE programme at this University – both as alumnus and as lecturer – as well as my own knowledge of and experiences in blogging.

3.4.3. Participation

Having decided on an integrated methodology, where both numeric and narrative analysis (of data collected via multiple, integrated methods) would be pursued, a multi-tiered (purposive/convenience) sampling strategy emerged, including the division of

the research population (N) into two population subsets: i.e. those who responded to the questionnaire (Nq) and those who made their blog-posts available to the study (Np).

3.4.3.1. Population (N)

All students enrolled in the 2015 PGCE programme at Stellenbosch University, in South Africa, were identified as the research population for this study. This group consisted of graduate students from diverse academic disciplines and backgrounds pursuing professional teacher certification in South Africa. The desired PGCE-qualification was awarded after a writing-intensive, one-year academic programme which included a term (roughly three months) of in-school teaching practice (also referred to as *school visit*, '*prac*' or *school practicum*).

Administering the electronic questionnaire to the entire population (census) was expected to return a subset of participants (Nq) whose data would be eligible for later integration with data collected from observation and artefact analysis. Similarly, the voluntary production of blog posts was expected to result in another subset of participants (Np) whose data would be eligible for integration with data collected from the questionnaire. The exact size of these subsets could not be determined in advance.

3.4.3.2. Core sample (n)

The core sample (n) for this study was defined as the pool where Nq overlapped with Np. Participants from this pool would have contributed (in varying degrees) to all generative activities (blogging and responding to the questionnaire), thereby providing comparable data via all three data collection methods.

3.4.3.3. Permission and consent

Requisite permission to conduct the study, along with ethical clearance, was obtained from the designated authorities at Stellenbosch University, i.e. the relevant *Departmental Ethics Screening Committee* (DESC) at the Faculty of Education; the University's *Division for Institutional Research and Planning*; and the University's *Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)*. The Division for Institutional Research and Planning further provided guidance regarding informed consent in terms of both questionnaire respondents as well as participating blog authors. Copies of the relevant documentation is collected and included as Addendum 1.

3.4.3.3.1. Census and informed consent

The questionnaire was made available to the entire study population (census) via the university's Learning Management System (LMS) for voluntary participation. The digitally distributed questionnaire (Addendum 2) opened with a detailed, informative cover page, explaining the research and providing the option to indicate consent to participate in the study (or not) via one required question. Indicating consent granted access to the questionnaire. The choice not to consent effectively closed the questionnaire.

All data collected from the questionnaire were volunteered as responses to optional questions. No item or question (other than the initial indication of informed consent) on the questionnaire was set to "required".

All participants consented freely to participation in the study, and were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point in time without penalty. There were no withdrawals of consent during or after the research process.

3.4.3.3.2. Public domain content inclusion and copyright

Two types of blogs (in terms of privacy settings) were included in the study: Those set to be openly available in the public domain; and those requiring expressed permission (administration settings) from the author to gain access to the blog. Prior to the study, all members of the study population were informed about this study's interest in their blogs and openly discussed alongside open discussion of the scope and nature of this thesis. During this group discussion (in class), it was agreed that:

1. Authors would indicate their consent to participate in the study by submitting their blog Unified Resource Locators (URLs);
2. Authors concerned with privacy on the open web would set their blogs to "Private" and indicate consent to participate in the study by granting me access to their blogs on an individual basis; and
3. Copyright would be indicated following Creative Commons[48] license conventions.

All participants consented freely to participation in the study, and there were no withdrawals of consent during or after the research process.

3.5.   Data collection

After obtaining the requisite clearance and permissions, and having settled on a research design and methods of data collection to suit the purpose of this study, data collection was pursued formally. The following section serves to document the process.

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[48] https://creativecommons.org

3.5.1. Case selection **[N]**

A class of 190 pre-service teachers – students enrolled in the 2015 PGCE programme at Stellenbosch University in South Africa – was identified as the research population for this study.

$$\therefore N = 190$$

3.5.1.1. Population subset: Responding participants [Nq]

The piloted questionnaire was distributed to the entire population (census) via the University's LMS, ensuring receipt of and access to the questionnaire. Eighty-four members of the research population responded to the questionnaire (N_q).

$$\therefore N_q = 84$$

3.5.1.2. Population subset: Publishing participants [Np]

Out of the study population, 169 participant blogs were created. For the purposes of this study, I was able to access 160 of the created blogs, either by virtue of these blogs being open to the public, or by invitation of the blog creator. Seventy-two of these accessible blogs contained at least one posted entry from the 2015 academic year (N_p).

$$\therefore N_p = 72$$

3.5.1.3. Core sample [n]

The core sample (n) for this study was defined as the pool where N_q overlapped with N_p. Thirty-five participant contributions met these criteria.

$$\therefore \; n = 35$$

3.5.2.   Methods

Agreeing with Wells' interpretation of Halliday's conviction that the "context plays a part in determining what we say; and what we say plays a part in determining the context" (Wells, 1994, p. 48), I believed it necessary to gather data from the population subsets in order to analyse data from the core sample of the study. Awareness of this interplay was considered vital to support reliability of the study, and is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.
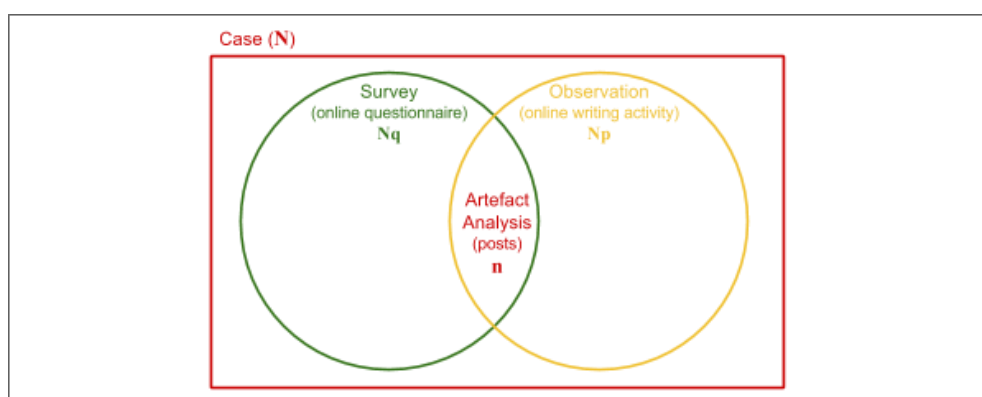
FIGURE 3.1 ILLUSTRATING HOW METHODS INTERSECT

3.5.2.1. Questionnaire

The developed questionnaire was piloted with the assistance of academics from the field of Education. Only after satisfactory feedback and proof of intelligible output was the questionnaire considered fit to be administered to the study population. It was

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administered to the whole group (N) after their return from practicum, at the start of their final academic term.

The questionnaire contained only one compulsory question: the provision of informed consent to participate in the study, or indication to the contrary. By selecting the option not to participate in the study, non-participating members of the population were redirected to the LMS page of the module hosting the study. After selecting the option to provide informed consent to participate in the study, participants (N_q) were directed to the data-collecting section of the questionnaire. Participant responses were machine coded for analytical purposes.

The data-collecting section of the questionnaire did not contain any compulsory questions. Choosing to answer a question had the potential of making related sub-questions available to the participant. In choosing not to answer a question, the respondent bypassed that particular set of potential sub-questions and moved on to the next question.

An example of the full questionnaire (including sub-questions) was included in this dissertation as Addendum 2.

3.5.2.2. Observation schedule

An observation schedule was developed with the assistance of colleagues in the field of Education. Closed coding was used in constructing the observation schedule, for the purposes of collecting numeric data of observable utilization of blogging for learning. Closed coding was based on expected results to the main research question (and sub questions), and informed by data (specifically codes) collected from the completed questionnaire. Inclusion of the metadata of N_p blogging activities and artefacts allowed me to bend time, in a manner of speaking (refer to Figure 3.2. below). Looking at questionnaire data (collected towards the end of the study, after most

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N_p blogging had finished) allowed for closed coding of the observation schedule which was used to observe N_p blogging activities as they happened. Data were consequently collected using the observation schedule after the final term of that academic year.
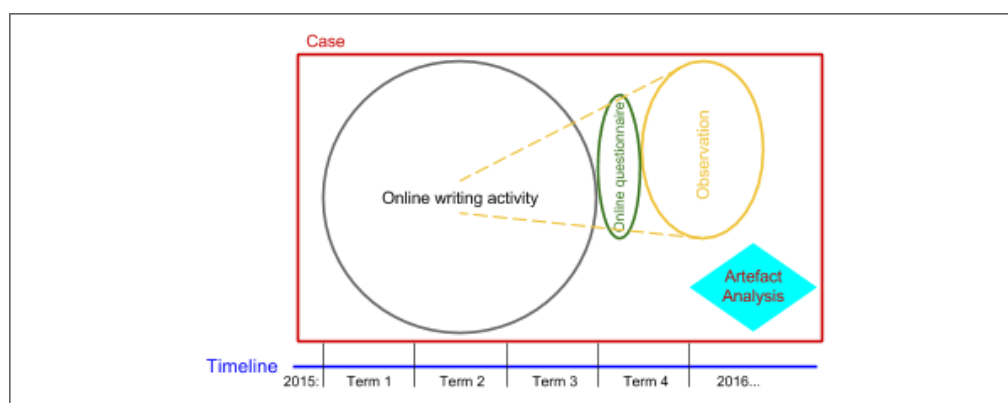
FIGURE 3.2 DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF ASYNCHRONOUS OBSERVATION

Identifiable blog details were machine coded for analytical purposes.

Blogging remained entirely voluntary for the duration of the study. Visibility and access settings of blogs remained entirely in the voluntary control of the bloggers themselves. Blogging format and frequency remained entirely at the discretion of the bloggers themselves. An example of the observation schedule was included in this dissertation as Addendum 3.

3.5.2.3. Artefact analysis

Prior to the onset of the study[49], the population was encouraged to start their own blogs dedicated to learning about one topic, or learning of one skill, of their individual choosing. The creation and maintenance of these blogs were voluntary. These blogs

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[49] As explained in the introduction (e.g. Section 1.3.) to this research.

were not required to be open to any particular audience and they weren't assessed for grades or performance evaluation in the PGCE programme. Whilst writing prompts were offered, the production and/or publishing of blog posts were left entirely up to the will, interest and discretion of the individual owner of each blog. The primary goal of these blogs was for each volunteer to document the pursuit of any real learning goal of personal significance.

All N_p-blog content generated during the first three terms of the academic year, which included the student-teachers' full term (third term) of school practicum, was collected. A spreadsheet was created for each blog (flagged to correspond with the machine coded naming protocol employed elsewhere in this study) and populated by copying written blog posts to the spreadsheet cells. Emphasis was placed on the capturing of written content for both numeric (measurement) and narrative analytical purposes. The use of images, video- and/or sound clips was noted but not copied (in pre-emptive avoidance of third-party complications related to media use).

3.6.   Data analysis

All members of the research population (N) were allowed to participate in this study. N-participation was then categorised into subset populations, i.e. questionnaire respondents (N_q), and publishing bloggers (N_p). Data[50] from both population subsets were studied to identify broad trends and potential schedule codes. These datasets were then layered in order to identify any overlap between the two, which resulted in the identification of a core sample (n) of data for closer analysis. Data were therefore studied and analysed inductively and deductively, with inductive results supporting both the process and results of deductive analysis. Triangulation for validity and reliability included asynchronous observation of N_p blogging, as well as numeric-

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[50] See Chapter 4 of this dissertation for representation of the data.

narrative data correlation and cross-referencing of comparative datasets (questionnaire vis-à-vis observation).

The process of data analysis was adopted from Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), who incorporated seven stages of data analysis, namely: "(a) data reduction, (b) data display, (c) data transformation, (d) data correlation, (e) data consolidation, (f) data comparison, and (g) data integration" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 22).

Narrative data (Sections 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.4.1) were reduced via exploratory thematic analysis, that is to say, via the "blending [of] inferences drawn directly from the displayed data" in the formulation of "general variables underlying many specifics" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 131–133). Numeric data were reduced via descriptive statistics[51] (in consultation with Statistical Services at the University of Stellenbosch) where possible. The data were consequently displayed in two stages: During the first stage, raw data (destroyed after successful completion of the study) were displayed in the form of charts, graphs, tables and diagrams. This facilitated the identification of patterns and similarities which, in turn, informed my analytical tools. The second stage displayed reduced data (Addendum 4) in tables and lists. The transformation of narrative and numeric data was guided by the requirements of the aforementioned stages and methods of display.

As a measure of credibility and validity, numeric N_q-data were correlated with numeric N_p-data as obtained via observation and artefact analysis. In the same vein, narrative N_q-data were correlated with narrative N_p-data from the remaining methods employed in the study. All data were consolidated into a new data set as a test for consistency and objectivity. Data from all research instruments were then compared to identify areas of agreement (support), disagreement (contradiction) and

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[51] "Descriptive Statistics - Social Research Methods." 2006. 10 Sep. 2016
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/statdesc.php>

complementarity as a test of reliability. After careful study during each iteration of this analysis process, data were integrated to develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which the data were addressing the research question (and sub questions).

3.7.   Procedures of warrant

The study was developed from the primary research question, which itself emerged during close reading of existing literature on innovations in learning. Prior to the onset of the study, it was considered and approved by the proposal committee of the Department of Curriculum Studies (Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University) where this study was hosted, as well as the relevant Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC); the University's Division for Institutional Research and Planning; and the University's Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) with protocol number DESC/Knoetze/Mar2015/2.

A thorough review of the extant literature followed. The scholarship supported the need for this study, and greatly informed the development of my research instruments.

Research instruments were approved[52] and piloted (questionnaire), peer evaluated (observation schedule and artefact analysis) and triangulated. Triangulation for validity and reliability included consistent analysis of participants' online writing (as described in Section 3.6. above); quantitative-qualitative data correlation; as well as comparative datasets (questionnaire vs observed activity).

3.8.   Solutions to ethical considerations

Various ethical considerations underpinned the conception, development and implementation of the entire study. These were not only of personal importance, but

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[52] Faculty of Education's Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC); the University's Division for Institutional Research and Planning; and the University's Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

were also required for ethical clearance and permission to conduct the research. Compliance to University regulations and procedures were observed throughout the duration of the study (see Addendum 1). Major areas of consideration are discussed forthwith.

3.8.1. Autonomy and consent

Informed consent was required of all participants prior to the commencement of the study. This was obtained after explaining the study to the research population in person (class time), as well as by providing potential participants with a detailed cover letter (Addendum 1) explaining the research. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and any participant could withdraw from the study at any time without fear of consequence. Degree and range of participation in the study was at the sole discretion of each individual participant.

3.8.2. Privacy, anonymity and intellectual property

Whilst the blogging activities were hosted on public platforms (e.g. Google Blogger, Wordpress), bloggers had freedom to control the visibility of their blogs via the relevant blogging platform's privacy settings. Participants (N_P) indicated their wish for their blogs to be included in the study by submitting their blog URLs on a shared database (Google Forms). In cases where individual blog privacy settings restricted access to their content, inclusion in the study was indicated via personal invitation to access content.

All participating blog URLs were machine coded and recorded individually. Records of naming protocols and participant identifiers were kept and consolidated electronically. While these records maintained participant anonymity, they allowed for inter-method

cross-referencing of data. All records with identifiable markers, along with all raw and unprocessed data were destroyed after data analysis was completed.

Original content published on participant blogs remained the intellectual property of the respective authors. Bloggers indicated copyright and licensing using Creative Commons (see Section 3.4.3.3.2 above) license conventions. Third party content were treated similarly, and were not included in any records of this study.

3.8.3.   Fairness and safety

All participants (and participant content) in the study were treated equally without favouritism or discrimination. Participation/nonparticipation in the study had no impact on N-member assessment or status in the programme.

Narrative contributions were considered to be of a personal and possibly sensitive nature. Every effort was made to avoid participant discomfort, injury or offence, including total participant autonomy. The nature of any writing activity can however not be regarded as completely free of consequence or effect – be it psychological, physical, social, economic or political in nature. Similarly, whilst every effort was made to arrange access to SUNLearn and Computer Use Areas (CUAs) to accommodate participant needs and preferences, N_q and N_p participation may have been completed after hours. Safe transport or passage to and from CUAs or similar facilities remained the choice and personal responsibility of each participant.

I reserved the right to terminate the study (as well as the right to withdraw participants from the study) in the event of unforeseen presentation or development of significant risks to the physical or psychological well-being of participants. Consequently, neither I nor the University were to be held responsible for any unforeseen individual consequences of participation in the study.

All data were transferred and encoded offline, and protected by means of password secured hard-drive storage on a non-networked laptop computer. Backups of such data were automatically encrypted (FileVault™) and stored on a password secured, system specific[53] backup drive which was kept off site throughout the study. I was the only person who had access to these devices throughout the study.

3.8.4.   Cost and reward

No financial costs to either participants or the institution were incurred. No rewards or penalties were offered or awarded for participation or nonparticipation in the study.

3.8.5.   Bias

Research methods bias was addressed in consultation with my study supervisor and a consultant from the University's Statistical Services. Research method bias was limited through higher levels of structure in design and types of data collected (where possible).

Researcher bias was addressed and monitored in cooperation with my study supervisor. Researcher bias was ameliorated through full disclosure at every stage of the research process.

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[53] OSX version 10.11.16 (Apple inc.)

4. The data chapter

4.1. Introduction to the data

Below, I report the findings of this study based upon the integrated methodology applied to gather data on the research question and sub-questions. Findings of this study are stated simply and arranged in a logical sequence. Interpretation of the data is unavoidably part of the presentation thereof (see Hà, 2011 and Burbules *et al.*, 2015 as discussed in Chapter 1 Section 1.2). Bias was checked for and monitored in cooperation with my study supervisor, a consultant from the University's Statistical Services, and critical peers.

To facilitate later referencing of the data, I order this chapter according to the instruments used to collect the data. Due to the integrated nature of the data-collection process, it does not make sense to impose an absolute chronological order on the data. After a brief description of the research population (N), I present the data collected from respondents to the online questionnaire (N_q). Here I highlight areas where reported activity can be juxtaposed to reported perceptions or understanding of the matter at hand. The next section presents data collected from observing the blog posts and publishing behaviour of participating bloggers (N_p). These data on actual activity bring an empirical perspective to the research, allowing comparison between claims and collected evidence regarding online writing. A closer look is then taken (i.e. artefact analysis) at the content published by those members of the population who participated in both N_q and N_p activities: this group is referred to as the core sample (n).
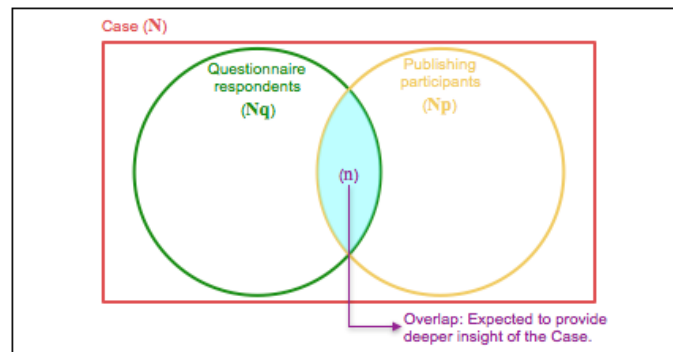
FIGURE 4.1 GROUPING AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.2.   Key findings

The purpose of articulating these results was to improve understanding of the research from within, to consider its constituent parts, and to highlight the research problem from different perspectives. This was achieved by presenting results more effectively, using figures, tables and other non-textual elements. In this section I start by presenting the data as fairly as possible, that is to say without (much) interpretation and bias. While some findings emerge in the process of presentation, discussion and interpretation of the various datasets occur in Chapter 5.

4.2.1.   Population

145   45
● Female   ● Male
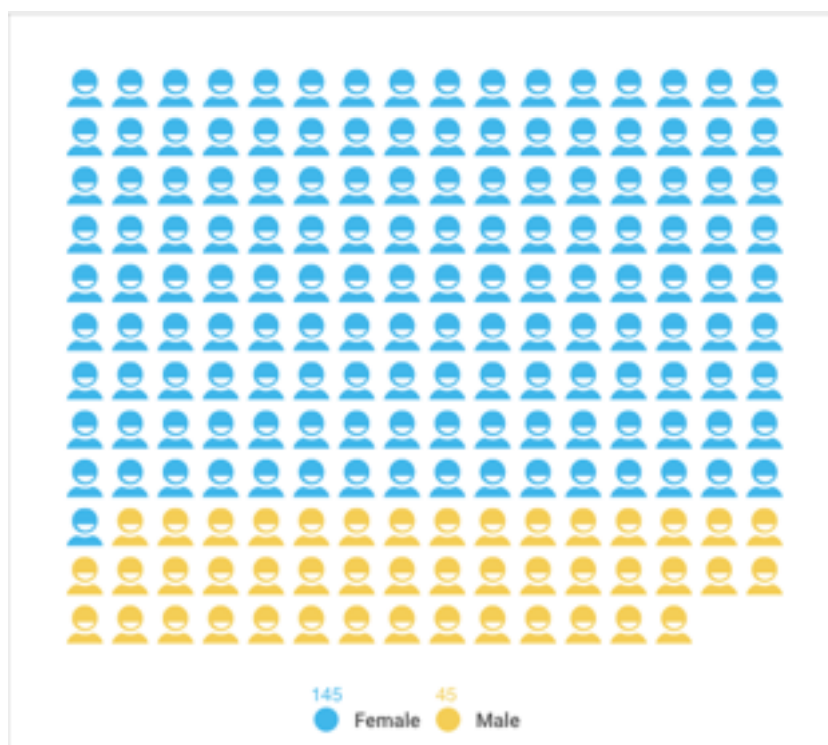
FIGURE 4.2 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE 2015 PGCE PROGRAMME AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

The research population (N) consisted of 169 active (out of 190 enrolled) PGCE students, ranging in age from their early twenties to mid-forties. This particular group consisted largely of students who identified as female. No data on student ethnicities were recorded. Members of N consisted of graduate students (having already obtained either a Bachelors, Honours or Master's degree) from a broad range of academic disciplines who were pursuing formal teacher certification (South Africa) via the 2015 Postgraduate Certificate in Education at Stellenbosch University. Course content and related communication were hosted and facilitated via SUNLearn, the

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University's Moodle-based LMS[54]. This information was duplicated to an informal class blog[55], which was hosted on a free, public blogging platform on the worldwide web. Both platforms were monitored to gauge participation/engagement rates amongst the research population.

4.2.1.1. N activity

N activity in the LMS (Learning Management System) course module[56] was obtained and included as an indication of usage/engagement trends amongst the population. LMS data did not include individual identifiers of the 169 active PGCE students. Table 4-1 differentiates between population engagement with online content (views vis-à-vis responses) on the LMS as well as similar engagement statistics obtained from the platform[57] hosting the class blog. These data are also represented in Figure 4.3, which gives a clearer indication of class engagement trends.

TABLE 4-1 N ACTIVITY: CONTENT VIEWS AND POSTS PER MONTH

Period ending (Month)	LMS Views	Blog Views	LMS Posts	Blog Posts
31 January 2015	60	0	0	0
28 February 2015	9748	881	772	86
31 March 2015	5558	421	932	85
30 April 2015	3343	72	364	8
31 May 2015	1652	19	3	12
30 June 2015	468	13	2	8
31 July 2015	239	10	1	9
31 August 2015	735	23	0	26
20 September 2015	1588	33	23	20

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[54] Learning Management System
[55] https://2015-45810-774.blogspot.co.za/
[56] Module code: 2015-45810-774 Computer Use [Education]
[57] Google Blogger (http://www.blogger.com)
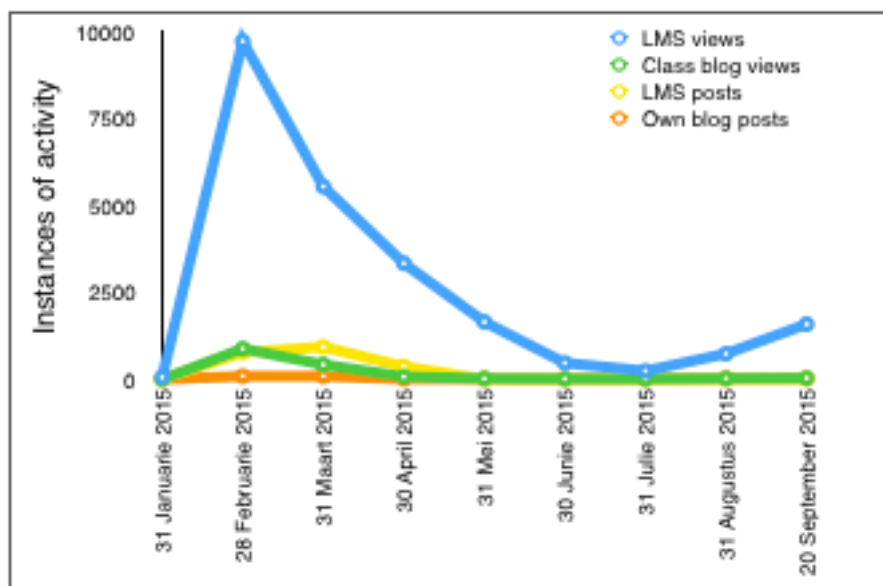
FIGURE 4.3 TREND-LINES OF N ACTIVITY PER MONTH

4.2.1.2. Findings

Members of the study population seemed significantly more inclined to view course content and related communication via the LMS than via the unofficial blog. Initial preference for posting to the LMS shifted in favour of posting to blogs towards the end of the second term of the academic year. Blogging activity increased during the third term, during which students were engaged in in-school teaching practice (*practicum*).

4.2.2. Population subset: Questionnaire respondents

Eighty-four members (42%) of the research population responded to the online questionnaire; these participants make up the population subset "Nq". Although much demographic data were collected, I only include findings that speak directly to the main research question or its sub-questions. I believe it important to note, however, that the reported language profile of Nq only reflected Afrikaans and English out of the eleven

official South African languages listed in the questionnaire. No participant indicated any proficiency in the remaining nine South African languages, despite being given various opportunities to do so (see Question 3 on the Questionnaire in Addendum 2). I believe this to be a significant observation, even if it does not speak directly to the research question. Gender dynamics in terms of interest and participation is equally tantalizing and deserving of study in itself.
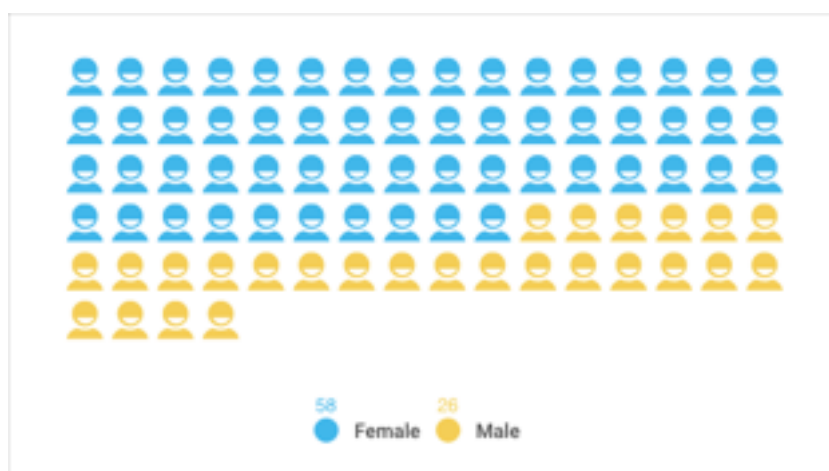
FIGURE 4.4 Nq: POPULATION SUBSET OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

4.2.2.1.Nq responses (Numeric)

To frame the collected numeric responses to the online questionnaire, eight focus questions were asked of the data. These questions to the data lifted response items from the questionnaire and looked at the results for clarifying perspectives on the main research question. While the frequency counts for each question are included in Addendum 4, discussion in this chapter will focus on cross-correlations and intersections between datasets. The answers to the eight focus questions are presented below.

4.2.2.1.1. How many participants responded positively to at least one item in terms of Writing Behaviour?

Questionnaire items about types of respondent online writing activity were grouped as 'Writing Behaviour' (refer to Addendum 4). These items were expected to identify respondents who already engaged in online writing, as well as the form(s) and varieties of such individual engagement. The assumption was that participants who engaged in a larger variety of online writing activities would likely provide greater insight into the nature and purpose of their online writing.

Fifty-seven respondents reported engaging in at least some of the writing activities queried; i.e. Journal writing, posting to social networks, blogging, microblogging, and posting to the University LMS (see Figure 4.5 below).
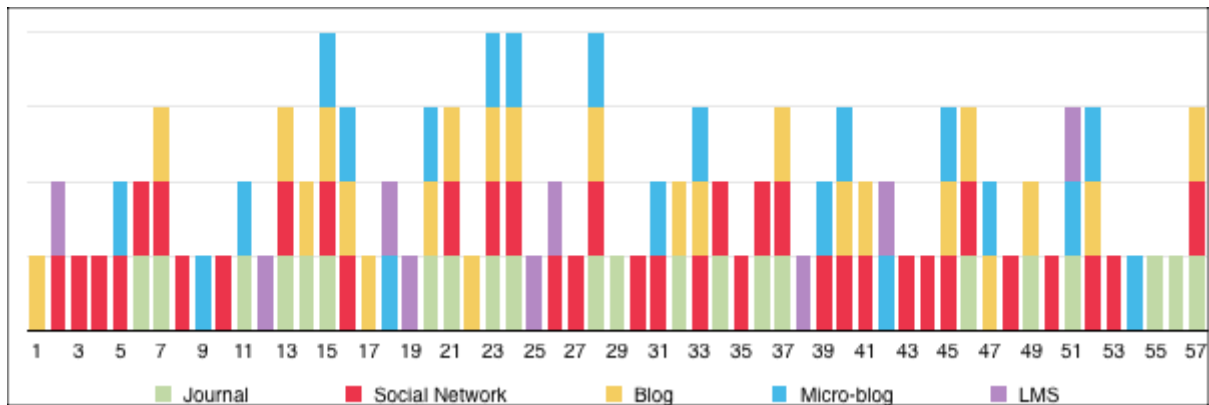
FIGURE 4.5 NQ POSITIVE WRITING BEHAVIOUR (REPORTED)

4.2.2.1.1.a.   To which extent did these participants overlap across writing activities?

Variations in combinations of online writing behaviour are illustrated for each of the fifty-seven respondents in Figure 4.6. Twenty-four of these respondents only engaged in one form of online writing. The reported variations in online writing activity of the fifty-seven respondents who responded positively in terms of Writing Behaviour are listed in Table 4-2.

TABLE 4-2 POSITIVE WRITING BEHAVIOUR ENGAGEMENT PER ONLINE WRITING ACTIVITY

Writing Behaviour	Respondents
Journal writing	22
Writing on Social Networks	36
Blogging	24
Micro-blogging	24
Posting to LMS	9

- One online writing activity.
- Combination of two online writing activities.
- Combination of three online writing activities.
- Combination of four online writing activities.
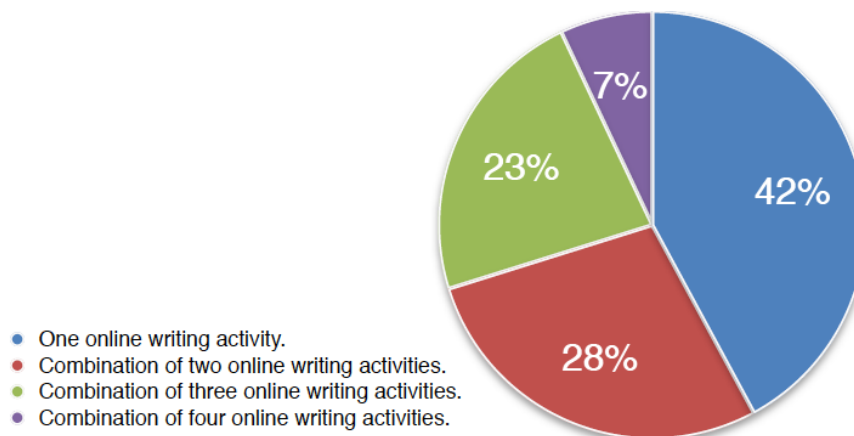
FIGURE 4.6 COMBINATIONS OF REPORTED WRITING ACTIVITIES (POSITIVE WRITING BEHAVIOUR)

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Sixteen respondents indicated that they engaged in a combination of two of the identified online writing activities. These combinations are listed below:

TABLE 4-3 COMBINATIONS OF TWO ONLINE WRITING ACTIVITIES (REPORTED)

Writing Behaviour Combinations	Respondents
Journaling/Social Networks	3
Journaling/Blogging	3
Journaling/Micro-blogging	1
Journaling/LMS	0
Social Networks/Blogging	1
Social Networks/Micro-blogging	3
Social Networks/LMS	2
Blogging/Micro-blogging	1
Blogging/LMS	0
Micro-blogging/LMS	2

Thirteen respondents indicated that they engaged in a combination of three of these online writing activities, with Journaling/Social Networks/Blogging beating Social Networks/Blogging/Microblogging by one respondent (Table 4-4 refers).

TABLE 4-4 COMBINATIONS OF THREE ONLINE WRITING ACTIVITIES (REPORTED)

Writing Behaviour Combinations	Respondents
Journaling/Social Networks/Blogging	6
Social Networks/Blogging/Micro-blogging	5
Journaling/Blogging/Micro-blogging	1
Journaling/Micro-blogging/LMS	1

Four respondents indicated that they engaged in four (all but LMS) of the writing activities. There were no respondents who indicated that they engaged in all five online writing activities.

The greatest overall overlap in positive Writing Behaviour was reported as writing in Social Networks and Blogging, followed by Journaling and Blogging, Journaling and Social Networks, Social Networks and Microblogging, and Blogging and Microblogging. Figure 4.7 illustrates all identified combinations of online writing activities that were reported.
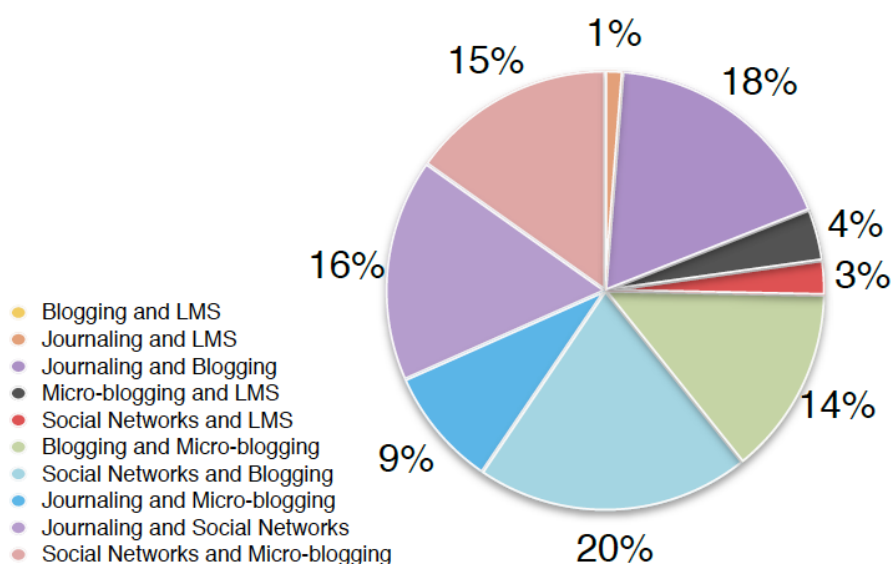
FIGURE 4.7 COMBINATIONS OF REPORTED WRITING ACTIVITIES (POSITIVE WRITING BEHAVIOUR)

4.2.2.1.1.b.   How did the overlapping participants rate the relation of writing to learning?

Four of these fifty-seven respondents reported engaging in four of the writing activities queried, whilst thirteen reported engaging in some combination of three. The fact that

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these seventeen respondents demonstrated their ability and willingness to write in a variety of media leads to the inference that they can be seen as people who like to write, and who possibly write easily. It is as a group, then, that it was thought they might provide insight into the beliefs of respondents with positive *Writing Behaviour* when it comes to ways in which writing relates to learning. Figure 4.8 illustrates how they rated selected statements regarding the relation of writing to learning.
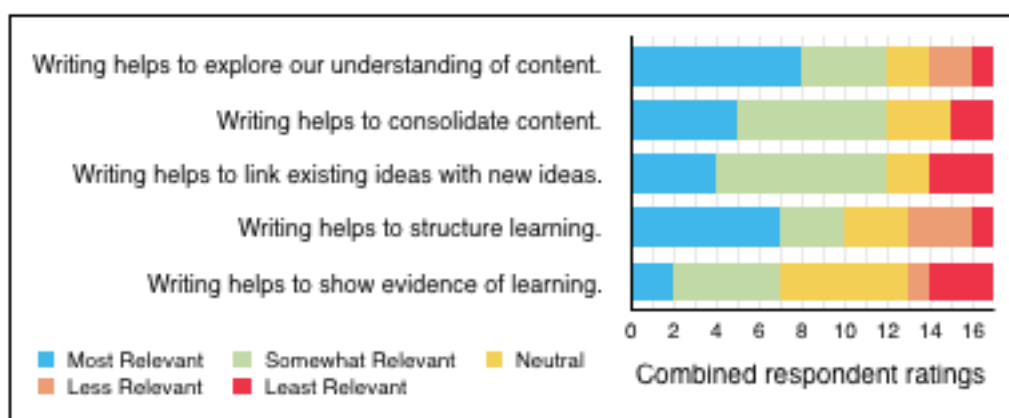
FIGURE 4.8 AVERAGE OF SELECTED RATINGS REGARDING THE ROLES OF WRITING FOR LEARNING

The response data of selected respondents with positive *Writing Behaviour* show the highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Most relevant") awarded to the statement: "Writing helps explore our understanding of content", followed by "Writing helps to structure learning" and "Writing helps to consolidate learning".

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4.2.2.1.2. What is the correlation between all ratings of how writing relates to learning and responses in terms of *Writing Behaviour* and *Reading Behaviour*?

In order to unlock the data relevant to this question, I first had to unpack each aspect of this focus question. To do so, I presented all Nq responses to the question of how writing relates to learning[58] (hereafter referred to as *Writing**) before combining these into an aggregate graph of the data.

4.2.2.1.2.a.   How did Nq rate the relation of writing to learning?

All participants were asked to rate the relevance of five statements (Likert-scale) on how writing related to learning. These results are illustrated in Figure 4.9 on the next page.

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[58] Online questionnaire: Question 60.
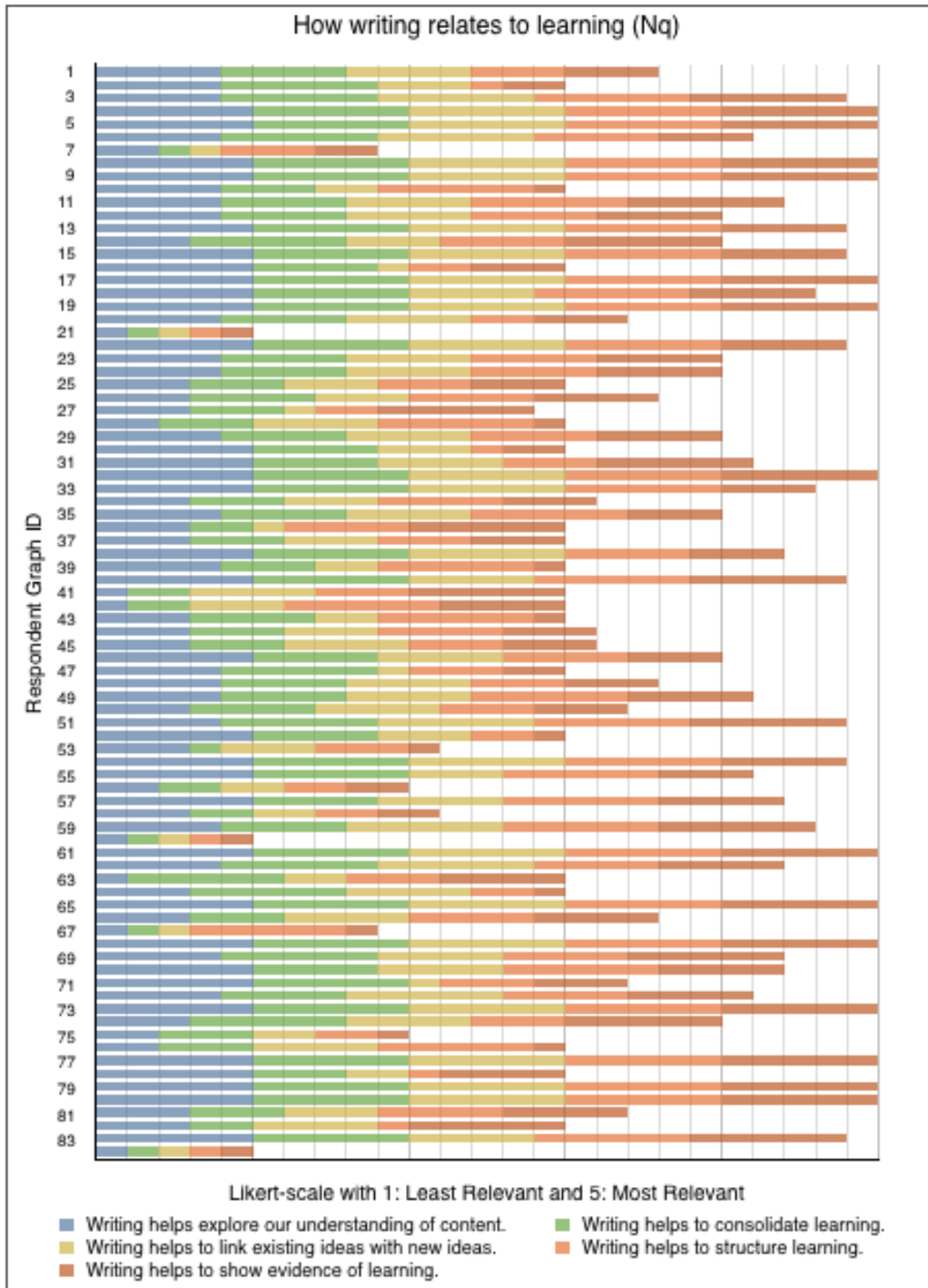
FIGURE 4.9 ALL NQ RATINGS REGARDING WRITING*

In Figure 4.10 I combine the individual N_q results on the relevance of statements regarding *Writing** into an aggregated graph of all responses per statement.
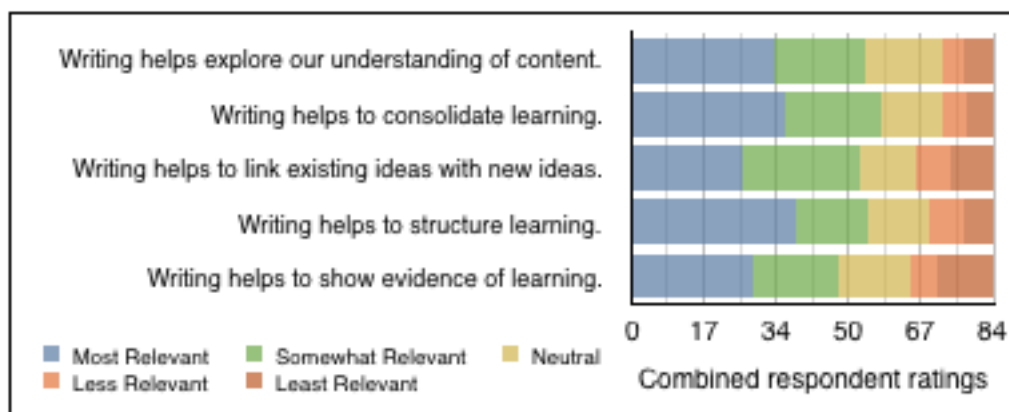
FIGURE 4.10 AVERAGE OF ALL N_q RATINGS REGARDING WRITING*

N_q response data show the highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Most Relevant") awarded to the statement "Writing helps to structure learning", followed by "Writing helps to consolidate learning" and "Writing helps explore our understanding of content". Accordingly, it could be said that N_q believes writing helps: to structure learning (45% relevance), to consolidate learning (43% relevance), to explore one's own understanding of content (39% relevance), to show evidence of learning (33% relevance), and to link existing ideas with new ideas (31% relevance).

When the second-highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Somewhat Relevant") is taken into consideration, however, the statement "Writing helps to consolidate learning" surpasses the statement "Writing helps to structure learning" in relevance. The statement "Writing helps explore our understanding of content" remains in third position.

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4.2.2.1.2.b.   How did Nq respond in terms of Reading Behaviour?

Where fifty-seven respondents had indicated positive *Writing Behaviour*, eighty-three out of eighty-four respondents indicated engagement in at least some of the reading activities queried; i.e. reading journals, reading on social networks, reading blogs, reading micro-blogs, and reading in the University LMS (see Figure 4.11).
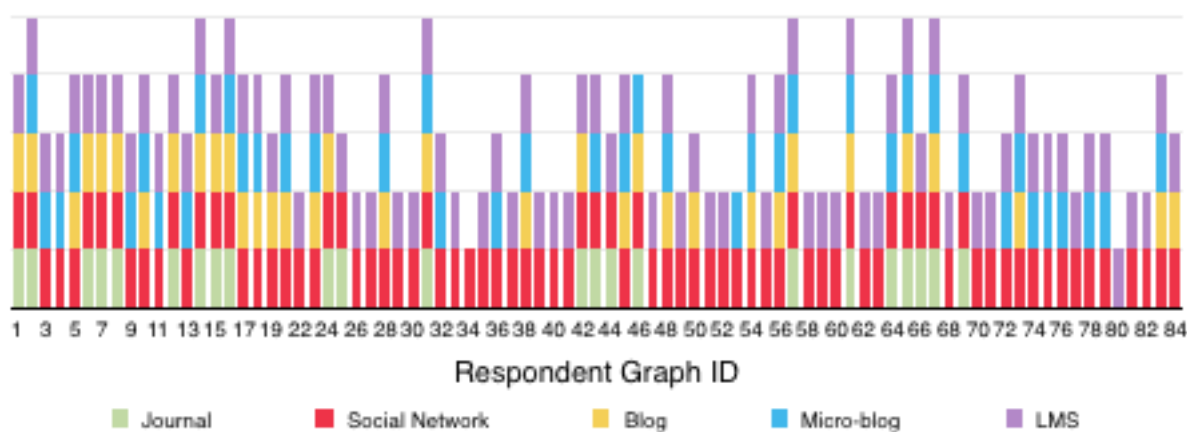
FIGURE 4.11 Nq POSITIVE READING BEHAVIOUR

In addition to looking for correlation between Nq beliefs about *Writing** and their reported *Writing Behaviour*[59], I also included their reported *Reading Behaviour*[60] for side-by-side comparison. This inclusion allows for the consideration of links between productive literacy skills (writing) and receptive literacy skills (reading), as these may very well provide significant insights into Nq learning behaviour and attitudes towards writing.

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[59] Online questionnaire: Questions 12, 21, 31, 41 and 51.
[60] Online questionnaire: Questions 17, 26, 36, 46 and 56.

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As in the case with *Writing Behaviour*, questionnaire items about types of respondent online reading activity were grouped as 'Reading Behaviour'. These items were expected to identify respondents who already engaged in online reading activities, as well as the form(s) and varieties of such individual engagement. One purpose of this grouping was to illustrate general differences in reported reading and writing behaviour (see figure 4.13).

After statistical analysis and consultation, **no significant correlations[61]** were found between ratings of *Writing** and responses in terms of either *Writing Behaviour* (p-value = 0.171682), or *Reading Behaviour* (p-value = 0.514687).

TABLE 4-5 SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS: WRITING* AND WRITING/READING BEHAVIOUR

| Pair of Variables | Spearman Rank Order Correlations (DATA 20161006.st: MD pairwise deleted Marked correlations are significant at p <.05000 | | | |
	Valid N	Spearman R	t(N-2)	p-value
WRITING BEHAVIOUR & WRITING	84	0.150537	1.378880	0.171682
READING BEHAVIOUR & WRITING	84	0.072078	0.654397	0.514687

As a graphic representation of the data behind Table 4-5 (above), the search for significant correlations is mapped out in Figure 4.12 (below). The coloured bars represent each collected data point, and allow for side-by-side comparison of N_q responses to the question of how writing relates to learning (*Writing**); reported N_q writing behaviour; and reported N_q reading behaviour.

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[61] Spearman Rank Order Correlations

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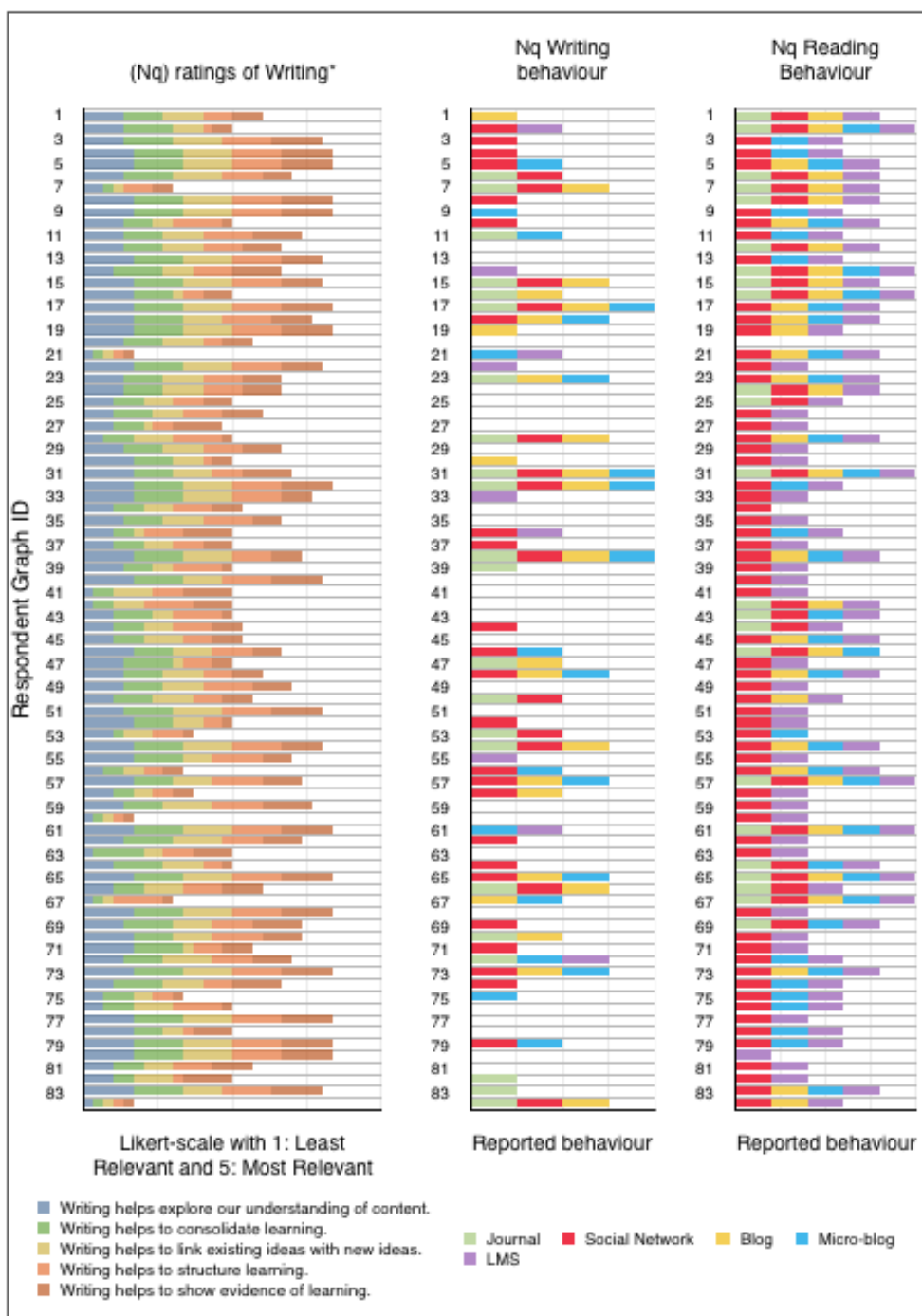
FIGURE 4.12 SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON OF WRITING* AND REPORTED BEHAVIOUR (NQ)

As is clear from the side-by-side comparison of the graphs in Figure 4.12, there is more reported activity in terms of reading behaviour than writing behaviour. This apparent bias towards reading activities casts a curious light on participants earlier rankings of the role of writing for learning (Section 4.2.2.1.2.a).

4.2.2.1.3. What is the relation between responses to *Writing** and *Writing/Reading Frequency*?

Questionnaire items about the frequency of respondent online writing activity[62] were grouped as 'Writing Frequency' (also referred to as "PARTICIPATION (W)" in the raw data). These items were expected to indicate degrees of participation in online writing, with allowances for variation in degrees of participation between the different forms of online writing activity. The assumption was that participants who engaged in online writing activities more frequently would likely provide greater insight into the nature and purpose of their online writing.

The following graph represents the reported frequency of N_q participation in online writing activities.

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[62] Online questionnaire: Questions 13, 22, 32, 42 and 52.
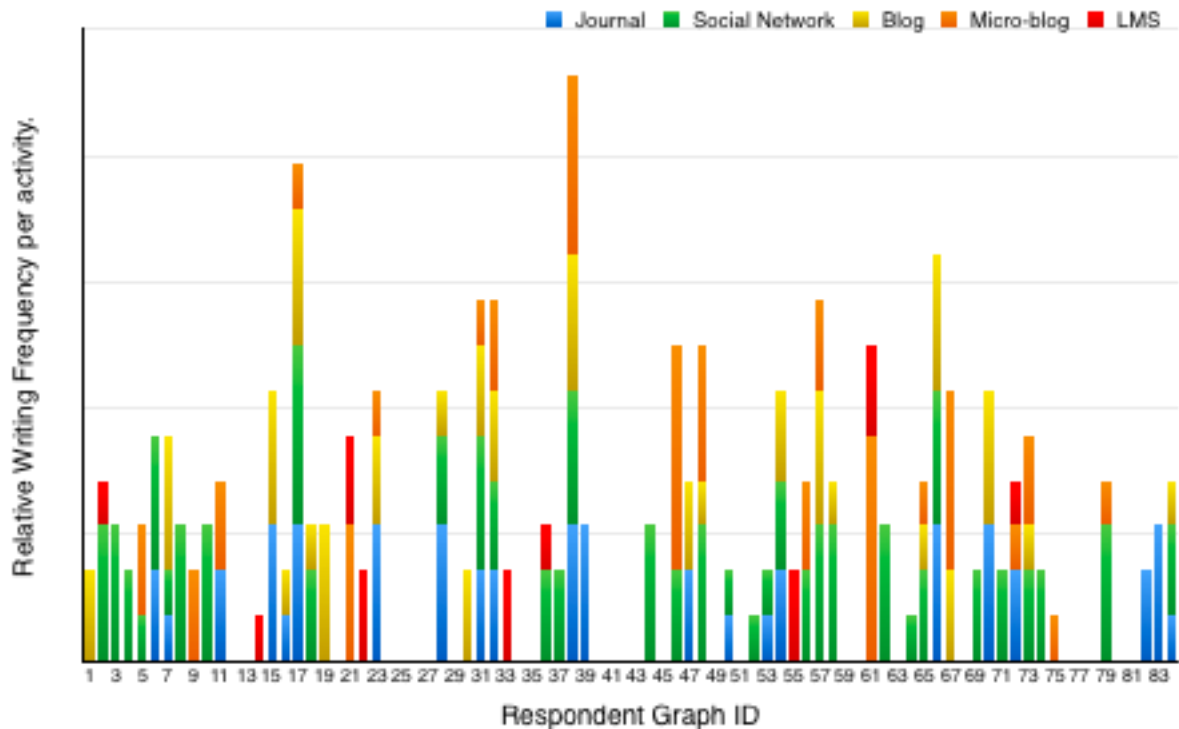
FIGURE 4.13 NQ WRITING FREQUENCY (REPORTED)

Similarly, questionnaire items about the frequency of respondent online reading activity[63] were grouped (Fig. 4.14 below) as 'Reading Frequency' (also referred to as "PARTICIPATION (R)" in the raw data). These items were expected to indicate degrees of participation in online reading, with allowances for variation in degrees of participation between the different forms of online reading activity. The assumption was that participants who engaged in online reading activities more frequently would likely provide greater insight into the nature and purpose of their online reading.

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[63] Online questionnaire: Questions 18, 27, 37, 47 and 57.
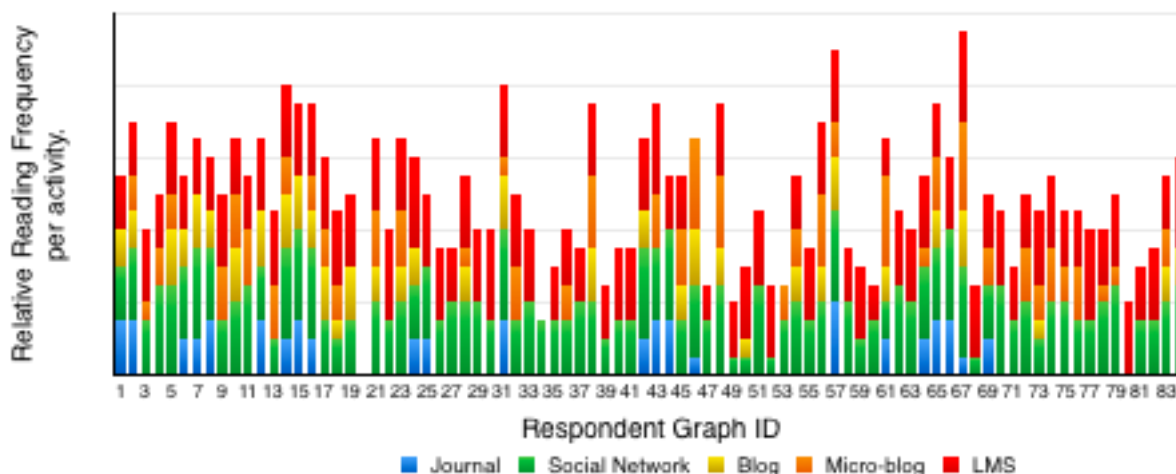
FIGURE 4.14 NQ READING FREQUENCY (REPORTED)

After statistical analysis and consultation, **nearly significant correlations** were found between ratings of *Writing** and responses in terms of *Writing Frequency* (p-value = 0.052904). **Not so** between ratings of *Writing** and responses in terms of *Reading Frequency* (p-value = 0.636850). The positive correlation between *Writing-* and *Reading Frequency* is close to significance (Table 4-6), and worth mentioning.

TABLE 4-6 SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS: READING/WRITING FREQUENCY AND WRITING*

Pair of Variables	Spearman Rank Order Correlations (DATA 20161006. MD pairwise deleted Marked correlations are significant at p <.05000			
	Valid N	Spearman R	t(N-2)	p-value
PARTICIPATION (w) & WRITING	58	0.255497	1.977599	0.052904
PARTICIPATION (R) & WRITING	83	0.052582	0.473894	0.636850

In contrast to Fig 4.12, reported writing frequency (as opposed to avowed writing behaviour) comes close to significance (at 0.052, see Table 4-6) in correlation with *Writing**.

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4.2.2.1.4. How do responses to *Writing** relate to perceptions of *Blogging for Learning*?

In order to unlock the data relevant to this question, I again unpack each aspect of this focus question. After presenting the Spearman rank order correlations for these variables, I illustrate all N_q responses to the question regarding the benefits of blogging for learning (hereafter referred to as *Blogging for Learning*) in Figure 4.15 (printed in full page format on the next page).
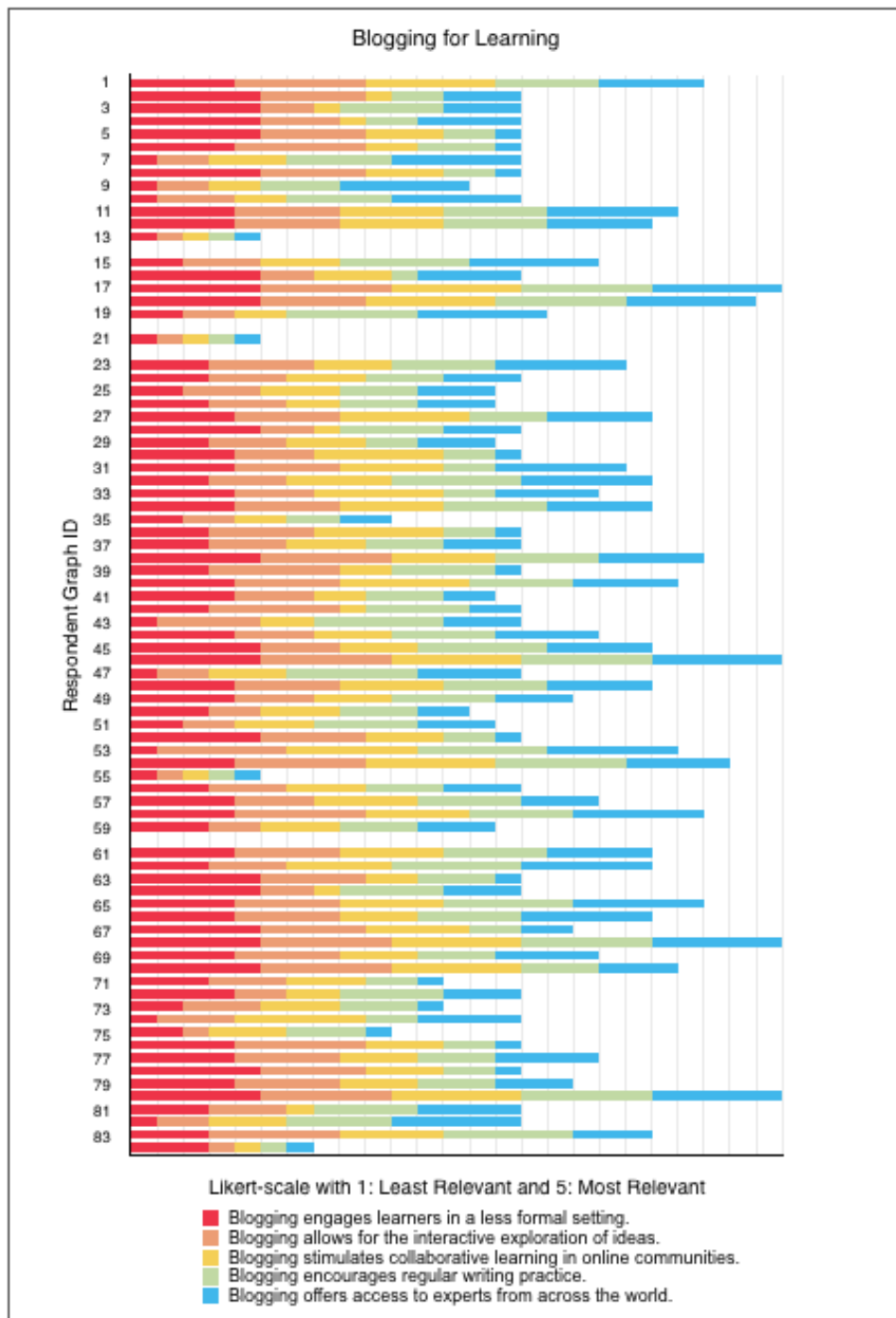
FIGURE 4.15 ALL NQ RATINGS REGARDING THE BENEFITS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

The coloured bars in Figure 4.15 represent each collected data point of N_q responses to the question of the role of blogging for learning. These are discussed below.

4.2.2.1.4.a. How did N_q rate statements related to Blogging for Learning?

All participants were asked to rate the relevance of five statements (Likert-scale) on the benefits of blogging for learning. These results were combined to create an aggregated graph (Fig. 4.16) of all responses per statement:
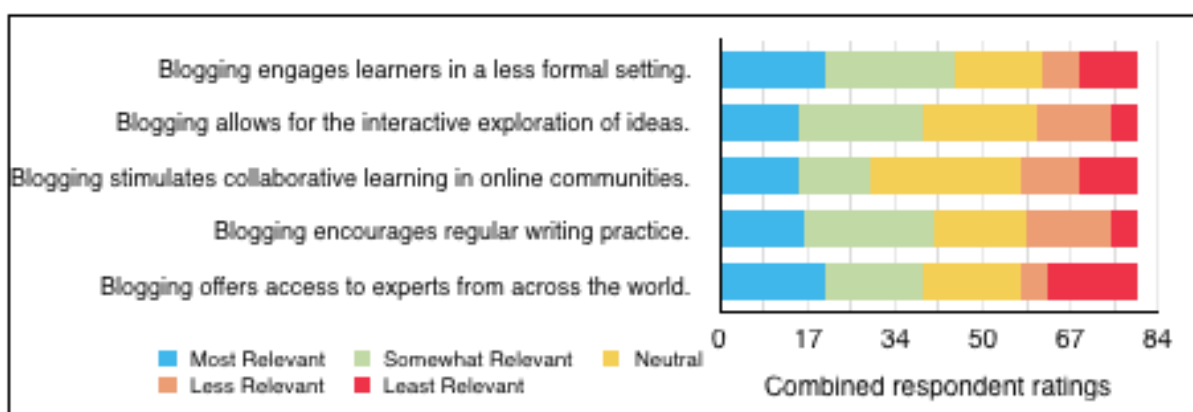
FIGURE 4.16 AVERAGE OF ALL N_q RATINGS REGARDING THE BENEFITS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

N_q response data show the highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Most Relevant") awarded to two statements; i.e. "Blogging engages learners in a less formal setting" and "Blogging offers access to experts from across the world". These are followed by the statement: "Blogging encourages regular writing practice" in terms of the highest degree of relevance awarded. Accordingly, it could be said that N_q believes blogging: engages learners in a less formal setting (25% relevance), offers access to experts from across the world (25% relevance), encourages regular writing practice (20%

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relevance), allows for the interactive exploration of ideas (19% relevance), and stimulates collaborative learning in online communities (19% relevance).

When the second-highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Somewhat Relevant") is also taken into consideration, however, the statement "Blogging engages learners in a less formal setting" is seen to have been awarded the greatest combined degree of relevance. In second place, the statement "Blogging encourages regular writing practice" now surpasses the statement "Blogging offers access to experts from across the world", which now shares the third position with the statement "Blogging allows for the interactive exploration of ideas" (see Section 4.2.2.2).

4.2.2.1.4.a.a. *How did Nq rate statements related to the drawbacks of blogging for learning?*

All participants were asked to rate the relevance of five statements (Likert-scale) on the drawbacks of blogging for learning. These results are combined and presented in an aggregated graph of all responses per statement (Fig. 4.17).
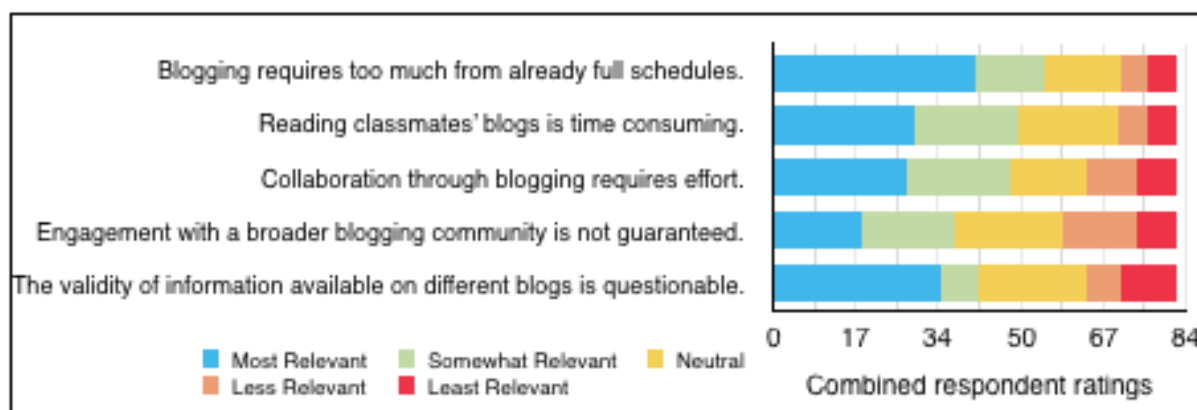
FIGURE 4.17 AVERAGE OF ALL NQ RATINGS REGARDING THE DRAWBACKS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

Nq response data show the highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Most Relevant") was awarded to "Blogging requires too much from already full schedules". "The validity of information available on different blogs is questionable" -statement garnered the second highest amount of responses, followed by the statement: "Reading classmates' blogs is time consuming" in terms of the highest degree of relevance awarded. Accordingly, it could be said that Nq believes the drawbacks to blogging are that: it requires too much from already full schedules (50% relevance), the validity of information available on different blogs is questionable (41% relevance), reading classmates' blogs is time consuming (35% relevance), collaboration through blogging requires effort (33% relevance), and that engagement with a broader blogging community is not guaranteed (22% relevance).

When the second-highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Somewhat Relevant") is also taken into consideration, however, the statement "Reading classmates' blogs is time consuming" moves into second position, followed by "Collaboration through blogging requires effort" – edging the issue of validity of information into fourth place. The concern that engagement "with a broader community is not guaranteed" remained in the last position.

4.2.2.1.4.b.   Is there a statistical relation between Writing* and Blogging for Learning?

Statistical analysis and consultation showed **significant correlations** between ratings of *Writing** and responses in terms of *Blogging for Learning* (p-value = 0.005735, see Table 4-7).

TABLE 4-7 SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS: ORDINAL SETS VIS-À-VIS
BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

Pair of Variables	Spearman Rank Order Correlations (DATA 20161006.sta) MD pairwise deleted Marked correlations are significant at p <.05000			
	Valid N	Spearman R	t(N-2)	p-value
WRITING & BLOGGING FOR LEARNING	80	0.306227	2.841010	0.005735
PARTICIPATION (w) & BLOGGING FOR LEARNING	56	0.341643	2.671288	0.009966
PARTICIPATION (R) & BLOGGING FOR LEARNING	80	0.035999	0.318136	0.751232
WRITING BEHAVIOUR & BLOGGING FOR LEARNING	80	0.276553	2.541574	0.013018
READING BEHAVIOUR & BLOGGING FOR LEARNING	80	0.147387	1.316059	0.192009

It is important to note that alongside *Writing**, *Writing Frequency* [Participation (W)] and *Writing Behaviour* in particular correlated significantly, rather than *Reading Frequency* [participation (R)] or *Reading Behaviour*.

4.2.2.1.4.c. How do Nq ratings of *Writing** relate to those of the benefits of *blogging for Learning*?

The data show a positive correlation between perceptions of the role of writing for learning, and those of the benefits of blogging for learning. On average, an increase on the Likert-scale axis of relevance in terms of *Writing**, corresponds to an increase on the Likert-scale axis for *Blogging for Learning*.

A significant correlation exists between perceptions that "writing helps explore our understanding of content" (*Writing**) and that "blogging engages learners in a less formal setting" (*Blogging for Learning*). As indicated in Table 4-8 (overleaf) 40.63% of respondents rated these statements as most relevant.

| Q60_WritingLearning1 | 2-Way Summary Table: Observed Frequencies (DATA 20161006.sta) Marked cells have counts > 10 Chi-square test: p=.47646 | | | | | |
	Q62_ProLearning1 1	Q62_ProLearning1 2	Q62_ProLearning1 3	Q62_ProLearning1 4	Q62_ProLearning1 5	Row Totals
1	1	0	2	1	2	6
Row %	16.67%	0.00%	33.33%	16.67%	33.33%	
2	1	1	1	1	1	5
Row %	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	
3	4	1	5	5	2	17
Row %	23.53%	5.88%	29.41%	29.41%	11.76%	
4	2	2	6	8	2	20
Row %	10.00%	10.00%	30.00%	40.00%	10.00%	
5	3	3	3	10	13	32
Row %	9.38%	9.38%	9.38%	31.25%	40.63%	
Totals	11	7	17	25	20	80

Similarly, 32.35% of respondents who rated the statement "writing helps to consolidate learning" as most relevant, indicated that "blogging engages learners in a less formal setting" was somewhat relevant.

29.73% of respondents rated both "Writing helps to structure learning" and "Blogging encourages regular writing practice" as the most relevant statements, while another 29.73% of respondents rated the former statement as most relevant, and the latter as only somewhat relevant. For a graphic representation of these, consult Figure 4.18 on the next page.

	Blogging engages learners in a less formal setting	Blogging allows for the interactive exploration of ideas	Blogging stimulates collaborative learning in online communities.	Blogging encourages regular writing practice.	Blogging offers access to experts from across the world.	
Writing helps explore our understanding of content	40,63%					Relevance Blogging for Learning.
Writing helps to consolidate learning		32,35%				Relevance Blogging for Learning.
Writing helps to link existing ideas with new ideas.						Relevance Blogging for Learning.
Writing helps to structure learning						Relevance Blogging for Learning.
Writing helps to show evidence of learning						Relevance Blogging for Learning.
	Relevance Writing*	Relevance Writing*	Relevance Writing*	Relevance Writing*	Relevance Writing*	

■ Most relevant ■ Somewhat relevant ■ Neutral ■ Less relevant ■ Least relevant

FIGURE 4.18 ILLUSTRATED TWO-WAY SUMMARY OF OBSERVED FREQUENCIES IN RATINGS: WRITING* AND BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

No significant correlations were found between responses in terms of the statements "Writing helps to link existing ideas to new ideas" or "Writing helps to show evidence of learning" and any of the *Blogging for Learning* statements. Similarly, no correlations were found between either "Blogging stimulates collaborative learning in online communities" or "Blogging offers access to experts from across the world" and any of the *Writing** statements.

To illustrate the data behind Table 4-8 and Figure 4.18, the full complement of N_q responses to *Writing** are arranged next to the full complement of N_q responses to *Blogging for Learning* (on a shared scale of five possible combinations of five degrees each) in Figure 4.19 (full page follows) for side-by-side comparison.
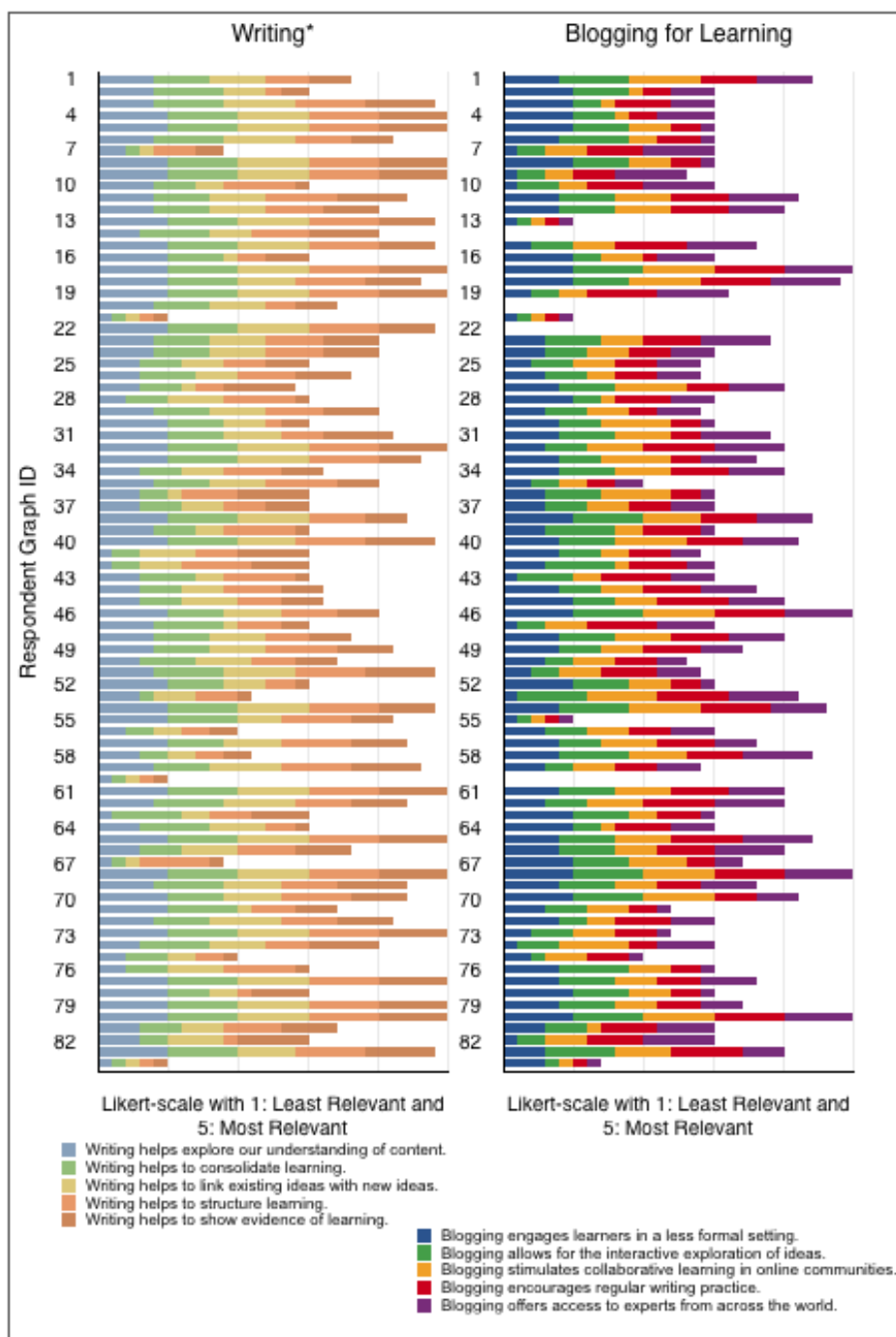
FIGURE 4.19 SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON OF RATINGS: WRITING* VIS-À-VIS BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

4.2.2.1.5. How do responses to *Writing Frequency* relate to *Blogging for Learning*?

The full complement of N_q responses to *Blogging for Learning* are arranged next to the full complement of N_q responses to *Writing Frequency* (on a shared scale of five possible combinations of five degrees each) in Figure 4.20 for side-by-side comparison.
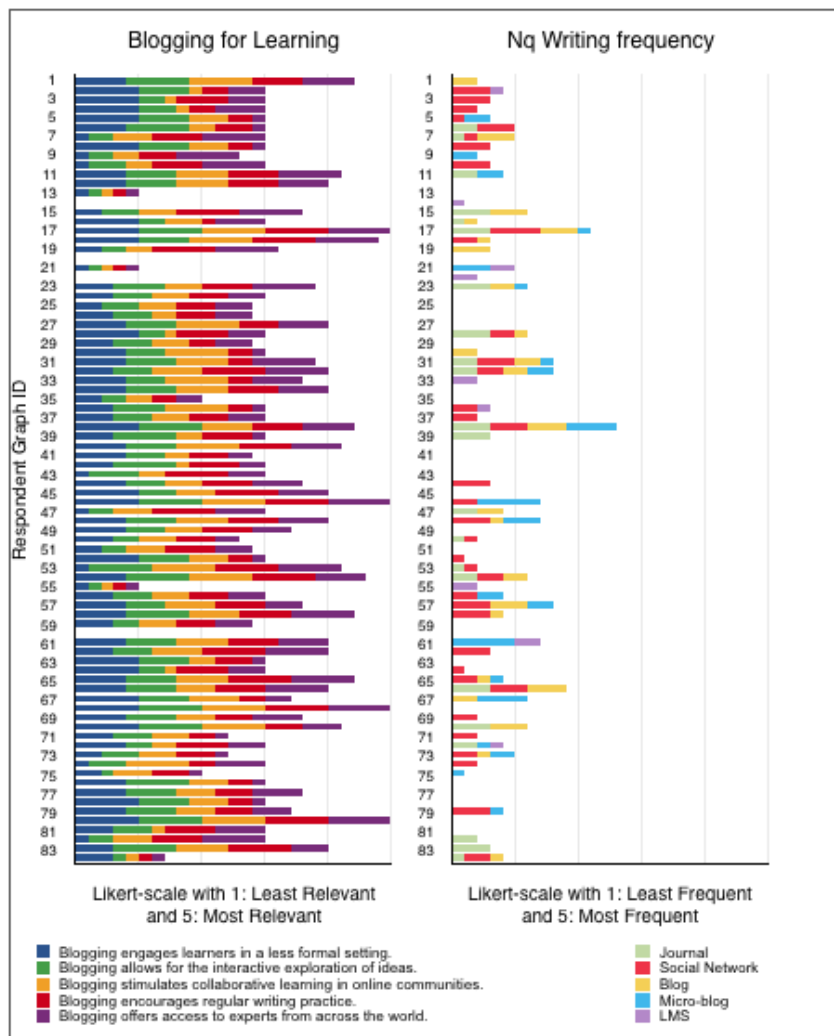
FIGURE 4.20 SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON: RATINGS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING AND REPORTED FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE WRITING ACTIVITIES

The data points represented in Figure 4.20 are discussed in the sub-questions below:

4.2.2.1.5.a.   Is there a statistical relation between *Writing Frequency* and *Blogging for Learning*?

Statistical analysis and consultation showed **significant correlations** between reported frequency of participation in online writing activities and responses in terms of *Blogging for Learning* (p-value[64] = 0.009966).

4.2.2.1.5.b.   What is the correlation between *Writing Frequency* and *Blogging for Learning*?

The data show a positive correlation (Fig. 4.21) between reported participation in online writing activities (captured as "Participation (W)" in the raw data), and those of the benefits of blogging for learning. On average, an increase on the Likert-scale axis of relevance in terms of *Writing Frequency*, corresponds to an increase on the Likert-scale axis for *Blogging for Learning*.

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[64] See Table 4-7.
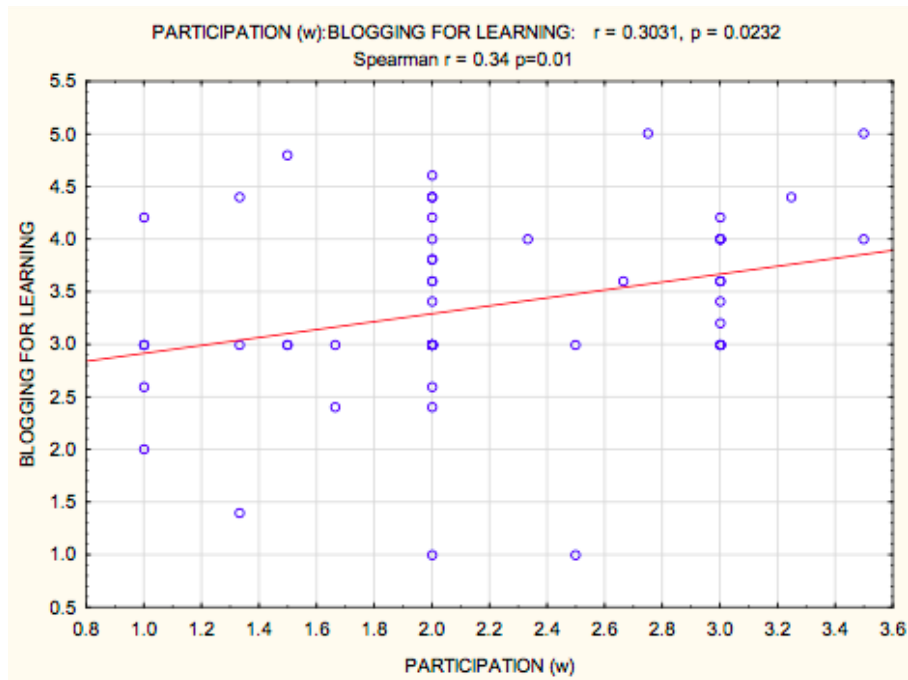
FIGURE 4.21 A TWO-DIMENSIONAL SCATTER PLOT GRAPH FOR CORRELATING WRITING FREQUENCY AND BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

As can be seen, the correlation is significant at 0.02.

4.2.2.1.6. How do responses to *Reading Frequency* relate to perceptions of *Blogging for Learning*?

The full complement of N_q responses to *Blogging for Learning* are arranged next to the full complement of N_q responses to *Reading Frequency* (on a shared scale of five possible combinations of five degrees each) in Figure 4.22 for side-by-side comparison. The data points are discussed under the sub-questions that follow.
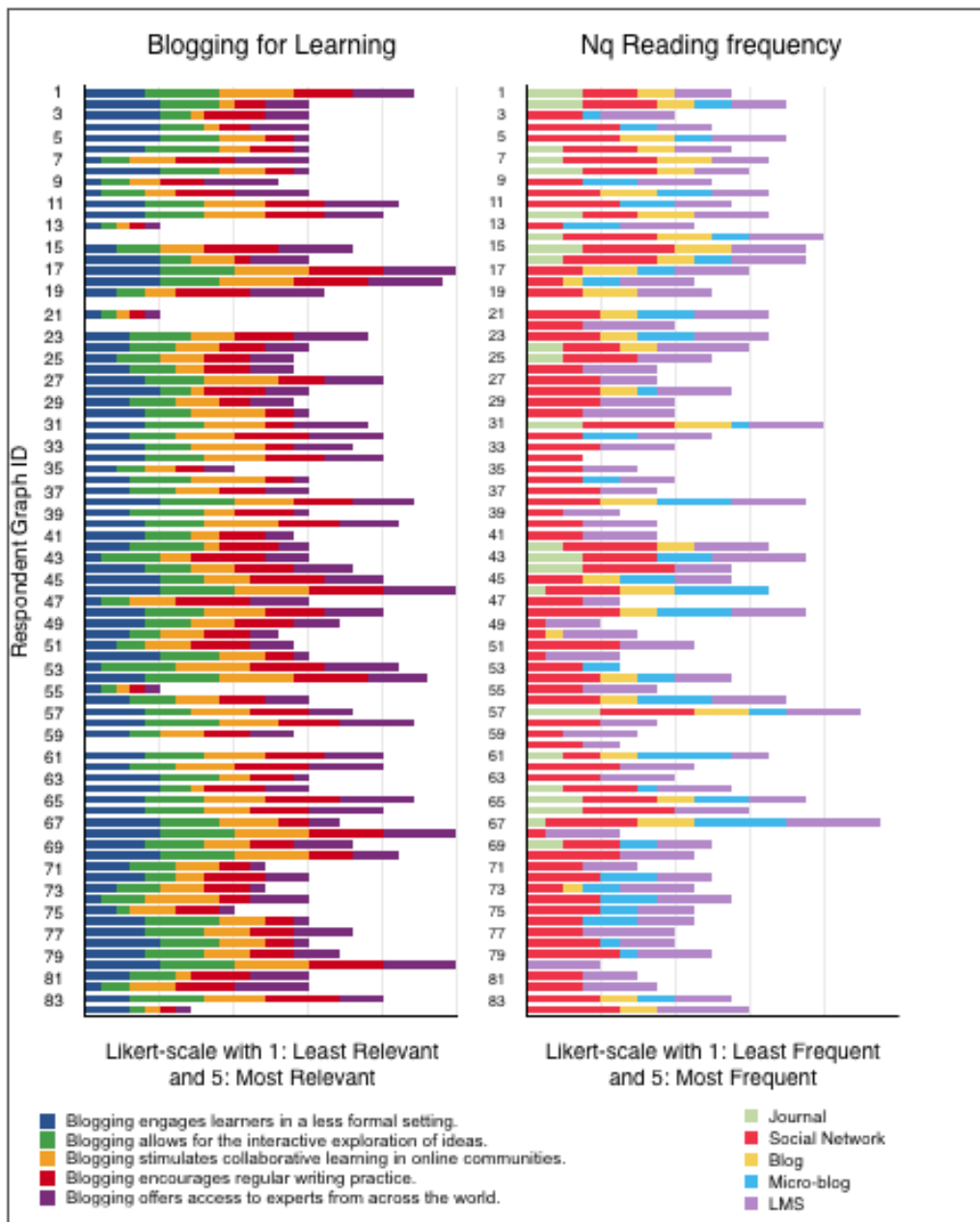
FIGURE 4.22 SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON: RATINGS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING AND
REPORTED FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE READING ACTIVITIES

4.2.2.1.6.a.   Is there a statistical relation between *Reading Frequency* and *Blogging for Learning*?

Statistical analysis and consultation showed **no significant correlations** between reported frequency of participation in online reading activities and responses in terms of *Blogging for Learning* (p-value[65] = 0.751232).

4.2.2.1.7. How many respondents who rated *Writing** variables 1, 2 and 3 as more important also rated *Blogging for Learning* variables 2 and 3 as more important?

The first three statements (Likert-scale variables) regarding *Writing** (Online questionnaire: Question 60) were identified in the literature (Section 2.2.2.3) as more significant roles of writing for learning. The second and third statements (Likert-scale variables) regarding the *Benefits of blogging for Learning* (Online questionnaire: Question 62) were similarly identified (Section 2.2.3.2) as more significant affordances of blogging for learning. I expected to find general agreement with the literature amongst the PGCE students. Surprisingly I found only seventeen respondents (Fig. 4.23 on the next page) who indicated similar views:

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[65] See Table 4-7.
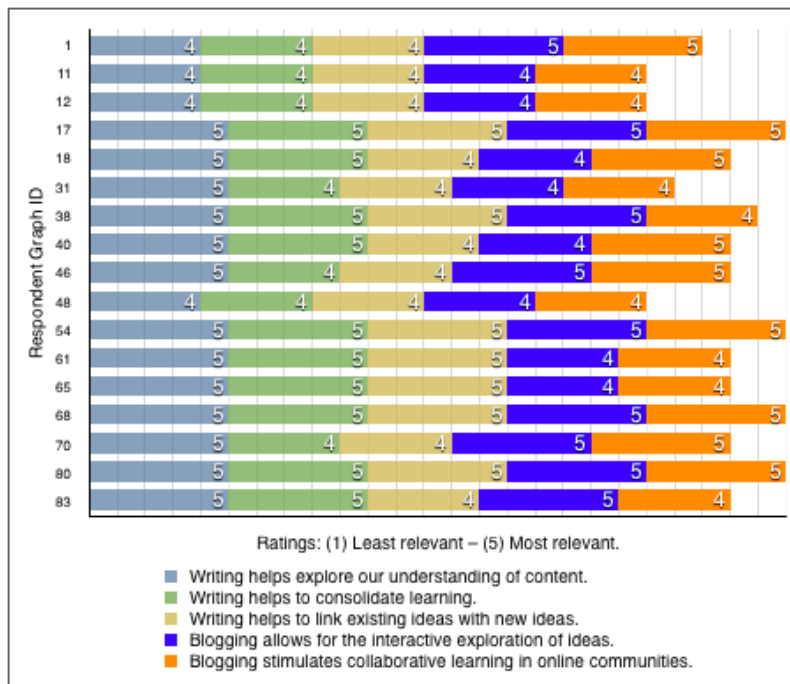
FIGURE 4.23 Nq RESPONDENT AGREEMENT WITH THE LITERATURE

As can be seen in Fig. 4.23, roughly twenty percent (calculated as 20.380952%) of respondent views aligned with the literature findings on the more significant a) roles of writing for learning, and b) affordances of blogging for learning. This indicates a significant misalignment between participant perceptions of the role and value of writing and blogging for learning, and research findings (Section 2.2).

4.2.2.1.8. How did respondents rate their experiences of blogging during their first semester of teacher training?

All participants were asked to rate the relevance of five statements (Likert-scale) on the value they placed on their own blogging for learning experience during the study

(unofficially referred to as project "#PGCEmix"). These results were combined to create an aggregated graph (Fig. 4.24) of all responses per statement:
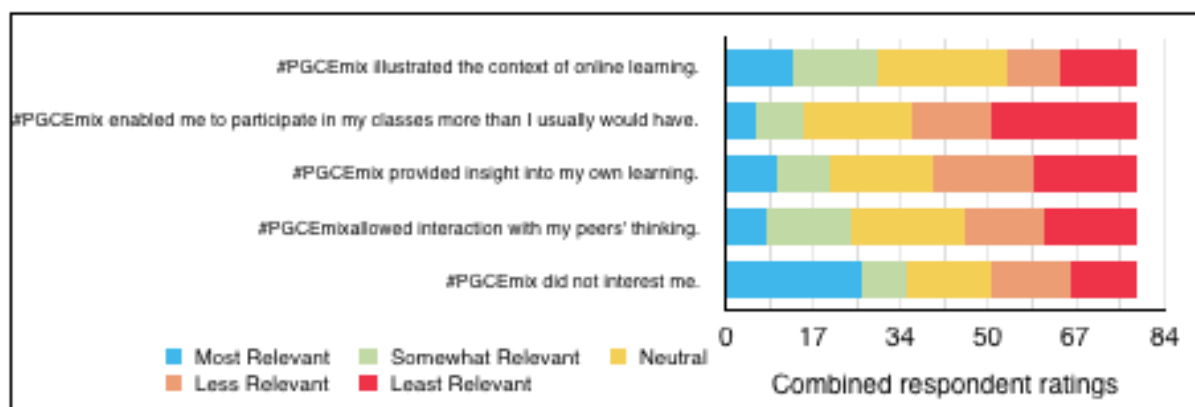
FIGURE 4.24 AVERAGE OF ALL NQ RATINGS OF THEIR BLOGGING EXPERIENCE

Nq response data show the highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Most Relevant") awarded to the statement: "#PGCEmix did not interest me". In second position, by a margin of 16.46% lies the statement "#PGCEmix illustrated the context of online learning". The statement "#PGCEmix provided insight into my own learning" followed in third place in terms of the highest degree of relevance awarded. Accordingly, it could be said that Nq experienced their experimentation with blogging for learning as: an uninteresting (33% relevance) illustration of the context of online learning (16% relevance), that provided (some) insight into their own learning (13% relevance), and allowed (some) interaction with the thinking of their peers (10% relevance), but hardly enabling in terms of participating in their classes more than usual (8% relevance).

When the second-highest degree of relevance (i.e. "Somewhat Relevant") is also taken into consideration, however, the statements "#PGCEmix allowed interaction with my peers' thinking" and "#PGCEmix provided insight into my own learning" change places, with the former moving up to third place, and the latter moving down to fourth.

The statement "#PGCEmix enabled me to participate in my classes more than I usually would have" remains fifth in order of relevance.

4.2.2.2. Nq responses (Narrative)

To analyse the collected narrative responses to the online questionnaire, responses were coded and categorised as either Positive, Negative, or Ambiguous in terms of the open-ended question. These themes are not always explicit or exclusive, and some overlap of responses do occur. Narrative responses are included in the subsections below exactly[66] as captured, with respondents own words indicated in grey italics.

4.2.2.2.1. "How would you expect to utilise blogging in your teaching practice?"

Seventy respondents answered the open-ended question of the online questionnaire. Of these, fifty-one indicated that they would implement some blogging in their teaching practice.

4.2.2.2.1.a. Positive responses

Responses were considered positive when expressly indicating that blogging would be used in respondents' teaching practice. In instances where answers presented arguments for or against the utilisation of blogging, arguments **for** blogging were also categorised as "positive".

4.2.2.2.1.a.a. *Communication outside the class:*

The most prominent trend in positive responses related to utilising blogging as a means of communication outside the class. In such instances, the active role of the

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[66] Except where indicated otherwise, as in the case of translations from Afrikaans into English.

teacher seemed to gravitate to that of broadcasting (making available) information (one-way communication). Examples of such utilisations of blogging were drawn from the data and are listed in order of prominence (most prominent to least prominent):

1. Teacher to learners – *As a teacher I might start a blog which discusses content covered in classes from an enrichment angle and with links to additional websites, content and videos. This would then be available for learners*;

2. Learners to learners – *For the sharing of ideas among learners*;

3. Teacher to teachers – *blogging helps to share your experience with other student teachers[67]*;

4. Teacher to parents – *Passing on information, especially to parents[68]* ;

5. Teacher/learner to self (journaling) – *To document my weekly reflections*; *As a reflective exercise for students*;

6. Teacher/learner to world out there – *I will answer other people's questions on my blog[69]*.

4.2.2.2.1.a.b.   Extending the classroom:

Another prominent trend in positive responses related to utilising blogging as a means of extending the classroom. Here, respondents view blogging as a useful tool for additional or extra-curricular learning activities. The predominance of teacher-learner communication remains evident, and plays out in a variety of ways: (examples of response text in gray italics)

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[67] Original: "blogging help om jou ervaring te deel met die ander proefstudente."
[68] Original: "Inligting deurgee, veral aan ouers."
[69] Original: "Ek sal vrae deur ander mense beanteoord [sic] op my blog."

1. Blogging as an *on-the-side activity*; to *further engage with learning*; for *reflection*; as a space for *in-depth discussions* (with the implication being that there wouldn't be enough time for this in class);

2. Blogging for *enrichment*; content related to *current events*; providing *extra information*; *informal* (relating to notions of voluntary participation with the implication that this work will not be assessed);

3. Blogging as a platform for *homework* or *group projects*;

4. Blogging for *assessment* or *monitoring progress*;

5. Blogging to stimulate *creativity* via *exposure to various genres* (e.g. for learning writing).

4.2.2.2.1.a.c. Utility for language learning in particular:

Respondents who proposed learner-driven utilisation of blogging for learning in their subject areas tended to focus on language learning. Especially prospective language teachers responded positively with suggestions both related to curricular work and beyond.

1. Engaging learners with literature studies:
   a. *Having them do a project where they blog about the play as they're reading…*
2. Opportunity for writing practice:
   a. *… keep online diaries… This will teach them writing skills…*
   b. *… improve writing skills…*
   c. *… platform for extended writing…*

4.2.2.2.1.b. Negative responses

Responses were considered negative when expressly indicating that blogging would not be used in respondents' teaching practice. In instances where answers presented

arguments for or against the utilisation of blogging, arguments **against** blogging were also categorised as "negative". Responses are included exactly as captured below, with respondents own words indicated in grey italics. Prominent themes in negative responses included:

1. Issues of access (cf. Moskal *et al.,* 2013):
    a. *… I think that it is impractical in informal settings where an internet connection is needed but not always guaranteed.*
    b. *… not all schools or learners have access to the internet or devices to start a blog.*
    c. *… learners firstly have to have access to data and devices to participate[70]...*
    d. *… No certainty that learners will have access to internet.*
    e. *… my school did not have the facilities to incorporate blogging.*
    f. *… if they do not have internet connection this will not work.*

2. Resistant attitudes:
    a. *… I would not use blogging in my teaching practice as there are very little to no benefits that I can see…* (see Zandi *et al.*, 2014)
    b. *I would not.*
    c. *… I will never use blogging in my teaching practice.*
    d. *… I feel strongly about learners doing things with "pen and paper"...*
    e. *I will not use it in my teaching prac* [sic]*…*
    f. *… children should rather study than fool around on computers reading other people's thoughts and opinions.*

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[70] Original: "leerders moet eerstens toegang het [sic] tot data en apperate [sic] om deel te kan neem."

g. *I wouldn't like too* [sic]...

3. Time constraints (cf. Sherman and Howard, 2012):

   a. *… as a teacher will need top [sic] use personal time to attend to [blog] moderation can they be/should they be remunerated for this additional Overtime?*

   b. *… blogging is far too time consuming…*

   c. *… I find it time consuming…*

   d. *… It is time consuming and I still have a hard time finding where everything is.*

The code "Lame" was adopted in response to colloquial references indicating undesirability:

> *I would not actually make use of it. Not many learners are interested in blogging and may find it lame, as they have told me. Other networks like instagram [sic] and facebook [sic] are much more appealing to the learners. The reason being that blogs are much smaller and do not contain gossip, which interests the learners.*

Some negative responses did not make sense:

> *It is not a very effective way of teaching in any way except for gaining content knowledge or viewing opinions. I would not recommend it.*

4.2.2.2.1.c.   Ambiguous responses

Responses were considered ambiguous when no clear indication of whether blogging would or would not be used in respondents' teaching practice was given. Instances

where answers indicated uncertainty were duly categorised as "ambiguous". Ambiguity often co-occurred with indications of uncertainty in terms of infrastructure:

> *I don't know whether or not I would even use it. I think that it is impractical in informal settings where an internet connection is needed but not always guaranteed.*

As is clear in this response, ambiguity overlapped with responses about limited access and perceptions of what learners might find more appealing.

4.2.2.3. Nq findings

The online questionnaire set out to collect numeric and narrative data regarding some PGCE student perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices. From the numeric data, it would seem that the majority of online writing activities engaged in by Nq related to updating their social networks (e.g. Facebook). Blogging and microblogging activities shared second place above journaling and posting to the University LMS.

Nq respondents who reported positive writing behaviour ranked the role of writing for learning firstly as a means to explore their own understanding of content; then as a way to structure learning; and thirdly as a way to consolidate learning. This order of importance is inverted when all Nq responses are taken into consideration (i.e. consolidate learning / structure learning / explore understanding). No significant correlations were found between these ratings of the role of writing for learning and reported *frequency* of Nq participation in online writing *or* reading activities (see Section 4.2.2.1.3). There were, however, some significant correlations (Table 4-9) between Nq ratings of the role of *writing for learning* and the perceived benefits of *blogging for learning* (see also Section 4.2.2.1.4.c):

TABLE 4-9 SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS: WRITING* AND BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

Portion of Nq responses	Rated most relevant	Rated somewhat relevant
40,63%	Writing helps explore our understanding of content.	
	Blogging engages learners in a less formal setting.	
32,35%	Writing helps to consolidate learning.	Blogging engages learners in a less formal setting.
29,73%	Writing helps to structure learning.	
	Blogging encourages regular writing practice.	
29,73%	Writing helps to structure learning.	Blogging encourages regular writing practice.

Participants reporting higher *frequencies* of participation in online *writing* activities significantly tended to indicate more positive perceptions of the benefits of *blogging for learning*. However, no significant correlations were found between reported frequency of participation in online reading activities and responses in terms of the benefits of blogging for learning. Overall, seventeen out of eighty-four respondents agreed with the literature (see Section 2.2.2) as far as their perceptions of the role of writing for learning, as well as their perceptions of the benefits of blogging for learning (see Section 2.2.3) were concerned.

Interestingly, of the eighty-three (of eighty-four) respondents who answered Questionnaire item fifty-nine, 82% indicated that they would make use of, or implement ***online learning*** in their teaching practice. Compared to the open-ended Questionnaire item (number sixty-six), which was answered by seventy (of eighty-four) respondents, only fifty-one respondents (nearly 73% in this instance) indicated that they would make use of, or implement some ***blogging*** in their teaching practice. Roughly 9% of respondents would conceivably make use of, or implement *other forms of online learning*.

Agreement between the numeric and narrative N_q data shows significant evidence of respondent affinity towards the expressive aspects of online writing. There is however disagreement where N_q professed understanding of either the role of writing for learning (Figure 4.9), or the benefits of blogging for learning (Figure 4.15), does not correspond to N_q reported online writing (or reading) behaviour (see Figure 4.20 and Figure 4.22).

4.2.3.   Population subset: Publishing participants

160 members of the research population made their blogs available for inclusion in the study. Out of these, seventy-two members published at least one post to their blog during the first three terms of the academic year (illustrated in Fig. 4.25).
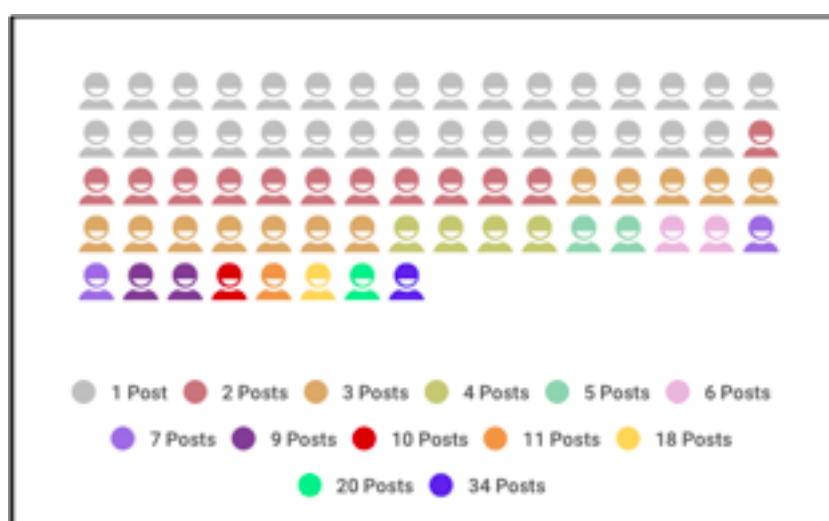
FIGURE 4.25 N_p: POPULATION SUBSET OF PUBLISHING PARTICIPANTS (BY NUMBER OF POSTS PUBLISHED)

These seventy-two blog publishing participants make up the population subset "N_p". Although much data were collected, I only include findings that speak directly to the main research question or its sub-questions.

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4.2.3.1.Np participation

Asynchronous observation of Np publishing activity and the related metadata was expected to provide data on the trajectories of participants adoption of blogging as a form of online writing, as well as data on the habits and trends of Np blogging over time. These data were expected to provide supporting evidence of publishing participants actual perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning.

4.2.3.1.1. Publishing behaviour

Of the seventy-two publishing members of the research population, thirty-one published a single post to their personal blogs during the study. Of these thirty-one posts, seventeen were published during February, at the onset of the study. Eight of these 'one-and-only' posts from February (2015) were brief introductory posts serving as a virtual "I'm here, what's next?" marker; five posts were in response to a writing prompt in class (PGCE-related learning); two posts kicked off efforts in response to the individual "Learning Project"; one post was related to PGCE learning (unprompted); and one post seemed to relate to a topic from a previous effort in personal blogging.

Twelve of the thirty-one 'one-and-only' posts were published during March. Of these, seven posts were in response to writing prompts (PGCE-related learning); and four were published as kick-off efforts in response to the individual learning project. The remaining two of the thirty-one 'one-and-only' posts were published in April, and represented efforts towards embarking on the individual learning project. Figure 4.26 (next page) illustrates each participant's (Np) blog publishing behaviour (in terms of posts) over time.
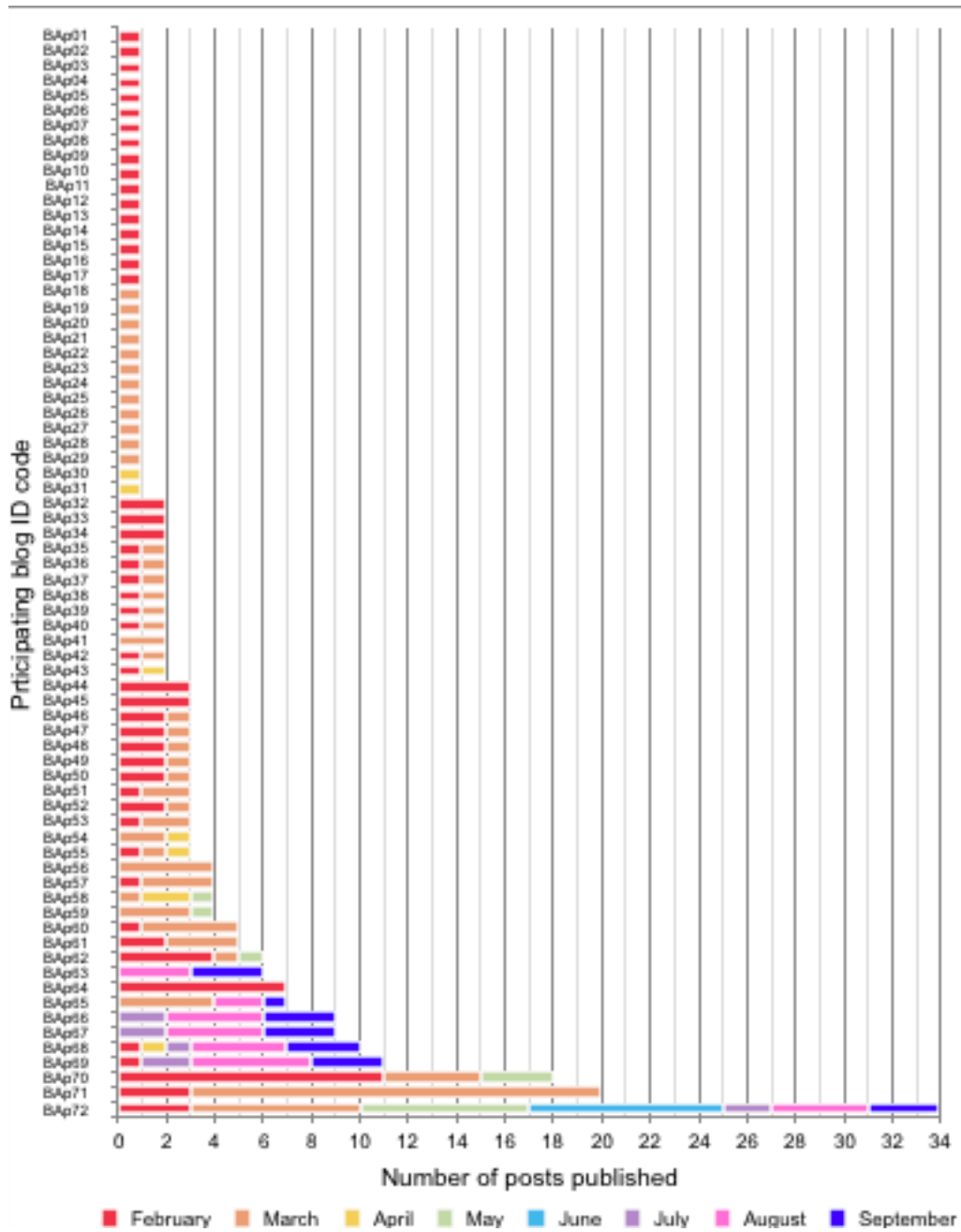
FIGURE 4.26 NP PUBLISHING: POSTS PER PARTICIPANT OVER TIME

The following sub-question unpacks the apparent inverse relation between the number of participants and the number of published posts over time.

4.2.3.1.1.a. Focus: Participation vis-à-vis publishing activity

At the onset of the study, during the first full month of the academic year, forty-nine participants published eighty-six posts. During the second month (March 2015) the number of publishing participants dropped by eight to forty-one – while the number of published posts during the same period fell by one, to eighty-five posts.

April 2015 (the third month of the study) saw a steep decline in both the number of participants (seven) and the number of posts published (eight). The month of May saw five active participants publish thirteen posts. One participant actively published eight posts during June 2015. In the following month, five participants published a total of nine posts. Seven participants were active in August, collectively publishing twenty-six posts. The last month (for our purposes ending on 22 September 2015) saw seven participants publish nineteen posts. Figure 4.27 serves to visualise trend lines of participation and publishing behaviour during the entirety of the study.
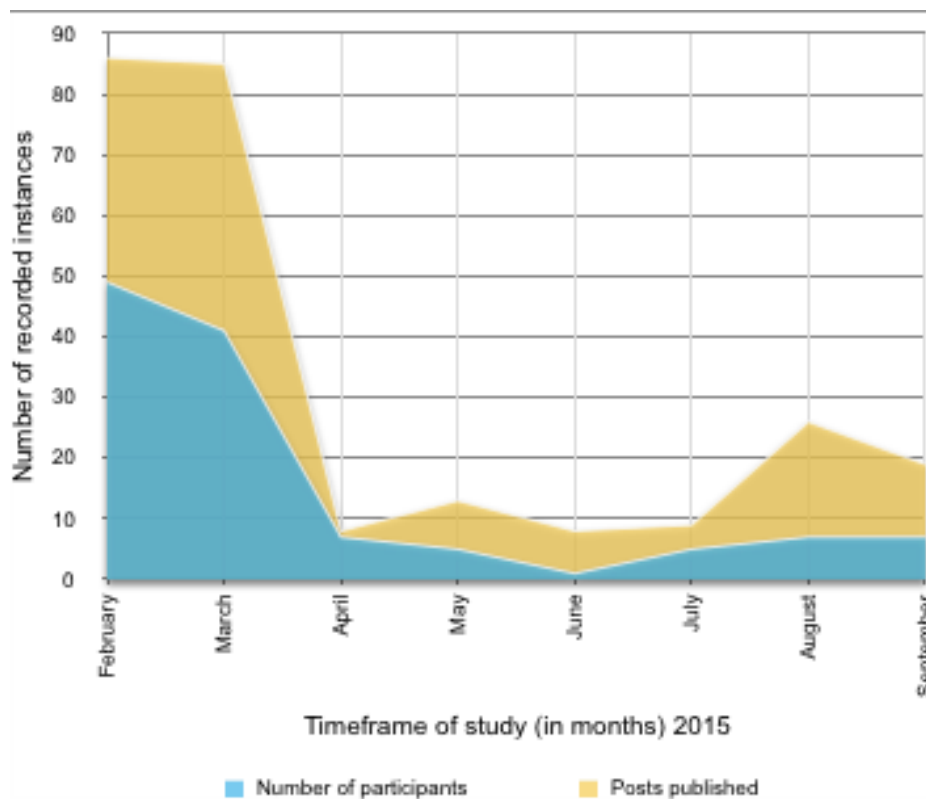
FIGURE 4.27 Np POSTS PUBLISHED PER MONTH

4.2.3.1.2. Topics of interest

254 Blog posts were published by Np during the first three terms of the 2015 academic year. For observation purposes, these posts were read and broadly categorised according to their content (Fig. 4.28). As the focus of this study is on the perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning, blog post content was considered against the larger theme of "learning". Three categories of learning emerged: *PGCE learning*, *Learning Project*, and *Practicum*.

Posts related to the pursuit of each participant identified (personal) learning goal were counted under the *Learning Project* category. The *PGCE learning* category contained any posts directly related to academic content of the PGCE-programme. Posts of

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learning or experiences directly linked to students' in-school training were categorised under *Practicum*.

Overlap between these three categories were expected to occur spontaneously, in which case such contributions would be counted in each category. One obvious overlap was expected to occur between *PGCE learning* and *Practicum*. Posts that did not relate to any of the aforementioned categories fell under "Other" (e.g. non-contextualised, seemingly random photos).
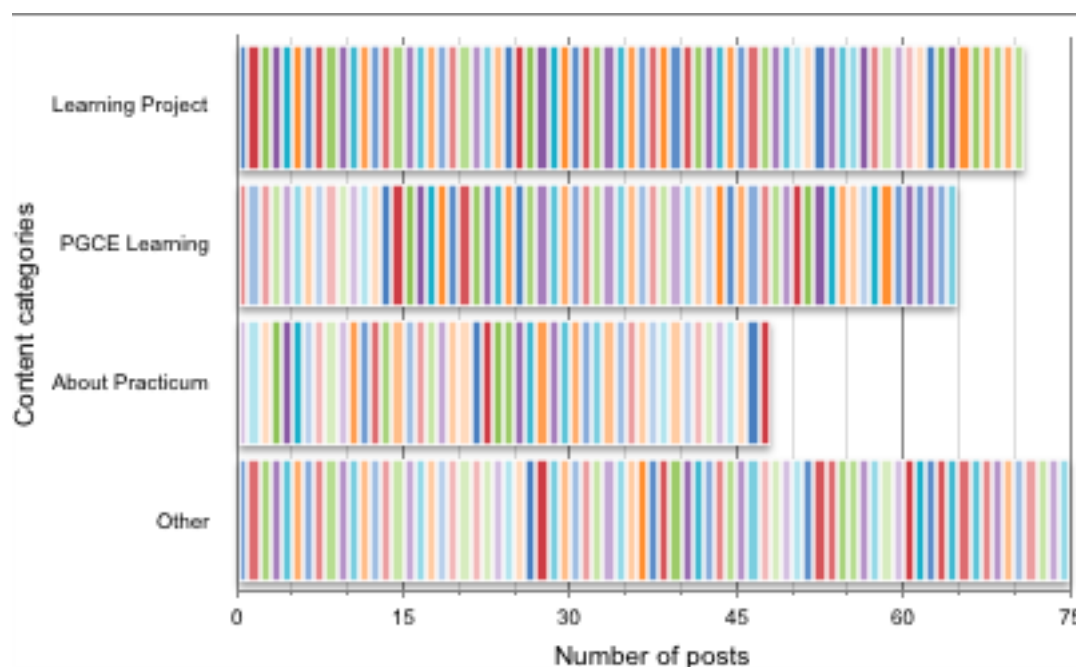
FIGURE 4.28 NP POSTS PER IDENTIFIED CATEGORY

Seventy-one published posts related to participants' own learning projects. Sixty-five published posts related to *PGCE learning*, forty-four of which were in response to writing prompts. This means twenty-one of the published posts related to *PGCE learning* were spontaneous contributions (Fig. 4.29). Forty-eight published posts

related to the PGCE *practicum*, and seventy-five published posts were classified as "*Other*".
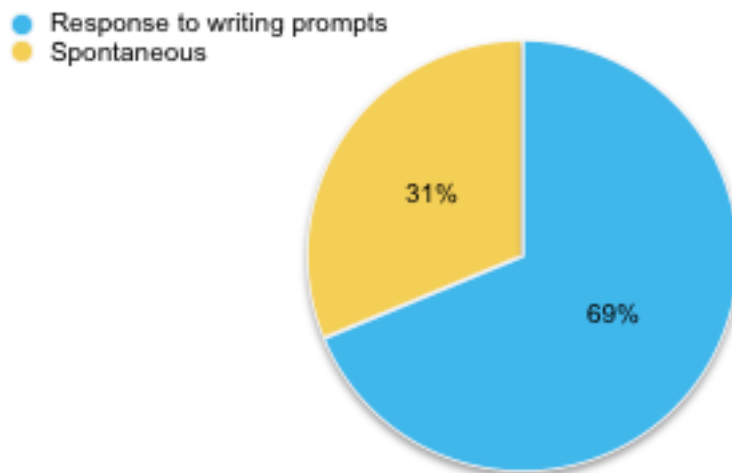
FIGURE 4.29 'PGCE LEARNING' POSTS: SPONTANEOUS VS PROMPTED

4.2.3.1.3. Focus: Language and modality

The majority of published posts, 189 out of 254, were written in English, or contained English language artefacts (e.g. audio, video or still images). Sixty-three posts were written in Afrikaans, or contained Afrikaans language artefacts. One published post contained text in both Afrikaans and English (Fig. 4.30), while one published post contained no written language artefacts whatsoever.
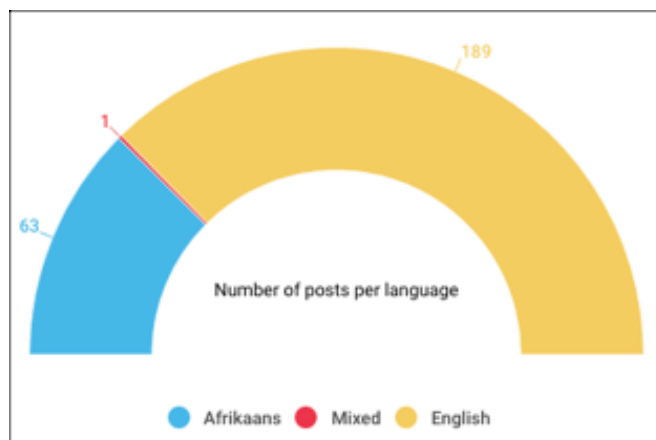
FIGURE 4.30 LANGUAGE PROFILE OF NP POSTS

In terms of content format (Fig. 4.31) out of the 254 published posts, twenty contained language artefacts in the form of videos, and ninety-three posts contained still images (e.g. photos, scanned documents, images sourced from the Internet, motivational posters). Roughly three percent of all posts did not contain any alphanumeric text.
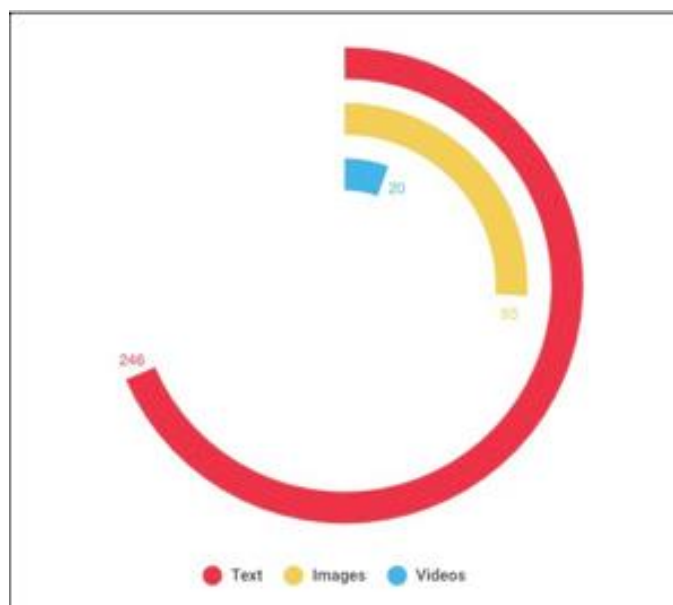
FIGURE 4.31 CONTENT FORMAT OF NP POSTS

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4.2.3.2. Np findings

From the numeric data, it seems that the momentum of initial participant publishing behaviour was sustained for the first two months of the first academic term of 2015. This momentum was lost during the third month of the term, which coincided with the April recess at Stellenbosch University. Publishing activity picked up slightly during the second term, but never reached the magnitude of the first half of the first term. Participant blogging plateaued during the second half of the second academic term, which coincided with the first semester exams at Stellenbosch University. The third term of the academic year saw a surge in publishing activity – particularly in August – which declined again towards the school holidays and University recess. The school holidays are noted due to the fact that the third term saw the PGCE students placed at various schools for their full-time practicum.

4.2.4. Core sample

The core sample (n) of the study was identified as consenting students who responded to the questionnaire **and** participated in blogging activities. In other words, n is defined as the overlap between N_q and N_p. These *core members* were expected to provide opportunity for comparison of data sets, and their data were consequently identified for closer analysis. All participants were asked to rate the relevance of five statements (Likert-scale) on the benefits of blogging for learning, and five statements on the drawbacks thereof (see Fig. 4.32).
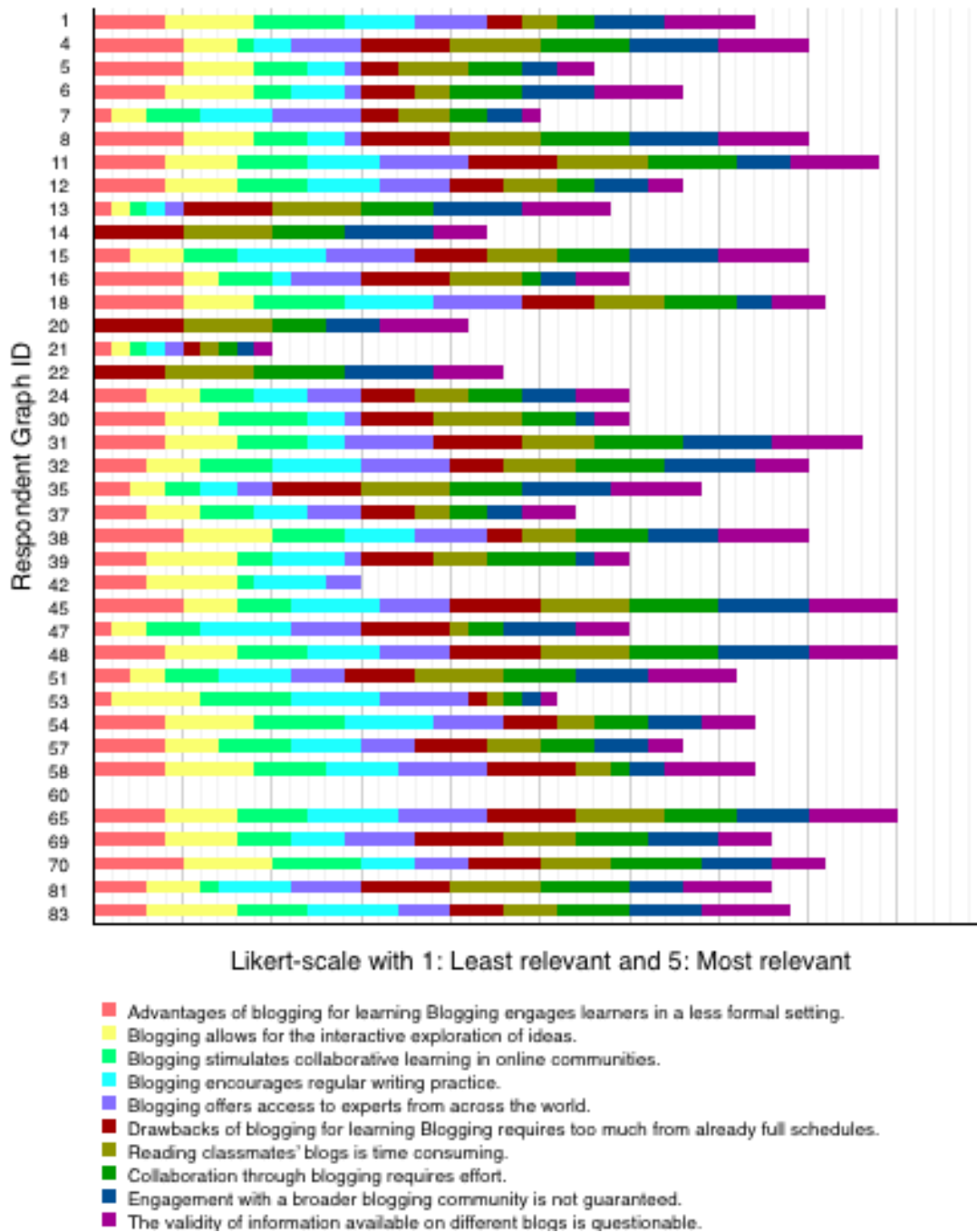
FIGURE 4.32 ALL N RATINGS REGARDING THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

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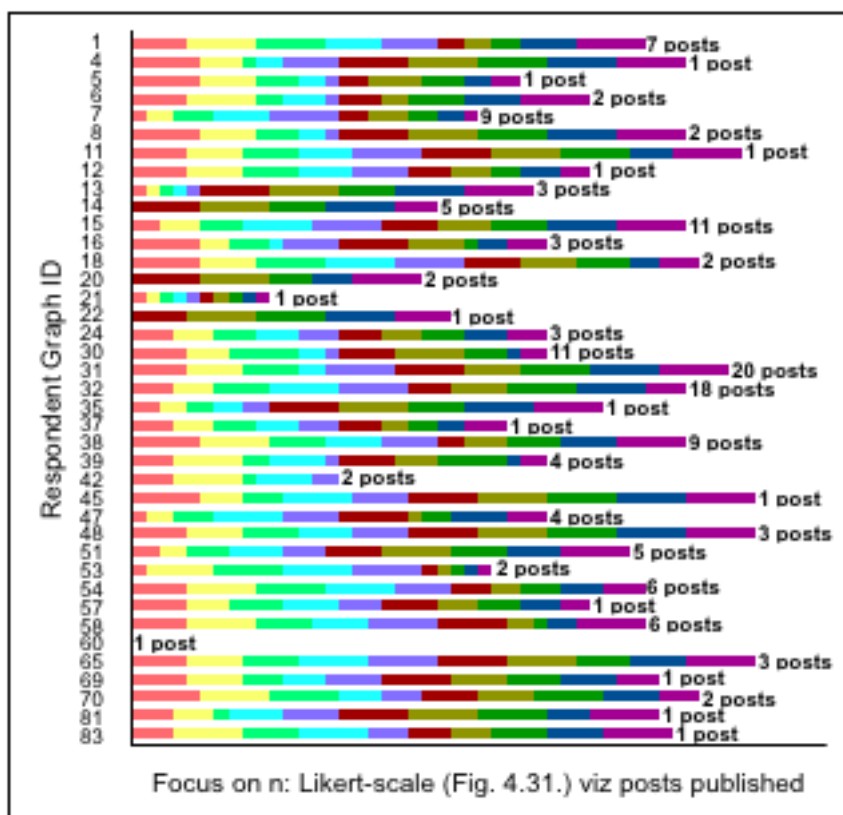
FIGURE 4.33 INDIVIDUAL RATINGS REGARDING BLOGGING FOR LEARNING VIS-À-VIS
RECORDED POSTS PUBLISHED

For interest sake, I replicated Fig. 4.32 and added the number of posts published per respondent. The resultant figure (Fig. 4.33) shows no significant agreement between respondent ratings of *Blogging for Learning* and their recorded publishing behaviour. That is to say, I don't see significantly more (or less) posts by publishing participants who indicated agreement with the proposed benefits of blogging for learning. Participant responses in terms of the benefits and drawbacks of blogging for learning are apparently not a significant (enough) factor (on its own) to understand their blog-writing behaviour.

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4.2.4.1.n Artefact analysis

Thirty-nine blogs, containing 157 posts altogether, were included in n. Collating all posts (written in Afrikaans and/or English) lead to a dataset of 51,319 words. Operating within the discourse domain of pre-service teacher training programmes, and keeping in mind that the publishing participants wrote from the context of a voluntary exercise in self-directed learning, content analysis of the collated dataset included numeric measuring of the prevalence of expected words (word counting), as well as identification of manifest and/or latent narrative content related to the advantages and drawbacks of Blogging for learning (as in Nq). Table 4-10 was constructed from the data after counting the instances of expected words or terms in all n blog posts. A relative balance of "teacher" and "learner" noun occurrences is evident. Related occurrences in verb form (i.e. "teach" and "learn") show a heavier focus on *learning*.

TABLE 4-10 FREQUENCY OF EXPECTED TERMINOLOGY (WORD COUNT) IN N BLOG POSTS

Expected words / terminology	Included synonyms / related words / *translations*	Total occurrences
Learner	learners, child, children, student, students, *kind, kinders, leerder, leerders, studente*	347
Teacher	teachers, educator, educators, lecturer, lecturers, pedagogue, pedagogues, instructor, instructors, *onderwyser, onderwysers, opvoedkundige, opvoedkundiges, opvoeders, lektor, lektore, instrukteur, instrukteurs, pedagoog, pedagoë*	338
Learn	learning, learned, *leer, geleer*	247
Time	timing, timeous, *tyd, tydsaam*	221
Teach	teaching , educate, educating, instruct, instructing, lecture, lecturing, *onderrig, klas gee[sic], lesing, aanbied*	176
Read	reading, *lees, gelees, leeswerk*	58
Write	writing, wrote, written, *skryf, geskryf, skryfwerk*	48
Blog	weblog, blogging	43
Engage	engaged, engagement, engaging, involve, involvement, involving, *betrokke, betrokkenheid*	35
Interact	interactive, interactivity, interaction, *interaksie, interaktief, interaktiewe*	20
Effort	*moeite*	9
Access	*toegang*	8
Collaborate	collaborated, collaborative, collaboration, *samewerking, saamwerk*	7

The collated dataset of n-posts was then split into two subsets: one for predominantly Afrikaans-language posts, and one for predominantly English-language posts. (One 'evenly' mixed-language post was split into each corresponding subset.) Word clouds (see Figure 4.34 and Figure 4.35) were created automatically and online[71] for each language-based subset. These were then analysed to create emergent lists (see Table

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[71] Wordle service (http://wordle.net)

4-11) of recurring words/terms that were not included in the initial list of expected words.
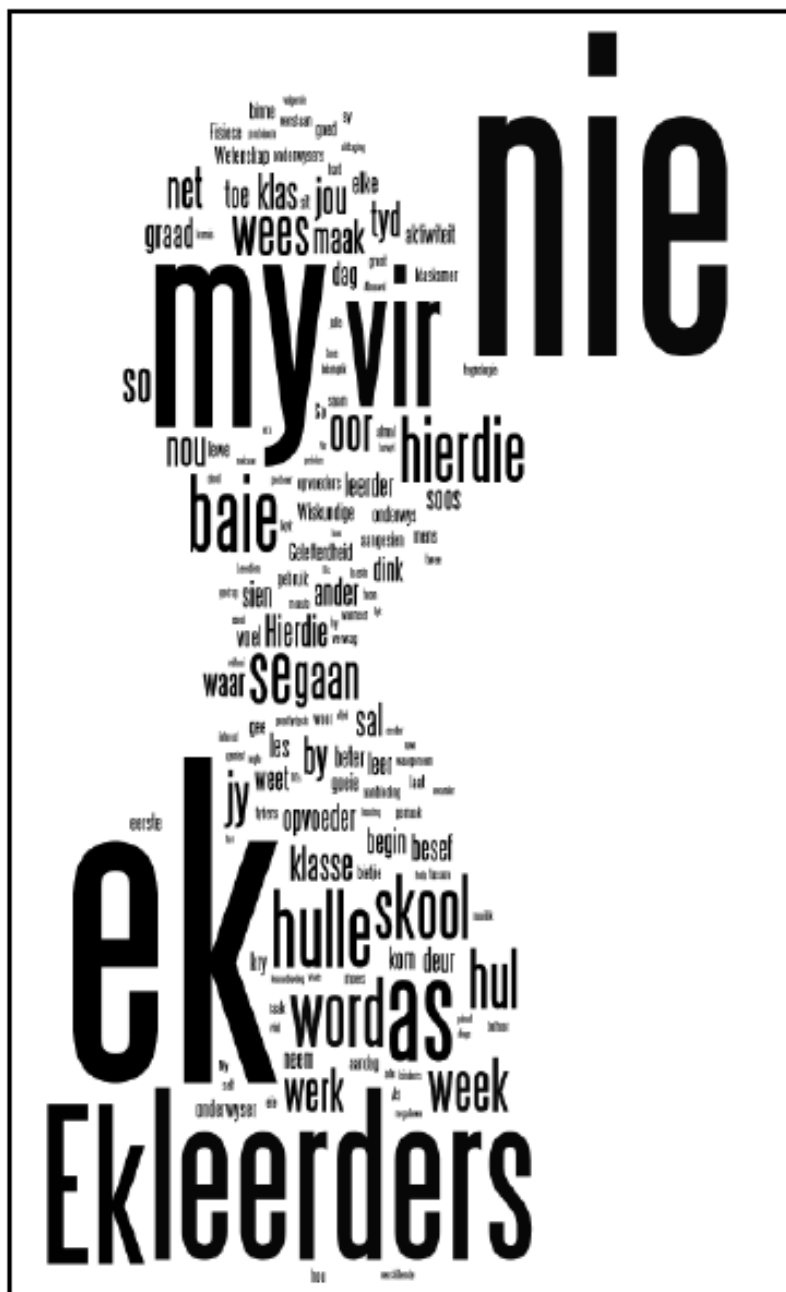
FIGURE 4.34 WORD CLOUD OF AFRIKAANS-LANGUAGE POSTS BY N

FIGURE 4.35 WORD CLOUD OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE POSTS BY N

After considering the machine-generated word clouds of both languages, the prominent (emergent) contributions to the existing word list were counted and listed in Table 4-11. While it is not commonly done, I included the use of personal and possessive pronouns following the pronounced focus on the self in a large portion of n-content.

TABLE 4-11 FREQUENCY OF EMERGENT TERMINOLOGY (WORD COUNT) IN N BLOG POSTS

Emergent words / terminology	Included synonyms / related words / *translations*	Total occurances
Me	my, *ek*	2003
Class	classes, *klas, klasse*	271
School	*skool*	269
Week	*week*	229
Work	*werk*	212
Grade	*graad*	105
Classroom	classrooms, *klaskamer, klaskamers*	65

Hoping to link the word-frequencies to the utility of *Blogging for learning*, instances of manifest narrative content related to the ten questionnaire statements of the advantages and drawbacks of blogging for learning were identified and counted.

Manifest n-content analysis revealed emergent themes of hesitancy/uncertainty (seven occurrences) and resistant attitudes (three associated occurrences) related to online writing for learning. Having found little in the way of explicit links to perceptions regarding the utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices, posts published by n were revisited in search of latent content that could address the research question. Table 4-12 lists the ten questionnaire statements (see Section 2.2 of this chapter), and the number of identified instances where content could be linked to each statement. Where useful, examples were lifted from the texts.

TABLE 4-12 N-CONTENT ANALYSIS RESULTS IN TERMS OF BLOGGING FOR LEARNING

	Questionnaire statements	Associated occurances	Example
Advantages of blogging for learning.	Blogging engages learners in a less formal setting.	2	"As promised the link to the website we did…. Understandingfracking.Weebly.Com. Please keep in mind it was done with grade 9/10's in mind and it is my first of this ever!"
	Blogging allows for the interactive exploration of ideas.	4	"Die leerders moet ook die geleentheid kry om self verdere navorsing oor onderwerpe wat hulle interessant vind, aan te pak en so ook die kans kry om self die fasiliteerders van inligting te wees." [The learners also have to have the opportunity to do further research on topics that interest them, as well as having the opportunity to be facilitators of information.]
	Blogging stimulates collaborative learning in online communities.	3	"This involves the creation of a community that is accepting and collaborative."
	Blogging encourages regular writing practice.	0	
	Blogging offers access to experts from across the world.	9	The material on the internet that I worked through were very helpful and there are some great learning opportunities available. Some sites include support as well.
Drawbacks of blogging for learning.	Blogging requires too much from already full schedules.	4	"So begin ek in 2015 met my NOS kwalifikasie… rocky start nadat ek al in Maart n emosionele breakdown gehad het voor n dosent (skaam my dood), maar die werkslading was werklik oorweldigend." [In this way I started with my PGCE qualification in 2015... rocky start after already having had an emotional breakdown in front of a lecturer (dreadfully ashamed) in March, but the workload was overwhelming.]
	Reading classmates' blogs is time consuming.	1	"I don't even want to use Facebook these days because it feels like a chore to keep up with."
	Collaboration through blogging requires effort.	0	
	Engagement with a broader blogging community is not guaranteed.	0	
	The validity of information available on different blogs is questionable.	0	

As can be expected, all the negative comments relate to time pressure and should be seen in the context of a very full programme. These comments also relate to the quick tapering off of blogging activities in April. The majority of the positive comments (access to experts around the world) can also be linked to students' widespread use of the Internet to complete assignments.

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4.2.4.2.n Findings

Where self-directed learning and interactive participation in online writing for learning were some of the initial motivators of the project to have PGCE students publish to blogs; much of the content published as posts turned out to be reports. Much reporting (and little *reflection*) on the PGCE school practicum was recorded, as well as reporting on more personal experiences, including going to the gym; hanging out with friends; drinking coffee etc.

Largely expressive in nature, closer analysis of blog posts published by n revealed an overall dominance of the use of first-person personal and possessive pronouns visible in Table 4-11. There is a difference between Afrikaans and English blogs in this case, as can be seen in the word clouds. This recorded focus on the self sheds an interesting light on the apparent Learner/Teacher equilibrium visible in Table 4-10, as well as the higher occurrences of agreement with the statement "Blogging offers access to experts from across the world" as shown in Table 4-12. While publishing participants seem to be trying out their voices as teachers, the frequency of words relating to learners and learning outstrips those relating to teachers and teaching. I suspect this data hints more at the transitioning identities of student-teachers than their perceptions of the utility of blogging for learning.

4.3. Summation

Data from this case study indicate a greater affinity for the consumption of learning material than for the production thereof (see Section 4.2.2.1). The data further indicate that, while such a view of *consumption for learning* may be expected to translate into teacher-centred *production for teaching* (broadcasting), such a dichotomy in educational practices is not guaranteed (see Section 4.2.2.2). Observed practices and interpreted perceptions of (online) writing for learning showed no significant correlation to the case's professed practices and perceptions.

5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

In exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices, I gathered data on the case by using a variety of data-collection instruments: through asynchronous observation of their actual online writing behaviour (i.e. blogging); via a survey to gauge their reported perceptions and habits related to online writing and writing for learning (online questionnaire); and through content analysis of their written artefacts (blog posts) produced during the study. The findings of these data were summarised and presented in the previous chapter. In this chapter I interpret and discuss the findings on the aforementioned data in terms of the main research question and its sub-questions. Following the discussion, I reflect on challenges and limitations of the completed study before highlighting the possible implications thereof, and provide recommendations for further research and for practitioners.

5.2. Interpreting the data

Studying the online writing activity of the research participants over a period of time (i.e. the first three terms of the 2015 academic year) allowed for the collection of a series of data documenting actual participant writing and writing behaviour. Data regarding their perceptions of the role of writing for learning, applications of online writing, and the utility of blogging for learning were also gathered. Having access to records of participant writing alongside observations of participant posting activity provided a database to which participant claims (i.e. professed habits and understanding, as collected via the online questionnaire) could be compared. Analysis of participant writing further revealed evidence of latent perceptions and beliefs held by the case – in terms of *writing for learning*, and especially online writing for learning

– that were not necessarily made manifest via the questionnaire or observation schedule. Developing and implementing such a three-pronged approach to studying the research question enabled me to consider the case data from multiple perspectives.

Integrating the findings of each research instrument led to a nuanced understanding of how participant perceptions of writing-based learning linked to their expectations of writing in emerging digital pedagogies. In turn, these expectations shed light on participant experiences of blogging during the course of their pre-service teacher-training. Considering these aspects collectively resulted in a scaffolding framework for my own understanding of participant expectations to utilise blogging in their educational practices.

5.2.1.   Breaking down the research question

The abovementioned scaffolded aspects toward answering the main research question reflected the impetus and foundation for the formulation of sub-questions that guided my exploration of the main research question: What are the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices? The sub-questions were formulated as follows:

1. What were participant perceptions in terms of writing based learning?
2. How did these perceptions compare to participant expectations of writing in emerging digital pedagogies (i.e. blended learning and the flipped classroom)?
3. What were participant experiences of blogging during the first semester of their teacher-training?
4. How did participants expect to utilise blogging in their teaching practice, if at all?

Upon completion of the data collection, each sub-question was unpacked and reconsidered as a scaffolding element towards understanding the results of the study.

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5.2.1.1.Perceptions of writing based learning

The literature (see Chapter 2) showed that writing is "embedded in a complex web of relationships between writers, readers, the text and reality" (Paltridge, 2004, p. 89), and that these relationships are always changing (Chapter 2, Section 2.2.2). Participant narrative data is interpreted accordingly as manifested representations of how the case "[links] meaning and wording" (Byrnes, 2011, p. 135). From this perspective, both respondent narratives (as expressed in the online questionnaire, particularly the open-ended response at the end) and participant blog posts contain evidence of active interpretation of experience and acts of meaning making by the case. These written artefacts are therefore understood to represent particular instances of meaning made by the case in varying contexts. Framed in this light, blog posts published by the case – whilst not necessarily written about or *in pursuit of learning*[72] – are viewed as evidence of latent perceptions of writing based learning, to be considered alongside its reported (online questionnaire) perceptions of writing based learning.

Based on responses to the online questionnaire, the case perceived writing as a means of consolidating and structuring learning that helps to explore its understanding of content. This is seen as an indication of the case reporting agency in learning. However, based on the content analysis of blog posts, it views writing as a means of reporting learning *as evidence of* its understanding of content. It would appear that the case exhibits very little ownership of its role in learning – indicating a disconnect between *expected* learning (content of the PGCE programme) and *enacted*[73] learning (strategies to graduate).

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[72] Despite the initial purpose of #PGCEmix-blogging being a focus on learning. (Certain roads are paved with good intentions…)

[73] i.e. Put into practice.

When considered as online writing for learning, the case perceived blogging as a means of engaging learners in less formal settings, encouraging regular writing practice and the interactive exploration of ideas, whilst potentially offering access to experts from across the world. However, little evidence of its own engagement in the less formal setting of #PGCEmix exists in the studied online writing, with no significant proof of regular writing practice and only limited interaction (or attempts at interaction) with member exploration of ideas. On the other hand, evidence indicating the utility of access to external expertise suggests that the case is capable of deeper, self-directed engagement with its own learning. One likely reason for the scarcity of blog posts is therefore not necessarily that the case doesn't value online writing for learning, but rather that their blog posts were not assessed "for marks". In a system where achievement is valued more than learning per sé, the case could have simply found the cost-benefit analysis of blogging *at that point of their studies* to not be worth the effort.

If one were to regard their actual practice as more convincing evidence of their possible practice, this interpretation of the research leads me to conclude that the case also views online writing as a means of reporting learning for assessment. Considered in context, this perception of writing based learning could be the product of school enculturation (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989b).

5.2.1.2. Expectations of writing in digital pedagogies

Upon entering the PGCE programme, all students had already graduated from a recognised institution of higher learning (typically universities). In the process of completing their respective undergraduate programmes, students developed academic habits and literacies that informed their expectations of writing in academic programmes. It is with these expectations that enrolled students entered the PGCE programme in question. Whilst no manifest records of the specific expectations of this

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case were compiled, much can be gleaned from the recorded data of writing-based activities in the programme module that hosted the study.

Trends in engagement (Section 4.2.1.1) showed the highest number of recorded online activity in the form of student access to the University's LMS – far outweighing blog activity. Registering 10,520 instances of activity during the first month of the academic year, the LMS consistently received more attention from the case despite all content being duplicated in blog form. LMS instances of activity do not, however, necessarily translate into participation, cooperation or collaboration in learning. The majority of the recorded instances of activity were consistently instances of *viewing* content (compared to instances of *posting* content). The case seemed significantly more inclined to consume (read) course related written artefacts (e.g. forum posts from the facilitator, provided reading material, class materials) than to contribute course related written artefacts – with the exception of producing written assessments that would count towards their final grade. This expectation was also evident in face-to-face class engagements, where the case would frequently ask whether learning materials and lecture notes would be "put on" the LMS, whilst refraining from posting to it unless the posts were "for marks".

In short, the case did not seem to expect to write for *learning* via digital platforms. Instead, even digitally, the case expected to write for *assessment*.

5.2.1.3. Experiences of blogging

The benefits of participation in digital learning environments, such as blog-based learning networks, range from personal development to collaborative learning in virtual communities of practice (Wenger *et al.*, 2009). In order for such benefits to be realised, sustained and meaningful participation (e.g. application of knowledge, engagement,

communication) is required. Without it, blogging loses its function to generate the interaction (Luo, 2010) that lies at the heart of online learning communities.

Based on responses to the online questionnaire, the case reported experiencing blogging as an uninteresting illustration of the context of online learning despite allowing for some interaction with the thinking of peers (see Section 4.2.2.1.8). Content analysis of blog posts (see Addendum 7.4.2) published by the case reflect the same sentiments, with little evidence of the application of knowledge or interactive communication to be found. Whilst more populated blogs created by the case reflected what Rivens Mompean (2010, p. 381) calls "a completely different motivation for expression'', as a result of the sense of ownership blogs afford their authors, this motivation for expression was not evident in the majority of blogs created by the case.

Possible reasons for the disinterest in blogging include the voluntary nature of case participation; the fact that studied blog posts were not assessed for grading purposes (Churchill, 2009); impatience with developing the necessary literacies to succeed (Hirvela, 2011); insufficient structure or guidance (Rivens Mompean, 2010); difficulty with balancing the high academic workload of the PGCE-programme (cf. Section 2.2.1.5); and a perceived lack of interest or any general uptake of digital pedagogies by faculty members (cf. Section 2.2.1.6). Due to disinterest, the case generally lacked the motivation to explore the learning affordances of blogging, and consequently were largely unable to meaningfully engage with the potential utility of blogging for learning.

5.2.1.4. Expectations of utilising blogging

Baydas and Goktas (2016a, p. 12) show that perceptions of utility "best explained preservice teachers' intentions" to use ICT in their own educational practices. In the absence of intent to do so, the pre-service teachers involved in this study are less likely to utilise blogging in practice. Case perceptions were explicitly queried in the

open-ended question (online questionnaire) on respondent expectations to utilise blogging in practice. Meaningful response, in this instance, relied on respondents' reflective capacity and self-awareness. While these aspects remain tricky to measure, higher levels of agreement between member data collected via the three different methods (see Section 4.2.4) could indicate higher reflective capacity and self-awareness of the participating member. Such agreement would lend a greater degree of reliability of responses for or against the utilisation of blogging in practice. Conversely, lower levels of agreement (or disagreement) between methods could be seen as evidence that participants' actions did not consistently reflect their intentions (see Section 4.2.3).

Case perceptions of the utility of blogging for educational practice were also inferred through interpretation of observation and content analysis data. Viewed holistically, the collected case data showed little agreement between professed (reported) understanding (see Section 4.2.2.3) and actual (studied) practice (see Section 4.2.3.2). Therefore, as promising as reported expectations in terms of using (some) blogging in educational practice might seem, there is little evidence in corresponding datasets to support the full realisation of such expectations without further study.

Should expectations to utilise blogging in educational practice realise, however, indications are that such utilisation is likely to reproduce current practices. Collected data show that dominant case practices reflect Luo's (2010, p. 34) findings that "blogs are used to organize and display course-related content." Some instances show promise to advance the use of blogging, in terms of learning affordances (see Section 2.3.4), to creating blogs "to either publish new content or review what has been covered in class" (Luo, 2010, p. 34). The case seems resistant towards affordances such as learner autonomy and open collaboration.

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5.2.2.   Answering the question

Overall perceptions of the studied PGCE students regarding the utility of blogging for learning in their own educational practices currently revolve around the provision of information and additional resources for learning (see Section 4.2.2.2.1). In essence, blogs are perceived to be similar to online learning management systems (LMS) in terms of utility, where information can be made available electronically. Some communicative potential is recognised, albeit mostly one-directional. Possibilities of extending the classroom via blogging are identified, but seem to be limited to extracurricular, *on-the-side* utility. Among curriculum specialisations, language teachers seem to be the most creative/positive about making the most of the learning affordances of blogging.

Whilst findings of the case study show hesitant (if not resistant) attitudes toward the immediate utilisation of blogging for learning in preservice teachers' educational practices – there is evidence of some movement towards the development of such practices. It would seem that awareness of the potential advantages, or perceived utility of blogging for learning allows for the future consideration and implementation thereof.

5.3.   Challenges and limitations

Resisting the urge to whine about challenges and limitations faced in my Master's experience overall, this section reports on challenges and limitations faced within the study itself.

The scope of the study was difficult to constrain as a result of the wealth of interdisciplinary contributions and considerations that were available. This was especially evident in the available literature, and consequently addressed in the second chapter of this dissertation. In light hereof, and as a result of decisions made

during the main literature review phase, new developments and scholarly work relevant to this research – that proliferated during the course of the study – proved challenging to keep up with.

Along with the scope of the study running the risk of being too broad, the size of the case ended up being more of a challenge than anticipated. Tracking and documenting the online writing activity of 169 students was an immense task. I initially wanted to include student activity on Twitter as a form of online writing in the study. The proliferation of new scholarship on Twitter, however, combined with the logistics of tracking the activity of 169 students on this additional platform, proved too unwieldy to include in a sensible manner.

Participation was limited to volunteering students enrolled in the PGCE programme offered at Stellenbosch University (South Africa) during 2015. The consistency and degree of Np-participation was noticeably impacted on during the PGCE school practicum, when all PGCE students were placed at different schools for a full term of full time teaching practice. Nonparticipation remained a challenge throughout the study (see Section 2.2.3.2 and compare Bangert-Drowns *et al.,* 2004).

This study focused on blogs and blogging as possible environments for and practices of writing-based learning. Here, Byrnes' (2011) findings ring true when stating that "if research is to uncover what learning how to mean in a textual environment is all about, it will have to seek out environments in which learners are given the opportunity to focus on content that is worth learning, that is worth writing about, and that is worth making one's own through the act of writing" (Byrnes, 2011, p. 149). Additional attention as to what "is worth writing about" and "worth making one's own" (*ibid*) is likely to yield different data, as the nature of this study implied certain restrictions on what was considered "worthy". Launching the study from a particular PGCE module – with me overseeing a section of that compulsory, semi-self-study module – could have

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influenced participants to write from perspectives and about topics that they may have thought I (cf. Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010) would find interesting or agreeable. N_P were, in other words, not solely writing about "content that is worth learning, that is worth writing about, and that is worth making one's own through the act of writing" (Byrnes, 2011, p. 149) from entirely authentic perspectives.

Keeping in mind that this study was conducted over only one year, it is entirely feasible to expect longitudinal studies of teacher adoption of blogging practices to show more encouraging results. Particularly when remembering my initial speculation (see Section 1.3) that teachers who gain experience in blogging could eventually tailor such online writing practices to suit their own purposes as well as the needs of their learners.

5.4.   Implications and recommendations

This dissertation reports on research focused on preservice teacher trainees from within an institution of higher education. The bulk of this section therefore focuses on the implications and recommendations of this study for bodies and institutions responsible for conducting preservice teacher training. I do, however, include a thought on the development of digital writing pedagogies at the end of this section.

5.4.1.   Preservice teacher training

I agree with Baydas and Goktas (2016b, p. 1) when they state that the "primary duty of ensuring the integration of ICT into education falls to institutions that train teachers." I would, however, expand on the concept of training to, at least in this case, explicitly include preservice enculturation into such critical educational practices. I believe alongside Ottenbreit-Leftwich *et al.* (2015, p. 1261) that, while it is true that "teacher educators are addressing a wide variety of topics in their programs, these are not completely aligned with the types of topics or uses that classroom teachers most value, as indicated by the technology they incorporate into their classrooms on a

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regular basis." My findings seem to support this premise by pointing out how the 'preached' integration of ICT in preservice teacher practices did not fully translate in – or indeed survive – the practical in school component of the PGCE programme (see Fig. 4.27).

It seems that enculturation into critical educational practice, rather than further enculturation into habits from schooling (Brown *et al.*, 1989b), remains a persistent challenge that needs to be met – especially in teacher education and professional development. This study seems to highlight an almost sub-textual expectation within the education sector that "digital natives" will bring digital literacies and practices into the classroom of their own accord, be it as learners or new teachers. This does not seem to be the case. Rather, 'old school' enculturation seems to persist and perpetuate practices modelled by previous generations of teachers. This is not to say that all practices modelled by previous generations of teachers are undesirable – rather that the inclusion of desirable/innovative practices requires a concerted effort. I would suggest that, in order to influence the effective implementation of digital tools for learning, teacher trainers/educators need to make a concerted effort to critically engage with, and model digital pedagogies in their teaching.

This echoes the sentiment expressed by Baydas and Goktas (2016a, p. 13) where "[Social Influence] has an important impact on increasing [Perceived Usefulness] of ICT in the eyes of preservice teachers. In this regard, instructors of faculties of educations [sic] may stand as a model to their students by using ICT in their lessons. In this way, [Perceived Usefulness] of the use of ICT in lessons to preservice teachers may be improved". I would therefore recommend a stronger emphasis on identifying and encouraging teacher trainers and -trainees who are willing to try out digital educational practices such as blogging. Encouraging, supporting and enhancing the visibility of those who experiment with digital educational practices should go a long

way in creating cultures, and communities of practice that welcome such innovations. This, of course, extends to guiding bodies and mentors outside pre-service training institutions (including government) that operate (and could increase their involvement) in in-service training and education.

5.4.2.   Digital writing pedagogies

Looking back to the literature that supports writing for learning (Section 2.2.2), I am surprised how little uptake the practice of online writing for learning had amongst the study participants. Especially worrying is the lack of interest in writing as educational practice amongst the population (N) training to teach in science, technology, economic and/or mathematical content areas. Writing to learn seems to be a concept that preservice teacher trainees largely earmark for their roles/peers in language education, and only tentatively to those in other arts and social sciences subjects. Where current educational practice is concerned, I would therefore unequivocally echo Hirvella in saying that "more needs to be done in [teacher education] to foreground the role of writing as a means of learning" and developing "considerable support from [both] writing instructors [and] content area instructors" (Hirvela, 2011, p. 56).

5.5.   Future research

Something I initially wanted to include in this study, was to look at publishing participants (N_p) content using Flesch-Kincaid readability- and grade-level scores as measures of complexity of writing. It would be interesting to see if/how the complexity of blogging participant writing changes over time, possibly in comparison to the complexity of participant writing in hard-copy learning portfolios. Another interesting variable would be the distribution of student backgrounds, disciplines and levels of qualifications already obtained. I would also think it interesting to ask what role the affordances of blogs would play in non-EFL writing for learning, and how would this

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differ between earlier and later phases of education? How does the data change in longitudinal studies? What role does multilingualism play in blogging for learning?

This study should also hold up a mirror to those on the other side of the podium, and encourage research on the online writing and digital practices of teacher trainers. While many teachers and academics are active in their own exploration of these opportunities, their forays into the digital realms may not be made explicit enough – if at all – in their own classrooms.

5.6.   Final comments

When I initially signed up for this journey through the hills and valleys of educational research, I did so with a curious mixture of excitement and fear. The challenge of completing a Master's degree by full dissertation was invigorating, and the workload of "part time teaching" seemed reasonable. The only thing I was frightened of was "doing it wrong", and not being able to care for my dog. Those were simpler times…

During the slow climb up each mountain of scholarship (and during the rapid free-falls in between), I became aware of the vast differences in motivation and approaches of renowned scientists, scholars, teacher trainers, student-teachers, and even friends when it came to learning, writing, and either decrying or lauding the integration of ICT in education. At several stages throughout this journey, I found myself questioning my ability to do the research.

Finally, I somehow return to a statement by Ottenbreit-Leftwich *et al.* (2015, p. 1261): "Future efforts are needed to provide our future teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to be effective technology-using teachers." Whilst I agree with the essence of this statement, I feel the wording thereof is not urgent enough. The knowledge and skills referred to are needed now. The teachers Ottenbreit-Leftwich *et*

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al (2015) are referring to, are already in training. *Further efforts are needed from now on…*

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7. Addenda

7.1. Addendum 1: Proof of compliance to University regulations and procedures

7.1.1. Research Proposal

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

FORM FOR A MASTER'S RESEARCH PROPOSAL

DID YOU:	YES/ NO
Consider the faculty guidelines for assessing master's study proposals?	YES
Discuss the submitted proposal with your study leader/department?	YES
Keep the proposal within the prescribed length of 1000 - 1500 words?	YES
Check the proposal thoroughly for language/technical errors?	YES
Attach your Curriculum Vitae?	YES
Attach the necessary ethical clearance documentation?	YES

CANDIDATE Title, Initials, Surname	Qualification to which you will be studying (E.g. MEd/MPhil/…)
Mr F.W.M. Knoetze	M.Ed

DEPARTMENT

Curriculum Studies

STUDY LEADER

Study Leader	Co-Study Leader (if applicable)
Prof C. van der Walt	

- **INFORMATION REGARDING CANDIDATE:**

Identity Number	7	8	0	5	2	4	5	1	5	5	0	8	5
Student Number	1	3	4	9	1	4	5	8	-	2	0	0	0
Date of Birth		1		9		7		8		0		5		2	4

Home Address	Postal Address
23 Karee street	Posbus 132
Eikenbosch	
Stellenbosch	Mosselbaai

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Postal Code	7600	6500	
Tel (Home)	n/a		
Tel (Work)	(021) 808 2266		
Fax	n/a		
Cellular	(079) 2959 806		
E-mail	fwmk@sun.ac.za		

- **Highest Qualification: _B.Ed (Hons) Language Education_____**

   Year obtained: _2014_____

   Institution where obtained: _Stellenbosch University_____

- **Occupation: _Master's Student_____**

   Part time/Contract: _Assistant lecturer (temporary)_____

   Full time: _Student – M.Ed_____

- **Employer: _Stellenbosch University_____**

1.16 Possibility of study leave: Yes

   Possible dates if Yes _Third Term_____

- **RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

- ## **Proposed title of the study**

  Exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for teaching and learning.

- ## **Motivation for the proposed research**

The popularity of *Web 2.0* platforms has transformed the manner in which people express themselves and engage with one another (Doering, Beach & O'Brien, 2007). Online writing and content-creation activities such as blogging as the act of creating, maintaining and/or publishing to blogs[74] (defined by Deng and Yuen (2012:48) as "easy-to-update websites with dated entries presented in reverse chronological order") allow us to engage with the world, to recreate and share personal realities and experiences in increasingly novel ways. Considered from a perspective greatly informed by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning (Wells, 1994), blogging has the potential to offer great opportunities and affordances (Van Lier, 2000) for learning. Here, affordances are understood as particular properties of a learning space with the potential for interaction, that are somehow relevant to an active participant within said space.

Language learning affordances of blogs could, for example, be argued to manifest in the utilisation of a platform (service) to create a space (blog) that allows for personal

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[74] A blog is therefore understood to be a personalised web site on which the user posts writing and/or multimodal texts. Blog posts may vary in length, regularity, format and purpose.

expression, linguistic interaction, collaboration, syndication and so forth. Fan fiction[75] websites and blogs are prime examples of the educational affordances of such spaces: Here additional language learners have been shown to engage in recreational online writing activities, and have made use of the opportunity to "scaffold and promote their L2 literacy development and strengthen their identity as writers" (Lai & Gu, 2011, p. 320).

The point of departure in this study is that developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) may represent great educational affordances for language based, and specifically writing based learning. The study is conceptualised in agreement with Lai and Gu's (2011, p. 320) conviction that technology "constitutes an important learning space in the ecology of learning".

Of specific interest is the link between blogging and multilingual, writing based education. Could it be argued that communicative activities such as social interaction and reflective dialogue afforded by blogging (Deng & Yuen, 2011) can be developed as scaffolding of content and language learning? The proposed research aims to investigate student-teachers' perceptions of such utility, and in so doing offer support for further arguments and exploration in this regard.

1.3. Statement of the problem

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[75] Fan fiction is fiction generated by fans of certain texts in popular culture (TV series, feature films, books, comics and other original works of fiction), featuring characters and/or settings from the original texts.

As touched on by Doering, Beach and O'Brien (2007), and suggested by the reported realities of current South African practices in multilingual education (Heugh, 2013), English literacy seems to be largely considered a requirement for both locally and internationally relevant education, as well as access to online information. The link between English, digital literacies and ICT in Education is grounded in literature (Doering, Beach & O'Brien, 2007; Holmner & Britz, 2013; Mitrovic, Taylor, Sharif, Claassen & Wesso, 2013; Pangrazio, 2014) aimed at developing frameworks to bridge the gaps between traditional education practices, and the Internet's potential for improved teaching and learning. An opportunity to explore current experiences of blogging within the Education Faculty at Stellenbosch University allows the proposed study to follow in the pursuit of effective digital pedagogies for teaching and learning in the 21st Century.

Annually, a large number of graduates enrol in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme offered by the Education Faculty of Stellenbosch University. PGCE students' teacher-training is steered and developed by the respective departments of Curriculum Studies, Education Policy Studies, Educational Psychology, and Sports Science. This writing-intense programme is presented over one academic year, with one full term of school-based teaching practicum, and is designed to "Provide educators for the Further Education and Training Band" (Stellenbosch University, 2015, p. 27).

The expectations and requirements of student writing in different University Faculties vary significantly between disciplines. This means that the sheer amount of writing, as well as the nature of academic writing expected of Education students, is often a shock to graduates coming from other faculties – especially those coming from outside the Social sciences. In stark contrast to the kind of writing expected from graduates in the Natural or Actuarial sciences, postgraduate Education students are required to adhere to strict and rigorous citation and formatting requirements in academic writing. These requirements are compounded by the PGCE-programme's expectations of students, where proof of learning and performance in assignments, tests and exams rely heavily on self-initiated research and synthesis pf different practice-based and academic sources into coherent written artefacts. Such writing based teaching and learning practices are presumably employed in large classes (180+ students) to facilitate more efficient and critical engagement with learning theories and subject content.

Unfortunately, such large classes provide students with limited opportunities for one-on-one contact with lecturers and tutors. Consequently, discussion of students' comprehension and revision of written work is not always sufficient to address the needs of PGCE students. This presents some PGCE students with potentially crippling barriers to meeting deadlines, formulating and maintaining conceptual arguments in writing, and achieving success in their studies.

In the transition period (specifically during the year 2015) leading up to structural changes to the programme (Stellenbosch University, 2015), the researcher was charged with overseeing a section of the compulsory, credit (6) bearing, semi-selfstudy *45810 Computer Use (ED) 774* module, resorting under the Department of Curriculum Studies (Stellenbosch University, 2015). As an optional, extra-curricular exploration of writing based learning in the digital landscape, the researcher proposed a voluntary, ungraded "social experiment" in the form of an online writing network made up of a semi-collaborative[76] group blog; individual blogs; individual Twitter[77] accounts; and a dedicated #PGCEmix *hashtag* for identifying and categorising relevant tweets.

The described settings and circumstances (both formal and informal) serve as the impetus and foundation of the research question:

What is the perceived utility of blogging for teaching and learning?

The following sub-questions will guide this exploration of the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging as online writing for their own teaching and learning practice:

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[76] Where full collaboration would require the registration of all current PGCE students (over 180) as co-authors for the group blog, the chosen platform did not allow for such a large number. The number of co-authors where therefore whittled down to those volunteers expressing the desire to co-author the group blog.

[77] An online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets", and made searchable/categorisable with the use of "hashtags".

1. What are PGCE students' perceptions in terms of writing based teaching and learning?

2. How does PGCE students' understanding of learning and emerging digital pedagogies (i.e. blended learning, flipped classrooms) compare to these expectations?

3. What are PGCE students' experiences of blogging during the first semester of their teacher-training?

4. How do student-teachers expect to utilise blogging in their teaching practice?

1.4. Research methodology

The proposed empirical research is conceived within a framework for integrated methodology, drawing on certain cognitive constructivist aspects of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning (Wells, 1994), Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory (1991), and the ecological perspective of learning as developed by Van Lier (2000). This framework is constructed on the basis of compatible ontological and epistemological assumptions related to the development of language and learning. Briefly: reality is understood to be co-constructed through interaction, and learning is understood to develop from such interactions.

The investigation of the PGCE class of 2015 fits comfortably within a case study design. This particular design further lends itself to a mixed methods approach to data collection. The group administration of an electronic survey (via the SUNLearn

learning management system), statistical data-mining, as well as standardised writing analysis instrument promise to provide comparable sets of both numerical and narrative data. These data-sets are to be analysed comparatively to determine the nature and relationship of student-teachers' blogging experiences, and their perceptions regarding the potential utility of blogging for teaching and learning in their teaching practice.

The target group of the study is described as graduate students enrolled in the 2015 PGCE programme at Stellenbosch University. The study is to be populated through voluntary participation from the entire target group. The participating volunteers are to complete a piloted, electronic survey following extra-curricular blogging and microblogging activities related to digital pedagogy and the teacher-training experience.

The capturing of the aforementioned meta-narratives in writing was encouraged in the form of blog posts, initially guided by writing prompts via the researcher throughout the first semester of the academic year. Participation in these online writing activities remained voluntary and were never assessed, graded or brought into consideration for any modular outcomes. Whilst such online writing activities might continue, data collection for this study is to be finalised by the end of the first semester of the academic year. The reason for the explicit time-frame being that the PGCE students are to complete the required school-based teaching practicum during the third term of

the PGCE programme. These students also face an intense schedule of formal assessment activities when returning to campus for the fourth and final term of the academic year. Participation is therefore expected to drop significantly during the second semester and potentially skewing data, should research continue during this time.

A provisional sequence of activities includes:

1) Permissions from relevant authorities to conduct the study;

2) Survey via group administration of electronic questionnaire;

3) Analysis of survey data;

4) Analysis of relevant SUNLearn statistics, such as page impressions and participation rates;

5) Analysis of volunteer blogs (post frequency; content complexity/readability; emergent themes; audience engagement and comments) produced during the first semester of the academic year;

6) Data mining and comparison.

Triangulation for validity and reliability will include synchronous analysis of participants' online writing; numeric/narative data correlation; as well as comparative datasets.

1.5. Provisional chaptering and proposed time schedule.

Chapter Titles	Expected Completion (Dates)
1 Introduction (and ethical clearance)	Mid May
2 Context (Literature Review)	Early July
3 Methodology	Mid July
4 Data (Results) and Analysis (Discussion)	Early August
5 Conclusion and Recommendations	End August
6 Appendices	Mid September

1.6. Ethical considerations

Permission for the study is to be obtained from the Dean and Vice Deans of the Faculty of Education, the relevant Department Chair and Module Coordinator, as well as the statutory bodies and committees at Stellenbosch University.

Participation will be voluntary, confirmed by the provision of informed consent, and temporary – as participants will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. The identity of participants and other sources of data will be protected, and is to remain anonymous in any and all reports and writing constituting and following the study. All blogging and microblogging artefacts will remain the intellectual property of their respective authors. Compliance to University regulations and procedures will be observed throughout the duration of the study.

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- **Reference list.**

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Signature of candidate: _____

Date: _____

Signature of study leader: _____

Date: _____

7.1.2.   Institutional Permission

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29 June 2015

Mr F. W. M. Knoetze
Department of Curriculum Studies
Stellenbosch University

Dear Mr Knoetze

Concerning research project: *Exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for teaching and learning*

The researcher has institutional permission to proceed with this project as stipulated in the institutional permission application. This permission is granted on the following conditions:

- The researcher must obtain ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee, Stellenbosch University, before commencing with this study.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Persons may not be coerced into participation.
- Persons who choose to participate must be informed of the purpose of the research, all the aspects of their participation, their role in the research and their rights as participants. Participants must consent to participation. The researcher may not proceed until he is confident that all the before mentioned has been established and recorded.
- Persons who choose not to participate may not be penalized as a result of non-participation.
- Participants may withdraw their participation at any time, and without consequence.
- Data must be processed in a way that ensures the anonymity of all participants.
- Data must be treated as strictly confidential.
- The use of the data collected may not be extended beyond the purpose of this study.
- The use of SU student e-mail addresses, student numbers, including all other information by which an individual may be identified is limited to the purpose of this study and may not be shared with third parties.
- All the data related to this study must be responsibly and suitably protected.
- Individuals may not be identified in the report(s) or publication(s) of the results of the study.
- The privacy of individuals must be respected and protected.
- The researcher must conduct his research within the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013.

Best wishes,

Prof Ian Cloete
Senior Director: Institutional Research and Planning

Afdeling Institusionele Navorsing en Beplanning • Institutional Research and Planning Division
Privaatsak/Private Bag X1 • Stellenbosch • 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa
Tel. + 27 21 808 3967 • Faks/Fax + 27 21 808 4533

7.1.3. Humanities REC Communiques

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Approval Notice
New Application

23-Mar-2015
Knoetze, Frederik FWM

Proposal #: DESC/Knoetze/Mar2015/2
Title: **Exploring the role of blogging in the development of B.Ed students' extended academic writing proficiency**

Dear Mr Frederik Knoetze,

Your **New Application** received on **05-Mar-2015**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

 Proposal Approval Period: **19-Mar-2015** -**18-Mar-2016**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with
these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (**DESC/Knoetze/Mar2015/2**) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your
research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor
the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The
Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical
Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external
audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 218089183.

Included Documents:
Research Proposal
Informed consent form_student
Permission letter_SU 2015
DESC Checklist form
Cover letter
Email correspondence
Informed consent form_lecturers
Permission_Faculty
Interview schedule

Sincerely,

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Approval Notice
Amendment

07-Mar-2016
Knoetze, Frederik FWM

Proposal #: DESC/Knoetze/Mar2015/2
Title: **Exploring the role of blogging in the development of B.Ed students' extended academic writing proficiency**

Dear Mr Frederik Knoetze,

Your **Amendment** received on **15-Jun-2015**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **19-Jul-2015** and was approved.
Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

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7.2. Addendum 2: Electronically distributed Questionnaire and Cover Letter

7.2.1. Cover letter

M.Ed Research Survey (DESC/Knoetze/Mar2015/2)

Exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for teaching and learning.

PREAMBLE

You are asked to participate in a research case study conducted by Frederik Willem Matthys Knoetze (B.A. Information Science, PGCE, B.Ed Hons), from the Department of Curriculum Studies at Stellenbosch University. The research forms part of an M.Ed programme, and results will contribute to a published thesis.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your status as an enrolled student for the 2015 Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme at Stellenbosch University.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging as online writing for their teaching and learning practice.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this case study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Volunteer your public online writing (in the form of blogging and microblogging) for statistic and thematic analysis by the researcher. (You may do this in the survey, or in person.)

Complete an electronic survey, made available to you via SUNLearn. The electronic survey should not require more than approximately 30 minutes of your time.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Whilst every effort will be made to arrange SUNLearn access to accommodate participants' preferences, the electronic survey may have to be completed after hours. Safe transport or passage to and from Computer Use Areas or similar facilities will remain the responsibility of each participant.

Survey questions may be considered to be of a personal nature. Whilst every effort has been made to eliminate participant discomfort or offence, the researcher cannot be held responsible for the consequences or effects of participation – be they psychological, physical, social, economical or political in nature. The researcher does reserve the right to terminate the study in the event of unforeseen presentation or development of significant risks to the physical or psychological wellbeing of participants.

Blogging and microblogging artefacts will remain the property and responsibility of their respective authors.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Study findings will indicate the possible value of, and warrant for further research in this field.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

No payment will be offered for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified and linked to you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of password secured hard-drive storage of encoded data on a non-networked device. Said device will only be accessed by the researcher. Participants' biographical data will be coded alphanumerically using aliases to protect participant anonymity. Research data will be published in the final thesis. Raw source- and processed data will only be made available, on request, to official Faculty examiners for formal assessment of the thesis.

All blogging and microblogging artefacts will remain the intellectual property of the respective participant authors.

The results of the study will be published as part of a full thesis, as required for the completion of the Master's Degree in Education at the Faculty of Education of Stellenbosch University.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator – Mr Willie Knoetze (021) 808 2266, e-mail fwmk@sun.ac.za.

Supervisor – Prof C. van der Walt (021) 808 2284, e-mail cvdwalt@sun.ac.za.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

CONSENT OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me at a lecture opportunity by Willie Knoetze in [Afrikaans/English] and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

By accessing this electronic survey, I consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

7.2.2.   Questionnaire (Schedule)

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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
SURVEY DESIGN: GROUP ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE

Exploring the perceptions of PGCE students regarding the potential utility of blogging for teaching and learning.

The following survey is intended to be delivered electronically (via SUNLearn) to all students registered for the 2015 Postgraduate Certificate in Education programme at Stellenbosch University.

<u>Structured Questions - Language Profile:</u>

1. How old are you this year? [Numerical value]

2. What is currently indicated on your Identity Document to be your biological sex? [Select 1]

3. Which of the official South African languages do you feel comfortable communicating in? [Multiple]

4. Which official South African language would you consider to be your **dominant** (primary/main) home language? [Select 1]

5. In which language do you mostly write your PGCE assignments and exams? [Select 1]

6. As a registered PGCE student, which language would you **most** prefer classes to be conducted in? [Select 1]

7. Should your preferred language not be available, which language would be your second choice for classes to be conducted in? [Select 1]

8. As a future teacher, which language would you **most prefer** to conduct your classes (other than Language subjects) in? [Select 1]

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9. Should your preferred language not be available, which language would be your second choice for teaching your classes (other than Language subjects) in? [Select 1]

Structured Questions - Writing Practices:

10. Do you own a physical/electronic journal/diary that is not part of a social network? [Yes/No]

11. Do you write about your thoughts and experiences? [Yes/No]

12. How often do you write about your thoughts and experiences? [Lickert: 1-5]

13. Do you usually write about your thoughts and experiences in your home language? [Yes/No]

    1. If "No", do you usually write about your thoughts and experiences in English? [Yes/No]

14. Do you usually let other people read what you write about your thoughts and experiences? [Yes/No]

15. Do you read other people's writing about their thoughts and experiences? [Yes/No]

16. How often do you read other people's writing about their thoughts and experiences? [Lickert: 1-5]

17. Do you consider yourself to be a journal/diary writer? [Yes/No]

18. Do you have a social networking account? (e.g. Facebook, Google+, Linkedin) [Yes/No]

19. Do you post status updates about your thoughts and experiences? [Yes/No]

20. How often do you post status updates about your thoughts and experiences? [Lickert: 1-5]

21. Do you usually post status updates in your home language? [Yes/No]

    1. If "No", do you usually post status updates in English? [Yes/No]

22. Do you usually let other people read your status updates? [Yes/No]

23. Do you read other people's status updates? [Yes/No]

24. How often do you read other people's status updates? [Lickert: 1-5]

25. Do you consider yourself to be a social networker? (e.g. Facebook, Google+, Linkedin) [Yes/No]

26. Did you know what a blog was before starting PGCE? [Yes/No]

27. Do you currently own a blog? [Yes/No]

28. Do you post to your blog? [Yes/No]

29. How often do you post to your blog? [Lickert: 1-5]

30. Do you usually blog in your home language? [Yes/No]

    1. If "No", do you usually blog in English? [Yes/No]

31. Do you read (an)other blog(s)? [Yes/No]

32. How often do you read (an)other blog(s)? [Lickert: 1-5]

33. Do you consider yourself to be a blogger? [Yes/No]

34. Did you know what Twitter (micro-blogging) was before starting PGCE? [Yes/No]

35. Do you currently have a Twitter account? [Yes/No]

36. Do you post to Twitter? [Yes/No]

37. How often do you post to Twitter? [Lickert: 1-5]

38. Do you usually tweet in your home language? [Yes/No]

    1. If "No", do you usually tweet in English? [Yes/No]

39. Do you read other people's tweets? [Yes/No]

40. How often do you read tweets? [Lickert: 1-5]

41. Do you consider yourself to be a Twitter user? [Yes/No]

42. Did you know what online learning was before starting PGCE? [Yes/No]

43. Do you have regular access to SUNLearn? [Yes/No]

44. Do you post to SUNLearn? [Yes/No]

45. How often do you post to SUNLearn [Lickert: 1-5]

46. Do you usually post to SUNLearn in your home language? [Yes/No]

    1. If "No", do you usually post to SUNLearn in English? [Yes/No]

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47. Do you check SUNLearn for updates? [Yes/No]

48. How often do you check for updates on SUNLearn? [Likert: 1-5]

49. Do you consider yourself to be an online learner? [Yes/No]

50. Would you make use of/implement online learning in your teaching practice? [Yes/No]

51. How do you think writing relates to learning? [Lickert:1-5]

52. What value did you place on the PGCEmix blogging experiment? [Lickert:1-5]

53. What do you think are the benefits of blogging for learning? [Lickert:1-5]

54. What do you think are the drawbacks of blogging for learning? [Lickert:1-5]

55. What do you think are the benefits of blogging for teaching? [Lickert:1-5]

56. What do you think are the drawbacks of blogging for teaching? [Lickert:1-5]

<u>Unstructured Question - Perceived Utility of Blogging for Teaching and Learning:</u>

57. How would you expect to utilise interactive blogging in your teaching practice? [Paragraph]

7.3.　Addendum 3: Observation schedule

Order of blog post	1
Copy (content of blog post)	Sample text
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score: (www.readabilityformulas.com)	2,8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score: (http://read-able.com)	2,8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score: (http://readability-score.com)	2,8
Average FKGL score	2,8
Format of post	Text
Language of post	English
Topic: Learning Project?	Y
Topic: PGCE Learning?	N
Topic: About Practicum?	N
Topic: Other?	N
Response to prompt?	N

7.4. Addendum 4: Reduced Data

7.4.1. Np Number of posts published/month

Np Blog Code	Access [y/n]	Posts [y/n]	Posts in 2015 [y/n]	Total 2015	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
BAp01	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp02	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp03	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp04	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp05	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp06	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp07	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp08	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp09	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp10	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp11	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp12	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp13	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp14	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp15	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp16	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp17	y	y	y	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp18	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp19	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp20	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp21	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp22	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

BAp23	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp24	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp25	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp26	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp27	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp28	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp29	y	y	y	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp30	y	y	y	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
BAp31	y	y	y	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
BAp32	y	y	y	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp33	y	y	y	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp34	y	y	y	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp35	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp36	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp37	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp38	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp39	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp40	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp41	y	y	y	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp42	y	y	y	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp43	y	y	y	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
BAp44	y	y	y	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp45	y	y	y	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp46	y	y	y	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp47	y	y	y	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp48	y	y	y	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp49	y	y	y	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

BAp50	y	y	y	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp51	y	y	y	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp52	y	y	y	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp53	y	y	y	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp54	y	y	y	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
BAp55	y	y	y	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
BAp56	y	y	y	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp57	y	y	y	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp58	y	y	y	4	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0
BAp59	y	y	y	4	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
BAp60	y	y	y	5	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp61	y	y	y	5	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp62	y	y	y	6	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
BAp63	y	y	y	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
BAp64	y	y	y	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp65	y	y	y	7	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	1
BAp66	y	y	y	9	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	3
BAp67	y	y	y	9	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	3
BAp68	y	y	y	10	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	3
BAp69	y	y	y	11	1	0	0	0	0	2	5	3
BAp70	y	y	y	18	11	4	0	3	0	0	0	0
BAp71	y	y	y	20	3	17	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAp72	y	y	y	34	3	7	0	7	8	2	4	3
TOTALS POSTS				254	86	85	8	13	8	9	26	19

7.4.2.   List of Np blog posts (copy)[78]

BAp01
1 - Other - FKGL 2,5
So what is a blog exactly, what am I doing……

BAp06
1 - Other - FKGL 5,3
Things might not always turn out to be as it seems at first glance. The positive outcome depends on your own interpretation.

BAp08
1 - Other - FKGL 8,8
Hey! So I'm [redacted], currently doing my PGCE at Stellenbosch University. **[intro]**

BAp12
1 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 14,4
Digital pedagogy refers to what Sean Morris describes as 'hybrid learning', combination of critical thinking and the use of supporting technologies. Entering a new era, we are confronted with a wide variety of technological devices to improve both the learners and teachers classroom experience. Learning and teaching with the help of a digital devices does not mean that the content of what is communicated will be replaced, rather these devices serve as tools to enhance the learning experience.

BAp13
1 - Learning project - FKGL 5,1
For Computer Use (Ed) 772 we have been challeneged to learn something new, anything from a new skill, hobby, a fact. Anything. The list is endless. The idea behind it all is the "flipped classroom" - learning on your own, teaching yourself and asking for help where necessary. At the end of it all, you are basically teaching yourself, therefore, your dedication to the task will be somewhat greater. Or at least that is what I understand by this task. I like the idea of learning something new, because as a future teacher I feel it is important for me to continue learning as I feel that learning should never stop. It is fun to learn (for me, at least. Hence, the career choice). Learning enhances your mind, your intellect and it makes for interesting dinner party conversation. So I thought, why not learn something I have always wanted to learn? Why not add to my repetoire? So, I have decided to learn to play the guitar. Here is a breakdown of how I intend to do it: Learn the history and origin of the guitar. Decide which music genre I enjoy most, and would most like to play (knowing myself I will love the most difficult, but choose the easiest genre even though it may be sucky). Learn the history about my genre of choice. Start learning the basics. Develop the basics. Learn some chords. Record those chords. Show you guys. Become a teacher by day, rockstar/popstar/jazz musician by night. Perhaps? Maybe? No? Watch this space.

BAp15

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[78] Text justification was maintained from the original blog post. Personal identifiers were redacted. Colour coding was used in identifying themes as described during analysis.

1 - Learning project - FKGL 9

For one of my classes, Computer Use (Ed), our lecturer has challenged us to learn something new. It can be anything from a new skill or a hobby or even learning about different subjects. The idea behind this task is the "flipped classroom concept" – where students can learn on their own and if necessary ask for help when they need it. It is the idea that at the end of the task the students will have taught themselves something new in their own way, a way in which they learn and understand better than maybe a teacher teaching them. So for this task I have decided to learn more about female suffrage. When women got the vote, how they went about getting it and how women are being treated around the world etc. So for the next couple of weeks, I will be posting my findings on this blog and hopefully at the end of the task I will have learnt something.

BAp16

1 - PGCE learning - FKGL 10,3 [Afrikaans]

Vir die afgelope vier weke bevind ek my in 'n totaal nuwe en uitdagende hoofstuk van my lewe. Na vier jaar het ek uiteindelik my graad in Wiskunde verwerf en kan ek my passie, naamlik onderwys, begin uitleef. Ek is tans besig met my Nagraadse Onderwyssertifikaat met die doel om myself as 'n Wiskunde onderwyseres te kwalifiseer. Die denkwyse van spesifiek my Wiskunde dosent, is so verfrissend en ek leer so baie elke dag. Hierdie afgelope paar weke het ons op die dieper kognitiewe beginsels agter sirkelmeetkunde gefokus. Ons het met 'n skok besef hoe min ervaring ons (as aspirant onderwysers) in hierdie gebied het! Die basiese begrippe van hoekverdubbeling, -halvering, ens. was vir ons nuut en ons moes lank daarmee sit en daaroor redeneer. Dit is vir my besonders bevredigend om te weet dat ek besig is om gapings in my eie opleiding as onderwyseres te vul. Ons leer hoe om werklik na kinders te luister en te verstaan watter begrippe hulle oor Wiskunde het. Hierdie is wat ek nog altyd wou gedoen het - ek kan nie wag om meer te leer nie!

BAp17

1 - Learning project - FKGL 6,4

Okay, so since I'm avoiding finishing an omsendbrief (I haven't written an Afrikaans letter since the Mbeki administration), I might as well do something 'constructive'. For my project I want to learn to draw. (I could kinda, maybe, sorta draw a little once upon a high school time. But my school had low standards for art, and I've unlearned everything I knew anyway.) That or how time travel works. We're going with options. **I make no promises on updates because this PGCE course has a monopoly on my time. (How can people write personal blogs on the regular?? I feel pretentious as all get out.)**

BAp18

1 - PGCE learning prompted **- FKGL 15,7 [Afrikaans]**

Die konseptuele raamwerk van die terme "digitale pedagogie" kan op twee maniere gedefinieer word. Eerstens; hierdie terme kan alleen staan as 'n betekeniskonstruk. "Pedagogie" verwys na die studie van opvoedkunde in alle sondanige praktiese en teoretiese aangeleenthede. Digitaal verwys na 'n revolusie wat onderneem was deur verskillende samelewings in die laat 20ste eeu om die opkoms van tegnologie met epistomologie en ontologie te vereenselwig. Daarom en tweedens, bied "digitale pedogie" die mens die ruimte om deur middel van tegnologie die opvoedkundige landskap ten goede te verander. Hierdie verandering vind plaas deur tegnologie by die manier van opvoeding te inkorpureer deur gebruik te maak van verskillende tegnologiese prosesse soos byvoorbeeld 'n rekenaar, "skyfies" en 'n oorhoofse projekter.

BAp20

1 - PGCE learning prompted **- FKGL 14,2 [Afrikaans]**

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Verskillende benaderings tot Digitale Pedagogie. Daar is verskeie benaderings waaruit Digitale Pedagogie bestaan, wat hoofsaaklik in die klaskameromgewing toegepas en gebruik word. Die belangrikste benaderings, myns insiens, is die Konstruktivisme-benadering tot digitale pedagogie waar inligting en vaardighede skep en herskep word. Hierdie benadering is buigbaar en kan aangepas word, en het daarom probeer wegbeweeg van die vaste konstrukte wat met leer, in die verlede, geasossieer is. Norme en ideale verander, so is dit ook belangrik dat onderrigstelsels en kurrikulums ook aangepas word. Die gebruik van tegnologie met die oordra van hierdie kennis (wat nie as konkreet beskou moet word nie), speel ook 'n deurslaggewende rol met die leer en internaliseer van inligting in hedendaagse onderrig. Dit is omdat alle navorsing klem lê op die voordele wat die gebruik van tegnologie, vir die klaskemer, inhou. So moet daar gebruikmaak word van PowerPoint-aanbiedings en Videos om die lesse meer ingryppend te maak. **Die leerders moet ook die geleentheid kry om self verdere navorsing oor onderwerpe wat hulle interessant vind, aan te pak en so ook die kans kry om self die fasiliteerders van inligting te wees.** Volgens my vorm hierdie twee benaderings die kern idee agter Digitale Pedagogie en hoe dit in die klaskamer gebruik word.

BAp28
1 - Learning project - FKGL 7,8
I've been thinking long and hard about this, and I guess it's time to make a decision. Also, I tend to overanalyse things and thinking too much leads to internal existential debate... And it gets messy.

So my fiancé, [redacted], is really into computers. He knows a lot of things about a lot of things, and when it comes to computers, he's a walking search engine. I thought that since he knows so much, he should be a part of this pedagogical journey.

And it boiled down to him either teaching me computer language (eek) or how to play computer games, since my hand-eye coordination can use some practice. Needless to say, I chose the latter.

In summary, during this learning experiment I will be teaching myself how to play a computer game, with the guidance of [redacted]. I haven't decided which one (they are many), or how I will record and share the experience (it will probably involve a video camera and some screen recording software) but since this is now out there in the big world of the Internet, I now have a metaphorical diving board to jump off of.

Now to introduce myself to the gaming candy shop of Steam…

BAp29
1 - Learning project - FKGL 6,9
Would love to know why certain lizzards, spiders and insects are able to walk on water…?

BAp30
1 - Learning project - FKGL -0,7 *
Really want to know how this stuff works?

BAp31
1 - Learning project - FKGL 0,7 [Afrikaans]
wie bepaal die mode

BAp32
1 - Other - FKGL 8,4
Testing..... testing….

2 - Learning project - FKGL 12,2

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As a PGCE student that wishes to become a English and History teacher, when I was informed I had to learn a new skill or explore a new area of expertise, I naturally decided to learn how to become a Dungeon Master. As such in the following few weeks, I shall be reading up on the Pathfinder rulebooks and hosting an adventure in the hopes of murdering my friends, while they simultaneously murder the various monsters and beasts I throw at them. After my initial run through this week, I hope to turn this challenge into a game where I will learn as many RPG systems in the next few weeks as humanly possible.

BAp34

1 - Learning project - FKGL 6,5

The beginning... The introduction... This has been the worst part of any assignment or essay. Where do you start, how do you phrase something in just the right manner as to catch your audiences attention and in my case as a Postgraduate student, my lecturers. It's like they say "first impressions are what count".

For the first time in 5 years, I can write what I want, how I want and when I want...
So, here it is..... My blog!

For those of you who are following me ;) here's a little about me:
I'm [redacted]. I'm from Cape Town and qualified last year with my BComm Financial Accounting. I'm currently busy with my Postgraduate degree in Education majoring in Accounting, Economics and Maths Literacy. I love the colour pink and I hate cockroaches and spiders. I love trying out new things and am not afraid to say what I'm thinking - provided it won't get me into any serious trouble.
I'm not going to give it all away, what would be the point of that? The rest you can learn along the way........

So honesty is key right....? Well this blog is an assignment of sorts, but please don't let that defer you, I've always wanted to start my own blog, but I've just never had the time to until now.. Obviously most girls my age are blogging about boys, fashion, weddings, etc.... and make no mistake I'd probably be headed off in that direction, but my lecturer has given me a specific title to work with and I hope it's something you all have an interest in too.

So here it is, despite me being a girlie girl and wanting more than anything to write about boys, fashion and weddings (not that I'm at that stage of my life yet), the title we were given in class is: write on something you've always wanted to learn.

You want to know what mine is.....?
World War 2!!!

I have ,for as long as I can remember, always had this fascination with World War 2 and all the Jews went through. I didn't have the opportunity to take History at school as our accounting classes were run in the same time slot and therefore never really learnt the depth I would have liked to have.

I have watched so many movies and a few documentaries, but honestly haven't learnt too much around what started the war, what countries were involved, how many lost their lives, etc. but now is my chance.. Piece by piece, through readings and documentaries, I will share with you all the knowledge I attain and together we can share in this discovery.

A question you might be asking... Why would I want to learn about World War 2?

Well I have not had a particularly easy life but regardless of the hard times, my friends and more importantly my family have brought me so much love and happiness than any human could attain. The war has always interested me in that it has made me appreciate all that I have had, no matter how big or small. With everything that went on during the war, The Jews stuck together and always lent a helping hand where they could. They looked out for one another even though their lives were at risk. Truly breath-taking!

So here it is.... the start of the biggest interest I have EVER had!

Until next time, xxx

2 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 10,3

Ok, sorry for the brief interruption, but our lecturer has us complete these questions once a week and has asked us to share this weeks question and answer on our personal blog.

Question of the week 2: What are some of the different approaches to digital pedagogy?

My source to answering this question comes from Michelle Moravec who is often asked to introduce digital learning to students. I really enjoyed reading her tips to approaching digital pedagogy, so much so, that I decided to share them with you in a brief summary.

She has the following tips:

Build from success

Spend time analysing your previous successes to build onto the next assignment. Thereafter you can search for further digital platforms, tools and infrastructure.

Be honest with yourself

Do you have a plan in the case of failure? It is important to remember that with every task comes a level of risk, but when technology is involved, that level of risk increases substantially. You should prepare yourself and your students to the possibility of failure and make alternative arrangements in the case something may go wrong. Michelle recommends pairing up individuals for task assignments to encourage peer support.

Start small

The greatest mistake teachers make is to do too much digitally too quickly. For the first assignment, she recommends sticking to one digital source and to install comfort in your students. You could as said above pair up individuals or alternatively allow an individual to take the lead empowering students to support one another.

Something has to give

You can take something out if you put something in, says Michelle. You can't teach all the content and you cannot feasibly expect students to do everything. A method to achieve the best of both worlds is to ask students to work digitally and the produce a short narrative paper summarising all they have done digitally. Students may not approve of this method of teaching but it does stem into a more productive pedagogy.

Until next time,

xxx

BAp39

1 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 10

In the words of Paulo Freire: "There is no such thing as a neutral educational process." ~ Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In today's quick and ever-changing society, it is necessary to a adapt to new practices and adopt new strategies, especially regarding teaching.

As (future) educator, it is important that we know all we can and use any available resources to facilitate a learning environment where out students can feel welcome, safe and intellectually challenged. Pedagogy; the profession (or ART) of teaching is one of extreme importance. You can kill someone's love for a subject or awaken the passion for studying. We must take not and integrate the best methods to use to teach. Remember: Teaching does not mean the students learnt anything.

Through the use of the many digital resources available to us, we can transform the classroom and the students' learning experience into something challenging (for both parties). The days of the only entertainment being the blackboard with three different coloured chalk sticks are numbered over. If we devices like an interactive whiteboard available, use it. If you can play videos in class via a projector; use it. If you can upload material to the Cloud or the Google Drive; USE IT.

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(NOTE: I clearly have a lot to learn when it comes to especially the digital part or "Digital Pedagogy".)

Digital pedagogy is thus utilizing any or all available digital devices to further the teaching and learning of students. It is to find a style of teaching you are comfortable with, one where you integrate something the students can relate to: create a Facebook Group where people can post queries. Start a Trend on Twitter. Spike their interest to use the internet not only as a place to post selfies on their 100 pages of social media.

Digital Pedagogy is thus modern-day teaching where we integrate ease of access to information with how to further your knowledge on a specific subject; adapting our teaching style to accommodate students.

2 - PGCE learning - FKGL 9,4 [Afrikaans]

Beste NOS-studente

Ek voel dat indien jy enige klagtes het oor hoe vanoggend se 9:00 les op 13 Maart 2015 "hanteer" is, of dat Meneer [redacted] "onprofessioneel" opgetree het, vra jouself af: hoe professioneel het JY opgetree?

Ons het inbreuk gemaak op sy lesuur deur na 9:00 nog IN GROEPE ROND TE STAAN EN MET MEKAAR TE GESELS, daar is in groepe saamgedrom om 'n opdrag in te gee wat jy na die afloop van die klas ook sou kon ingee; die dame wat dit ingeneem het vir Dr [redacted] sou nêrens heen gaan nie. Hierdie is gedoen gedurende Meneer [redacted] se lesuur. Weereens, infringement, for what. Jy was besig met 'n ander dosent se werk gedurende Meneer [redacted] se klas. Hoe professioneel dink jy was dit.

Volgende; Meneer [redacted] het die klaskamer se ligte afgeskakel – dit was sy manier om ons aandag te kry – net soos daai aandagstreep. Nie net wou hy ons aandag gedurende die lesing hê nie, hy wou stilte bewerkstellig deur die lig af en weer aan te skakel, in my opinie. Di ten dat student besef hulle moet in hulle sitplekke kom.

Dit waarvoor ek my die meeste skaam is nie hoe student na die tyd gekla het en 'n petisie begin opstel het om te kla oor Meneer [redacted] se "onprofessionalitiet" nie, maar my eie reaksie. En wat was dit? Niks. Ek het gedink ek moet opstaan om almal wat gepraat het stilt e maak, maar ek het nie.

Ons verwag professionaliteit en respek, maar niemand het in vandag se lesing enige respek aan Meneer [redacted] getoon nie. Dit het ons byna 10 minute geneem om tot stilte te kom. Indien ons soos verantwoordelike, intelligente, volwasse "grootmense" behandel wil word, moet ons so optree. Niemand, in my opinie, het dus die reg om te kla oor die verloop van die dosent se gedrag vanoggend nie.

Indien jy een van díe is wat gepraat het – of dit nou staande in groepe was, of kliphard terwyl jy op die banke gesit het – en of jy een van diegene is wat, soos ek, net in stilte gesit en wag het vir verandering, het jy enige en alle "regte" wat jy dink jy het, verbeur.

BAp40
1 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 11,1

Digital Pedagogy is the use of technology in a classroom to further the education of the learners and to aid the teacher while teaching. The use of technology makes teaching simpler, **because information is right at hand and students can do research at the touch of a button**; it also enables students to visualise the work being taught, because diagrams and simulations can be showed.

The technology is used to directly impact the teaching and learning between the students and the teachers. It is used to improve the experience and simplify life. It definitely has a place in South African schools, but due to the fact that our country is a third world country, this will take time to implement.

2 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 12

By knowing the difference in training for a pedagogue, a teacher and a curriculum technician one would have to know the identities of each. Once the role is defined the difference in training styles and importance will become clear.

A pedagogue's training will be more formal, but less specified than a teacher; who in turn will be less specified than a curriculum technician. The curriculum technician will be trained within the specific curriculum and the teacher will need a broader understanding of the content and ALSO of the learners and how to treat them.

BAp41

1 - Learning project - FKGL 7,2

Why hello personal blog! Ummm, I'm not very confident with what I'm supposed to do here, so I figured I would attempt a start and see where the "winging it" takes me...

Is this thing on?

When it comes to technology, or more specifically, computers and the internet, I would say I live under a rock. As in I tend to be quiet selectively oblivious to what happens in the world with regards to social networking or sharing my thoughts with strangers. I'm old-school in many ways.

I'm pretty sure some of it comes from my father, who doesn't even own a cellphone. Yet, as a professor, he is very advanced with computer skills. Hence the selective. I use Facebook, and I can Google pretty well (my next google will be on whether to capitalise Google and Facebook in writing or not?)But if you ask me about Twitter and Blogging, I might ask you who is twittering, and I would keep very quiet about what I know about blogs (not much - **thank you google for helping me to set up an account!**)

When I heard of this side project involving blogging and twittering, my brain went into a little panic, and my internal computer immediately went on sleep mode. But somewhere in my subconscious ideas starting forming.

The teacher in me awoke and nudged...I absolutely love the idea of a personal project to learn something over a few months or a year. Ideas like perfecting my cupcake skills and learning how to hula-hoop, or even picking up my flute again after seven years of rest, sent me into excited tangents of the possibilities of learning new things that I wanted to learn. But I got very nervous when I realised that I had to use technology to do so.

A classmate pointed out that I am what is referred to as a technophobe. In other words, I have a fear of advanced technology or complex devices like computers. I had to absorb this about myself.

PGCE has fiercely infiltrated my life this year. And one major Ah Ha! moment in these past couple of months is adding to the realisation that we fear the unknown. And through acknowledgement, fear can be overcome, or tolerated at the very least.

How can I teach children new ideas if their minds are closed to these unknowns? How can I learn new things if my mind is closed to the unknown? And so my venture into 'know'ing technology will start..

And then there were other thoughts... **I just don't have the time!** So my absorbing processes took place, and I finally decided that I would start my blog, and give up Facebook for a while. I've probably used Facebook every day since I opened my account in 2007, which I find quiet an interesting thought with regards to addiction and habit, so I will see how the detox goes. I haven't signed in for four days, and I must say I feel strangely lighter than I thought I would.

I want to go back to expand some basics of myself. I want to learn how to fully embrace my passion for poetry. And my definition of poetry will include inspiration from actual poetry, as well as photography, and reading in general. Language and expression has always been an ongoing hobby of

mine, and I feel that this will greatly benefit me as a to-be History and English teacher.

And so I had to make it official, because the first thing I tend to do in the morning is check my Facebook. So I stuck a post-it to my mirror and slept on it... hence the new beginning…

2 - Learning project - FKGL 10,1

I'm still a little lost with this whole blogging thing, but oh well, something bought me back to it... so here it goes(again)!

I watched a classmate present a History class on Wednesday morning, and I was pleasantly surprised with a fantastic lesson learnt myself. The theme was the Mughal Empire, an empire that ruled most of India from approximately 1526-1857 by a dynasty of Mongol and Chagatai-Turkic origins. The class was focused on a particular Mughal Emporer, namely Akbar the Great (1542-1605). Akbar was the third ruler of the empire (succeeding his father), and began at the mere age of fourteen. He is seen as one of the greatest rulers of the empire, because as a result of the military, political, cultural and economic dominance under his rule, his power and influence extended over the entire country.

Akbar's success was in unifying the Mughal state. He established a centralised system of administration throughout his empire and adopted a policy of conciliating conquered rulers through marriage and diplomacy so as to preserve peace and order in a religiously and culturally diverse empire. This won him support of his non-Muslim subjects through his adopted policies as well.

I could go on about the fascinating history of this powerful empire (thank you Wikipedia for basic facts!), but for the sake of keeping it short and sweet, I would like to emphasise just one point:

Akbar's success was owed to his ability to unite the people of the country, regardless of its cultural and religious diversity. His steadfast tolerance, and acceptance of differences was what made this character so unique, especially so long ago in history.
I was touched by the fact that his tolerance was the very reason his rule was so powerful within the vast and ever expanding empire.

Akbar: "I love my own religion, but others also love their religion. If they want to spend money on their religion, what right do I have to prevent them. Do they not have the right to the love the thing that is their own?"

This to me is POETRY...
And it affirms my own responsibility to LEARN to TOLERATE all walks of life!

BAp42

1 - Learning project - FKGL 10,8

So, I have been thinking long and hard about one of my assignments for my Post-graduate Certificate in Education. The assignment is to start a blog about anything you want to learn. I wanted to link it to my studies, but could not find the perfect topic. After a while I decided that I will blog about one of my biggest passions - music. For as long as I can remember, music were the one thing that calmed me down.

Playing a music instrument myself (Flute), and receiving vocal training for a few years with South African gospel singer, Riana van Wyk, my passion for music is as clear as daylight. I was thinking about focusing only on one genre of music, namely country, but why not expand my horizons and learn more about the different genres of music out there.

I will start my first blog with Country. I have no idea why, but country is my favorite genre to sing and to listen to. There is just something about it - whether it is the musicality of the artists, the combination of different instruments, or just the mere fact that every country song has a wonderful story to tell. Lets first start off by first looking at the history of country music.
ACCORDING TO WIKIPEDIA:
"Country music is a genre of American popular music that originated in Southern United States, in

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Atlanta, Georgia in the 1920's. It takes its roots from the South-Eastern genre of American folk music and Western music. Country music often consists of ballads and dance tunes with generally simple forms and harmonies accompanied by mostly string instruments such as banjos, electric and acoustic guitars, fiddles and harmonicas. The term 'country music' gained popularity in the 1940's in preference to the earlier term 'hillbilly music'. The origins of country music are the folk music of mostly white, working-class Americans, who blended popular songs, Irish and Celtic fiddle tunes, traditional ballads, and cowboy songs, and various musical traditions from European immigrant communities. In 2009, country music was the most listened to rush hour radio genre during the evening commute, and second most popular in the morning commute in the United States.

Country music was "introduced to the world as a Southern phenomenon." The first generation emerged in the early 1920's. Okeh Records began issuing hillbilly music records by Fiddlin' John Carson as early as 1923, followed by Columbia Records in 1924, and RCA Victor Records in 1927.

During the second generation (1930's - 1940's), radio became a popular source of entertainment, and "barn dance" shows featuring country music were started all over the South, as far North as Chicago, and as far West as California. The most important was the Grand Ole Opry, aired starting in 19325 by WSM in Nashville and continuing to present day. During the 1930's and 1940's, cowboy songs were popularized by films made in Hollywood. Bob Wills was one of the first country musicians to have added an electric guitar to his band, in 1938. Country musicians began recording boogie in 1939.

The third generation (1950's -1960's) started at the end of World War II with "mountaineer" string band music known as bluegrass, which emerged when Bill Monroe, along with Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs were introduced by Roy Acuff at the Grand Ole Opry. Gospel music remained a popular component of country music. By the early 1950's, a blend of Western swing, country boogie, and honky tonk was played by most country bands. Beginning in the mid-1950's, and reaching its peak during the early 1960's, the Nashville Sound turned country music into a multi-million dollar industry centered in Nashville, Tennessee. In the aftermath of the British Invasion, many desired a return to the "old values" of "rock 'n roll". At the same time there was a lack of enthusiasm in the country sector for Nashville-produced music. What resulted was a crossbred genre known as country rock.

Fourth generation (1970's - 1980's) music included outlaw country and country pop or soft pop, with roots in the country politan sound, folk music and soft rock. Between 1972 and 1975, singer/guitarist John Denver released a series of hugely successful songs blending country and folk-rock music styles. During the mid-1980's, a group of new artists began to emerge who rejected the more polished country-pop sound that had been prominent on radio and the charts in favor of more traditional "back-to-basics" production.

During the fifth generation (1990's), country music became a world-wide phenomenon thanks to Garth Brooks. The Dixie Chicks became one of the most popular country bands in the 1990's and early 2000's.

The sixth generation (2000's - present), is exemplified by country singer Carrie Underwood. The influence of rock music in country has become more overt during the late 2000's and early 2010's. Most of the best-selling country songs of this era however were in the country pop genre, such as those by Lady Antebellum, Florida George Line and Taylor Swift.

2 - Learning project AND PGCE learning - FKGL 6,7 [included lyrics]

Okay, so yet again I changed the direction of this blog... It has been a while - things have been crazy the past month. At first I thought it is crazy to not have a fixed theme for the blog, but that is how my mind works, everyday it is something else! So I will rather see this blog as a reflection of what is currently going on in my mind.

There will be a fixed idea though - For the love of...

I will write about anything I love, mostly music, of course!! And whatever I write about, I will learn more

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of it. So it is a win-win situation.

The reason I decided to write today, is because I have been quite negative about the year, about my studies, and especially the direction in which I was forced with my post-grad course... Don't get me wrong, this past month I developed more and more respect for teachers. It is a LOT of hard work, planning, dedication, patience, but I think it will be rewarded in the end... So from now on, only positive thoughts!! That's why I decided to blog the lyrics of a song which made me think a lot about my mindset, etc.

I was quite depressed after class one day and decided to listen to some music... Like a sign from above, the first song that came up was Something in the water, sung by Carrie Underwood - one of my favourite artists!!

Like every country song, the words has a lot of meaning, and I think each and everyone of us relate!!

"Something In The Water"

He said, "I've been where you've been before.
Down every hallway's a slamming door.
No way out, no one to come and save me.
Wasting a life that the Good Lord gave me.

Then somebody said what I'm saying to you,
Opened my eyes and told me the truth."
They said, "Just a little faith, it'll all get better."
So I followed that preacher man down to the river and now I'm changed
And now I'm stronger

There must've been something in the water
Oh, there must've been something in the water

Well, I heard what he said and I went on my way
Didn't think about it for a couple of days
Then it hit me like a lightning late one night
I was all out of hope and all out of fight

Couldn't fight back the tears so I fell on my knees
Saying, "God, if you're there come and rescue me."
Felt love pouring down from above
Got washed in the water, washed in the blood and now I'm changed
And now I'm stronger

There must be something in the water
Oh, there must be something in the water

And now I'm singing along to amazing grace
Can't nobody wipe this smile off my face
Got joy in my heart, angels on my side
Thank God almighty, I saw the light
Gonna look ahead, no turning back
Live every day, give it all that I have

Beautiful, isn't it??

Which makes it even more special is what Carrie Underwood told the media after they criticized her about singing about her faith:

"Country music is different," she told Glamour magazine. "You have that Bible Belt-ness about it. I'm not the first person to sing about God, Jesus or faith [or] any of that, and I won't be the last. And it won't be the last for me, either. If you don't like it, change the channel."

Please do yourself a favour and go and watch the music video... It literally gives me goosebumps every time I watch it!!

So, everyone, especially PGCE students who, I am sure also feel like I do sometimes, whenever you feel down, go and listen to this song. Instant cheer-up GUARENTEED!!

BAp43

1 - Other - FKGL 14,1

The nature of things, much like the nature of truth, is inherently both subjective and intrinsic for it is a concept and what we conceive is our individual interpretation and understanding. Things are not the way they are merely because we perceive them to be because of our inherent fallibility as human beings.This fallibility is what keeps us in the continual pursuit of perfection (through ethics,religion or philosophy) and will see us chasing the ideal for a very long time still.

Things are what they are because that is what we see them as. There is nothing about a tree or a rock that makes it so; we as subjective human beings chose to give it such a name and forever bound the image and idea of both rock and tree to these respective words. With this then it becomes obvious why human beings have different ideas, values and beliefs for they all extend out of our subjective perspective, assessment and quantification/codification of the world around us; for is man's instinct and drive not to understand that which is unknown?

Perhaps I am assessing this issue of reality and the nature of things too deeply, so I shall leave these questions aside for now and depart with this simple quote:

"Sleep is no easy feat: You have to stay awake all day to do it" - Friedrich Nietzsche

2 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL12,4

A while ago I had a conversation with a friend on becoming a leader and raising up other leaders, with the question just being how do you do that? How do you mould a person in such a way that others will be inspired by their presence and gravitate towards the ineffable authority that each leader must carry?

The answer, he told me, was very simple. Firstly we must acknowledge that everyone has the

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ability to lead, the only difference is in their capacity. We all lead in our daily lives, whether it be leading ourselves to the coffee pot in the morning or leading a group of friends in either physical, emotional or mental discussion. The term "capacity" here simply regers to how many people an individual can lead effectivley; some (like Nelson Mandela/Steve Biko/ President Kruger) have a great capacity and are usually found leading nations or corporations. Some people however have a smaller capacity and usually lead on a smaller, but no less important, scale ; for it is in scale alone that these differ.

The second point he made was that in training a leader, train them the way you yourself would have liked to be trained. This lets the training process continually change to best serve those using/doing it while still ensuring that the knowledge and experience of our existing leaders are passed on to the next generation. With the benefit of hindsight we can also correct mistakes our own leaders and trainers made adwell as include information we feel was left out that should be brought in.

But what, you ask, is the point of all this discourse on leadership; or is the goal merely to see words on a page that I release into the gaping maw and crowded platform that is the Internet? Simply this: at it's bare and fundamental level Teachers and Educators are leaders of thought who usher and lead students from idea to idea, conclusion to conclusion, with knowledge as the eternal end-goal. They are leaders, each with a capacity of their own, and so they can and should be trained as such.

In educating Educators then we must train them as we the existing ones would have liked to be trained; let their education be the sum of our education, experience and ideals. This training must remain open and flexible, as if you say one thing for the human race (and students in particular); say they are changing.

BAp46

1 - Other - FKGL 5,2 [Afrikaans]

die liefde is 'n somersdood.

2 - PGCE learning - FKGL 10,7 [Afrikaans]

Ek moes vandag die opdrag oor die rol van tegnologie in die Suid-Afrikaanse klaskamer doen. En met die afloop van hierdie taak besef ek hoe 'n kardinale rol tegnologie kan vervul in die klaskamer. Met die oneindige toegang tot hulpmiddels op die internet asook die integrering van tegnologie in klasaanbieding kan die onderwyser se taak van klasaanbied vergemaklik word. Die onderwyser kan in die proses meer aandag skenk aan hoe om die inhoud aan die leerders oor te dra. Om tegnologie in die klaskamer te gebruik beteken ook die leerders raak meer bekend met tegnologie en word sodoende nie so ontnugter wanneer hul na skool met tegnologie in kontak kom nie. Maar as 'n mens na Suid-Afrika gaan kyk is dit nie juis so maanskyn en rose nie. Ek dink nou terug aan my eerstejaar toe 'n meisie my in die Inligtingsvaardighede eksamen vra hoe om te right click. Dit wys duidelik hoe ongelyk hierdie toegang tot tegnologie in Suid-Afrikaanse skole is. Dit breek my hart dat ons land nie genoeg doen om hierdie leerders aan tegnologie bloot te stel nie.

Ek dink dis tyd dat ons as land na die gebruik van tegnologie in die klaskamer moet kyk. Maar terselfdertyd ook daarin belê om alle leerders regoor die land toegang tot internet te verseker, [sic]

3 - Other - FKGL 8 [Afrikaans]

So, ek het sopas 'n artikel oor 'n "gay cure" kamp gelees. Basies stuur ouers hul homoseksuele seuns na hierdie kamp, waar die kampleiers die seuns in sogenaamde "manne" verander. Hierdie kampleiers het die dood van drie seuns veroorsaak.

Hierdie artikel het my verskriklik ontstel omdat ek self as homoseksueel identifiseer. Dis moeilik om nou selfs hierdie inskrywing te maak en terselfdertyd te verseker dat dit koherent is, want my gevoelens is all over the place. Dit is absoluut onherroeplik belaglik dat mense dink dit is moontlik om 'n kind na 'n kamp te stuur sodat hulle "reg" kan kom. Die hetero-normatiewe houding is wat die absolute

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pyn in my bestaan is.

Ek weet regtig nie hoe enige iemand kan dink dat gay mans/vrouens kies om hulself deur hierdie diskrimansie en vernedering te sit nie. Gay wees is nie 'n opsie wat jy kan kies nie. Ek is veral disgusted deur die ouers wat hul eie kinders deur hierdie hel sit. Ek het geen respek vir jou as ouer as jy meer bekommerd is oor die kind se seksualiteit as sy welsyn. Ek weet ek moet die beter mens wees, maar ek sal daai ouers nooit kan vergewe vir wat hulle aan hulle kinders gedoen het nie.

Ek weet glad nie wat om te sê oor die idee van die samelewing dat mens gay wees kan kuur nie. Ek het alle geloof in die mens verloor. Dankie wêreld.

BAp48

1 - PGCE learning - FKGL 3,2

Well hello to whom ever is reading this
This blog needs to be set up for my computer class in the PGCE program. I have no idea what to expect from this blog but it seems like I will be keeping you up to date.

:) enjoy!

2 - PGCE learning - FKGL 8,2

That time that your lecturer wants to see everything you do and want you on Twitter to post class questions...

PS the question about the hippopotamus was posted by my friend who got hold of my phone and so eagerly wanted to post the first question.

3 - Other - FKGL 6,1 [Afrikaans/English]

Guys I would like to share something with you... So today I turned 23 and my boyfriend who I believe to be my life long partner organized an entire evening for me with my friends! I would like to tell [redacted] that: My Skat jy is die beste ding wat al ooit met my gebeur het! Vanaand was stunning en ek wens ek kon verdeuidelik hoe lief ek vir jou is! Jy is amazing en ek kon nie vir n groter geskenk gevra het nie! Jy is rerig my alles!

And to all of you who assisted [redacted] and made my evening so special! From [redacted] giving me clues during class today, to [redacted] organizing me **more work than I already had** (I am soooo tired) to everyone who set up and helped organize - I am truly belessed to have you guys in my life! Baie dankie vir julle almal wat hier was en my aand amazing gemaak het (**even though I am too tired to do my work** haha)! Ek het in my lewe nog nooit iets so speciaal ervaar nie!

Thank all of you very much! En baie dankie my Skat vir 'n amazing aand! I LOVE YOU ALL!!!

BAp50

1 - Learning project - FKGL 11,3 [included wikipedia]

I love dance and have decide to do some research about different types of dances. As modern dance is my favourite and I have also done it for 7 years, I will start with it....

Definition
Modern dance is a broad genre of western concert dance, it has primarily arise out of Germany and the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

History
Oversimplification of modern dance's history often leads to the erroneous explanation that the artform emerged merely as a rejection of or rebellion against classical ballet. As early as the 1880's, a range of socioeconomic changes in both the United States and Europe helped pave the way to tremendous shifts in the dance world. For example: in America, the rise of a middle class, and the decline of Victorian social strictures led to a new interest in health and physical fitness.

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During the 1880's, the champions of physical education helped to prepare the way for modern dance, and gymnastic exercises served as technical starting points for young women who longed to dance. Emil Rath, stated, "Music and rhythmic bodily movement are twin sisters of art, as they have come into existence simultaneously..".

Facts

Modern dance focuses on a dancer's own interpretations instead of structured steps, as in traditional ballet dancing. Modern dance encourages dancers to use their emotions and moods to design their own steps and routines. Modern dancers reject the limitations of classical ballet and favor movements derived from the expression of their inner feelings. Modern dance pioneers often danced in bare feet and revealing costumes. In the United States, several dance pioneers paved the way for American modern dance, including the legendary Martha Graham.

Another characteristic of modern dance in opposition to ballet is the deliberate use of gravity. Whereas classical ballet dancers strive to be light and airy on their feet, modern dancers often use their body weight to enhance movement. This type of dancer rejects the classical ballet stance of an upright, erect body, often opting instead for deliberate falls to the floor.

When attending your first modern dance class, you are probably wondering what type of shoes and clothes you should wear. While some studios have strict dress requirements, you will probably be safe showing up in tights and a leotard underneath a top or skirt of some kind. As for shoes, many modern dancers prefer to wear leather or canvas ballet slippers, and some like the feeling of bare feet.

2 - Learning project - FKGL 13,4 [included wikipedia]

The second dance on my list is ballet dance. I did ballet for 2 years as a school subject.

History

The history of ballet began in the Italian Renaissance courts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It then spread to the French court of Catherine de' Medici where it was further developed. The creation of classical ballet as it is known today occurred under Louis XIV, who in his youth was an avid dancer and performed in ballets by Pierre Beauchamp and Jean-Baptiste Lully. In 1661 Louis founded the Académie Royale de Danse (Royal Dance Academy) which was charged with establishing standards for the art of dance and the certification of dance instructors. In 1672, Louis XIV made Lully the director of the Académie Royale de Musique (Paris Opera) in which the first professional ballet company, the Paris Opera Ballet, arose. Early ballets preceded the invention of the proscenium stage and were performed in large chambers with the audience seated on tiers or galleries on three sides of the dance floor.

Despite the great reforms of Jean-Georges Noverre in the eighteenth century, ballet went into decline in France after 1830, though it was continued in Denmark, Italy, and Russia. It was reintroduced to western Europe on the eve of the First World War by a Russian company, the Ballets Russes of Sergei Diaghilev, who ultimately influenced ballet around the world. Diaghilev's company became a destination for many of the Russian-trained dancers fleeing the famine and unrest that followed the Bolshevik revolution. These dancers brought back to their place of origin many of the choreographic and stylistic innovations that had been flourishing under the czars.

In the 20th century, ballet had a strong influence on broader concert dance. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Styles

Romantic ballet

Romantic ballet is defined by an era during the early to mid 19th century (the romantic era) in which ballets featured themes that emphasized intense emotion as a source of aesthetic experience.(Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Classical ballet

Classical ballet is based on traditional ballet technique and vocabulary.(Wikipedia, the free

encyclopedia)
Neoclassical ballet

Neoclassical ballet is a style that utilizes classical ballet technique and vocabulary, but deviates from classical ballet in its use of the abstract. In Neo-Classical Ballet, there often is no clear plot, costumes or scenery. Music choice can be diverse and will often include music that is also neo-classical..(Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)
Contemporary ballet

Contemporary ballet is a form of dance that opens up the doors to for any style to influence a work made utilizing ballet technique. Contemporary Ballet can take on a wide variety of aesthetics, incorporating pedestrian, modern, jazz, or ethnic forms, so long as a the roots of classical ballet are apparent. It allows for open ended exploration and experimentation, but a good way to determine if a work is contemporary ballet as oppose to contemporary dance, is to ask the question, is ballet training needed to perform this as it was intended?. (**Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia**)

3 - Learning project - FKGL 10,2 [included wikipedia]
Hip-Hop dance is the dance which amaze me....
History

Hip-hop dance refers to street dance styles primarily performed to hip-hop music or that have evolved as part of hip-hop culture. It includes a wide range of styles primarily breaking, locking, and popping which were created in the 1970s and made popular by dance crews in the United States. The television show Soul Train and the 1980s films Breakin', Beat Street, and Wild Style showcased these crews and dance styles in their early stages; therefore, giving hip-hop mainstream exposure. The dance industry responded with a commercial, studio-based version of hip-hop—sometimes called "new style". Classically trained dancers developed these studio styles in order to create choreography from the hip-hop dances that were performed on the street. Because of this development, hip-hop dance is practiced in both dance studios and outdoor spaces.

Though the dance is established in entertainment, including mild representation in theater, it maintains a strong presence in urban neighborhoods which has led to the creation of street dance derivatives Memphis jookin, turfing, jerkin', and krumping.

1980s films, television shows, and the Internet have contributed to introducing hip-hop dance outside of the United States. Since being exposed, educational opportunities and dance competitions have helped maintain its presence worldwide.

What distinguishes hip-hop from other forms of dance is that it is often "freestyle" (improvisational) in nature and hip-hop dance crews often engage in freestyle dance competitions—colloquially referred to as "battles". Crews, freestyling, and battles are identifiers of this style. Hip-hop dance can be a form of entertainment or a hobby. It can also be a way to stay active in competitive dance and a way to make a living by dancing professionally.
Main styles
Breaking

Breaking was created in the South Bronx, New York City during the early 1970s. It is the first hip-hop dance style. At the time of its creation, it was the only hip-hop dance style because Afrika Bambaataa classified it as one of the five pillars of hip-hop culture along with MCing (rapping), DJing (turntablism), graffiti writing, and knowledge. Breaking includes four foundational dances: toprock, footwork-oriented steps performed while standing up; downrock, footwork performed with both hands and feet on the floor; freezes, stylish poses done on your hands; and power moves, complex and impressive acrobatic moves. Transitions from toprock to downrock are called "drops."
Locking

Locking, originally called Campbellocking, was created in 1969 in Los Angeles, California by Don "Campbellock" Campbell and popularized by his crew The Lockers.

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Locking looks similar to popping, and the two are frequently confused by the casual observer. In locking, dancers hold their positions longer. The lock is the primary move used in locking. It is "similar to a freeze or a sudden pause." A locker's dancing is characterized by frequently locking in place and after a brief freeze moving again. According to Dance Spirit magazine, a dancer cannot perform both locking and popping simultaneously; thus, it is incorrect to call locking "pop-locking".

Popping

Popping was created in Fresno, California in the 1970s and popularized by Samuel "Boogaloo Sam" Solomon and his crew the Electric Boogaloos. It is based on the technique of quickly contracting and relaxing muscles to cause a jerk in a dancer's body, referred to as a pop or a hit. Each hit should be synchronized to the rhythm and beats of the music. Popping is also used as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of closely related illusionary dance styles such as strobing, liquid, animation, twisto-flex, and waving.Dancers often integrate these styles with standard popping to create a more varied performance. Popping as an umbrella term also includes floating, gliding, and sliding.

BAp51

1 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 7,8 [included definitions]

Digital [di-gi-tal]

a.

1 Relating to computer technology

Pedagogy [ped-uh-go-gi]

n.

1 The profession or theory of teaching

Digital pedagogy refers to the use of the digital in the teaching profession.

2 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 11,2 [included definitions]

Although the term 'Digital Pedagogy' may refer to the use and assistance of the digital (technology) in teaching, it has now been established that digital in fact does not only refer to the technological aspect of the word and that the 'digital' can also include simpler objects such as a blackboard, chalk, 'sticky-notes'. What is key when the digital is applied through these objects is how it is used.

Digital Pedagogy is also distinguished by several approaches to learning. The following is an example of types of approaches used.

1. Scaffolding Learning

"Scaffolding is a six-step approach to assisting learning and development of individuals within their zone of proximal development"

These steps include:

'Intentionality': The task given has begins with an end in mind. The start and all the parts presented contribute to the conclusion and the outcome of the lesson.

Appropriateness: The level of instruction and task needs to be appropriate and suited to the level of the learner.

Structure: The scaffold method is characterized by modeling and questioning activities which are specifically decided on in terms of the content of the lesson.

Collaboration: The teacher's feedback should 'work' in collaboration with what the student has already produced and what they will produce in the future.

Internalization: The guidance (or as this theory defines it) supports the internalisation of knowledge until scaffolding the learner is no longer needed.

This approach is a form of guided-discovery. It is largely dependent on the relationship between

the learner and the teacher.

3 - PGCE learning - FKGL 11,6

I am of opinion that pedagogues cannot be trained. To be a pedagogue is to engage with an inherent prior knowledge or understanding of what it means to teach. Therefore, unlike other professions such as teaching or being a curriculum technician, pedagogues acquire and learn their information and teaching from previous encounters or experiences. How is this different from the way in which teachers learn to teach or the way curriculum technicians form curriculum you may ask?

The only answer I am able to supply here is that teachers are taught to teach- to follow traditional norms and stick to a defined curriculum. Curriculum technicians adapt curricula to suit the needs of students and to meet expected outcomes This is however not always developed to suit the students, but it is often development based on someone else's idea of what students need to know at a specific age or stage. It can therefore be derived that the teaching and curriculum technician professions both build on a historical understanding of what is expected of their profession.

It is important to understand that not all teachers are pedagogues, and all pedagogues are not teachers. One cannot simply train someone to become a pedagogue. Several factors, such as the personal want or need to become of pedagogue, play a role. However here is the crux of being a pedagogue. Pedagogues can be suited to any profession. This is because their inherent qualities are adaptable to dealing with life. The teaching pedagogue needs to only be taught the 'how' (to teach), whereas the teacher and curriculum technician need to know various other factors such as the where, who, when, why and so on.

BAp53

1 - Other - FKGL 8,9

Since I started my Tertiary education, my thoughts were always to do medicine. I started out wanting to be a doctor, but today I am currently undergoing a change of field, or more of a change of heart in the same field.

I will teach others what I learnt, in order for them to want the same dreams and even more. I will become a Biology teacher, well the new terminology is a Life Science Teacher.

I am still a bit uncertain of where everything falls in place, but I have certainly grasped the fact that I enjoy learning, be it in a lecture hall with lecturers or a classroom with children, we all have something new to learn each day.

One thing remains, even after I am a qualified teacher, I will never stop learning. I will continue to study, not only to broaden my horizon but to share my new knowledge with others. . .

2 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 13,6

Social media such as twitter, facebook, even this blog are ways in which digital pedagogy can be achieved in the classroom. These are a few of the approaches to digital pedagogy:
Constructivist approaches
New Pedagogic Models
Communities of practice
Activity theory
Scaffolding learning

3 - Learning project - FKGL 6,0

This year is year of discoveries for me. Taking on new ventures and discovering new sides of myself I never knew existed. . .

So here's to new discoveries. For now, all I want to discover is how to play the piano. I enjoy

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music and already play the violin, so here's to learning another instrument.

Stay tuned for updates ;)

BAp57

1 - Learning project - FKGL 7,7

So today we were told what the content of this blog should be. It's more interesting than I expected to be honest. Rather than this blog being a repository for set assignments, our individual assignment is simply "What would you like to learn?" and we must blog about a learning journey of our choice. I enjoy this freedom and have two main ideas. Mostly my choice between the two will come down to what is most practical to actually do. Once I've decided I'll write another blog.

We were also instructed to start a Twitter account, which I am not as pleased about. **I don't even want to use Facebook these days because it feels like a chore to keep up with. I just can't see the appeal in pouring time and energy into browsing through lists of people's unfiltered broadcasted internal monologs and retweetings. They say it can be a tool for communicating to a broad audience, but that only works if everyone is Twitter-obsessed and they devote a chunk of their life to sifting through tweets.** I would also not want to use Twitter in a classroom environment because it crosses the professional relationship, in the same way I wouldn't add learners on Facebook. Oh well, perhaps I'll be surprised by some functionality Twitter has that I'm unaware of. For my classmate's convenience, my Twitter account is [redacted], same name as in this blog's url.

I'll end each post with something cute, because the world needs more reasons to go "aww". Today I give you rats with tiny teddy bears!

2 - Learning project - FKGL 7,5

This Saturday was the Cape Town Pride Parade! This is third Pride I've gone to and I always greatly enjoy it. I've always experienced the atmosphere as very positive. Diverse people come together and there is a wonderful sense of acceptance, good will and celebration. It doesn't matter who you are, how "strange" you are or how much difficult cultures reject you based on your sexual orientation, sex or gender identity, the Pride community welcomes you. Members of the broader community also come support and cheer at the parade. I further enjoy how colourful it is at Pride and how vibrant the people are. Of course the experience was made even better because some of my best friends were with me. There were also some other fantastic people there, plenty of friendly strangers to chat to and even a few unexpected familiar faces.

You can see photos of pride here on Facebook.
Because this blog is meant to be about learning, I'll post about something I learned how to do because of pride: How to make tie dye shirts! Below are my two creations. I can't find the tutorial I used (I had opened it on my phone and then lost the link), but this tutorial explains the steps just as well. I didn't quite follow things correctly, which is why the colour isn't very dark and the patterns are a bit blurry. The fabric also didn't take the dye well, and I only noticed afterward that it wasn't 100% cotton. It's all part of the learning process, however, and I think that for a first try I'm very happy with them! I hope the tie dye pre-Pride event I went to becomes a tradition so I can make a shirt or two each year. It's something I've always wanted to do!

For today's "awws", I bring you fluffy baby bunnies. <3

3 - Learning project - FKGL 10,9

To fulfill the purpose of this blog, I'll be reflecting on one of the greatest learning experiences of my life. It just happened to be in the field of education, teaching and learning, which is an added benefit. For the sake of privacy, both for myself and other people involved, I won't be using names or locations in my reflections. This also sadly means I can't post photos of the experience or the people or

place I interacted with.

The story begins:

When I first joined university I wanted to use the opportunity to finally get involved in volunteer work. I hadn't really had opportunities to do so before, but the university is thankfully alive with diverse extramural activities, societies and community projects to take part in.

Of the many opportunities I was interested in, one was a community project that facilitated university students tutoring grade 12 learners at an underprivileged school in the nearby township. Learners there face a great number of challenges in both their living environments and at their schools. According to one of the other projects found in this township, some of these challenges include poverty, homelessness, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, drug abuse, illiteracy, malnutrition, crime, and a high incidence of one parent households. Most of these everyday tragedies result of inequalities systematically introduced during the Apartheid era which still persist to this day. Unfortunately, people from this township remain marginalised and excluded. This is evident in how many people from this township refer to people in the city as coming from the "other side", how many people in the township have never left its borders, and how may people in this township will remain trapped in a cycle of poverty. One of the things I greatly like about the project I wanted to join was that its focus was not on charity, and not just academic education, but rather building relationships that cross socioeconomic divides and builds a unity between people.

Then, at the young age of 18, I made a mistake. I told my parents about my decision to volunteer. They became hysterical. Unfortunately they held on to misconceptions and fears about "the other" that were deeply triggered by their natural parental instincts to protect me. I was told that a black township was never, under any conditions, safe for a young white woman to go to. While I can't remember their exact words, I seem to remember them behaving as if they thought that I'd be robbed, murdered and raped as soon as I set foot in a township. Never mind the fact that the university would never endorse something that put their students in danger. I was forbidden from volunteering. My second mistake was to obey them.

I missed out on a lot because of that decision. Thankfully by second year I'd built up enough strength of character to disobey my parents and volunteer. This was one of the best decisions of my life. What I experienced and learned, which I will cover in future blog reflections, changed me as a person, changed my path in life, and gave me a change to change the world. Indeed, not long after I started, my parents saw how much I benefited from volunteering that they came to support me and my endeavors.

This is where I learned my first important lesson from this journey: Do not let anyone stop you from doing what is truly important to you in life.

Lastly, to conclude, this image is a reflection of my views of learning and way of living life:

4 - Other - FKGL 9,3

Recent events have made me reflect on how one can handle dealing with an emotional crisis within the professionalism of work spaces. "Life happens" and at times we find ourselves unable to cope with the demands of basic emotional functioning, let alone the workplace. I know this all too well, being someone suffering from chronic mental illness. It's during times like these that we inevitably "mess up", sometimes with severe consequences. We may be unable to fulfill duties, meet deadlines and meetings, and at worst, even be disrespectful or harmful to others. Even though circumstances might mean that it's understandable that we behave in a way that harms others, it's important to remember that harming others is never excusable. During the writing of this blog, I realised that what applies in the workplace applies to all interpersonal circumstances, so this is really a life lesson. This blog post covers my personal views, strategies and life experience regarding this topic.

First, how can I prevent messing up when I'm facing emotional difficulties?

In my experiences, this requires the self-knowledge to know when you are going to not be able to cope

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and what your not-coping behaviour might be. This further requires the interpersonal skills to communicate your circumstances and needs prior to catastrophe. Enactment this strategy has been essential for me as a student leader, and I expect it will be essential as a teacher or other role with authority.

For example: During a very emotionally difficult phase, a committee I was leader of what not pulling their weight. This meant that on top of my personal struggles, I was doing at least 3-5 times the work of everyone else in the team. I felt overwhelmed, unappreciated, disrespected and on the edge of total breakdown. However, instead of breaking down, I wrote a carefully-composed letter outlining the problem, how I felt about it, how it impacted on my personal struggles, and what I desperately needed from the committee. I slept on it, had a neutral friend proof read it (to check my rationality), edited it and sent it to the members. The result was a catastrophe averted! My committee immediately responded to my clear and open communication, they cared about my circumstances, and improvement was immediate. Further, it strengthened our bond as a team and lead to better cooperation in the long term.

But what can I do when I do inevitably mess up?

Crises cannot always be averted. When I can't cope and mess up I have a 4-step strategy I employ that has served me well. Even though these skills apply to all interpersonal contexts, after outlining the steps I'll focus on the professional aspects through two "case studies" from my own life.

1.) Communicate acknowledgement of what you have done

This step is difficult for some people, who naturally try protect themselves through believing they are in the right when they aren't, or maybe when they are only partially in the wrong. This is dangerous! In the real world, if you mess up, it makes life harder for the people around you. In doing that you damage relationships which need to be repaired. The first thing you need to do is explicitly acknowledge that you have messed up. Don't let pride or self-pity tempt you into justifying your misdoings. This won't help anyone and will further damage your relationships.

Note that this comes *before* explaining your circumstances, lest you find yourself making excuses rather than acknowledging wrongs.

2.) Apologise

This should hopefully follow naturally after acknowledging your wrongdoings (if not, you need to seriously think about why you don't want to apologise!). While you can't undo what has been done, a sincere apology can undo some of the hurt or emotional distance you may have caused. Rather apologise than not, as a missed apology can damage a relationship permanently. Also note that it needs to be an explicit apology. By that I mean not just "I'm sorry" but "I'm sorry for..."

3.) Communicate your circumstances

Now you have the opportunity to explain yourself. Note: *explain* not *excuse*. Making excuses can undo everything you have said up till now. It's hard to know how much is appropriate to share, as that has a lot to do with circumstances. Preferably communicate enough so that the person may use empathy to understand your struggles.

4.) Ask for leeway until you find your feet

If you can't cope with life right now, chances are you'll need some time to recover. I personally find it very difficult to ask for help or leeway, but I learned the hard way that it is essential at times. Be realistic about what you are capable with and how much leeway others are able to give you.

Case study 1: When I've managed to implement the strategy

Last year my grandmother died. It was expected, but it still hit me harder than I anticipated. That week I failed at everything, especially my duties at my part time job. I missed meetings, due dates, ignored my emails and generally screwed up. I was a fumbling mess at best. As soon as I was able, I sent emails to everyone I had inconvenienced. I acknowledged what I had done wrong, I apologised for it, I explained my circumstances and I asked for some leeway. Most people know what it is like to lose a family member or someone close to you, so everyone immediately understood, forgave me, and no relationships were damaged.

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Case study 2: When it's just too hard

Sometimes life hits you so hard and so slyly that by the time you realise what has happened you don't know what to do and it might feel like it is too late. During a more severe period of mental illness, I screwed up more than I had even realised. I was called into work for a talk. My boss (for lack of a better word) is a kind and motherly person, so she approached the topic gently. I still cried of course, which I hate doing in a professional setting. I had tried so hard to just cope without asking for help and without communicating that I was struggling but that only lead to me making everyone else's life difficult. I felt so guilty and so sorry, which I think was thankfully obvious because I don't know if I ever found the words to say so. What made it worse is that I couldn't bring myself to explain my circumstances - she didn't know I had a chronic mental illness. My boss tried to find explanations to my actions and failures, as I am an otherwise competent individual, and I couldn't tell her what was really going on in my life. I felt powerless beneath my mental illness symptoms and powerless in terms of my barriers to being understood. Thankfully my colleagues are forgiving people, and we moved on from there as if nothing had happened. The experience was so traumatising for me, however, that it made me rethink how I need to cope with my personal difficulties within the workplace setting. That day hung heavy over me for a long time, until finally about 6 months later I found the courage to tell my boss about my chronic mental illness and finally explain my failures all that time ago. I'm lucky that I have the kind of relationship with her that I can do that. Many people suffering from mental illness face great stigma and never have the opportunity to be open with colleagues about their experiences. Even so, to implement my 4-step strategy to the best of one's ability (even if step three is simply "personal difficulties") can prevent a lot of harm, especially in circumstances less forgiving as the ones I find myself in.

An extra note for the educator

To keep this explicitly relevant to education, I feel that this topic is especially relevant in the classroom. As an educator, your relationship with learners is not just personal or professional, it is key to their education. Learners learn best in an environment where they like and trust their educator. A learner needs to feel like they are being treated fairly and with respect. Unfortunately, the classroom is not a power equitable environment. Often educators feel they "don't need to" acknowledge and address their wrongdoing (consciously or not). Pride becomes and issue - "They are the teacher, therefore they are right". However, if a teacher does not acknowledge mistakes, apologise for the impact their mistakes on learners, explain (as much as is appropriate) their circumstances and ask for leeway, serious consequences happen. First, learners' relationship with the educator will be damaged, which can ruin the educational environment of the classroom. If not respected, learners may come to dislike the class or even the subject, which impacts on their wellbeing and academic success. Second, the educator is a poor role model and may reinforce or introduce maladaptive strategies that the learners use in their own lives.

Being an educator carries great responsibility. Our learners are both clay to be molded and the future of our society.

In summary:

"Life happens" to all of us. It's through self knowledge and interpersonal skills that we can behave professionally regardless of what life throws at us. No personal circumstances can excuse disrespecting or harming others. If something happens, we need to have the strength to apologise and explain (but not try and excuse) our behaviour. This not only helps to repair injured relationships, but also can be preventative in nature.

Things are hard sometimes. If you're going through a hard time as you read this, may this episode's dose of "aww" bring you some comfort:

BAp58
1 - Learning project - FKGL 10,4

In order to become a good teacher, a person has to understand the child or learner. I'm currently studying a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). I'm specializing in Business, Economics and Accounting. From personal experience, these was some of the hardest subjects in schools. How can critical thinking be encouraged in a compressed curriculum?

The adolescent is a strange creature. The influx or imbalance of hormones makes them particularly vulnerable to emotional re-activity, impulsiveness and high risk behavior. This hormonal imbalances, isn't the only reason for this sometimes destructive behavior. The emotional processing of a teenager can be described as bottom-up and adults demonstrates a top-down control. (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). The prefrontal cortical is responsible for problem-solving and decision-making. The limbic subcortical system on the other hand controls emotions and behavior. The top-down control system in adults, prefrontal cortical, overrides inappropriate choices. Read the articles below for a more in-depth description of these processes.

They are capable of making rational decisions, but they knowingly engage in risky behavior due to feelings, emotions and peers (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). Futhermore, possible gains also encourage high risk behavior.

There is a fine line between helping or hindering a child, adapting to adulthood. Few counselling initiatives actually curb violence, substance abuse, suicide, sex and gangs. Teachers can nudge adolescents to the proper responses to these hazards (Dobbs, 2011).
Teachers must create an environment that allows teenagers to explore but protect them against destructive behavior (The teen brain: Still under construction, 2011).

Why is all of this relevant? As a teacher you have to take these changes into account, in order to become an facilitator of learning. In my next post, I will write about the adolescent's capacity for learning.

2 - Learning project - FKGL 10,4

According to the US Department of Health and Human National Institute of Mental Health (2011), the learning capacity of an individual will never be greater than during adolescence.

The volume of gray matter peaks during adolescence. Gray matter is the thin, folding outer layer (cortex) responsible for thought processing and memories. Studies has shown that different parts of the cortex matures at different rates. Those areas of the brain responsible for basic functions like informational processing coming from the senses and controlling movements are the first to mature. Whereas parts responsible for planning ahead or controlling of impulses are last.

The frontal cortex changes dramatically during these years. It is responsible fo cognitive functions like multitasking, planning, social understanding and remembering to do things. Studies also show that transmission speeds increase in the frontal cortex because myelination. As neurons develops, myelin builds up on their axons. This fatty substance (myelin), increase transmission speed because it insulates the axon. Thus messages moves faster. Myelination is important for effective brain processing. See references for a more detailed explanation.

Why then is this important for teachers? Teachers must understand the changes adolescents are going through, related to hormones, social- and brain development, and match their teaching style to that phase. Environmental issues can effect the development as well. Maybe lessons should be planned around the adolescents, still developing abilities.

3 - Learning project - FKGL 8,4

In my mind, inclusivity meant valuing others and respecting another's input even though you don't necessarily agree with them. Yes, it is all that but it is also so much more. It is about accommodating the diverse learning needs of your learners, creating equal educational opportunities and ensuring access to learning. Access alone is not enough, the necessary support is needed to ensure success. The world is very diverse and this is reflected in the classroom. Learners shouldn't

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have to try and fit into the system. The system must accommodate and address their diverse needs.

Schools are a function of what is happening externally. Developments in politics, economics and the society, influences schools. For me, the biggest influences comes from the community or socio-economic developments. If you think about it, in the end of the day it is a teacher, coming from the surrounding community that plays a major role in schools.

It is thus teaching practices that may or may not lead to a inclusive school. Teachers can influence the attitudes towards acceptance. This requires the commitment of the teacher and the school. The whole culture needs to change. **This involves the creation of a community that is accepting and collaborative.** Teaching can overcome some of the barriers to learning. Teaching practices and the curricula must be aimed at diverse learning needs.

In my next post, I will elaborate more on the barriers of learning.

4 - Learning project - FKGL 7,4

A friend of mine told me this story. Extra-curricular activities led to him staying late after school with some of his learners. After a sequence of events, it turned out that he had to take them home. Never mind the ethical issues of this story, him taking them home, the story is what I want to tell. He dropped them of, one by one. One of the girls lived in a mansion. The last girl lived in a township, in a shack. What the last girl told him when he dropped her off really stirred my heart. She said: "I'm sorry my house isn't as great as my friend's, but we are still building." This girl lives in a shack and she is comparing her home, to a mansion.

What struck me about this story and this girl, is that she had no idea that her living situation wasn't as great or couldn't be as great as her friend's. She has a lot of aspirations and the fact, that reality or society has not gotten to her yet, is inspiring. She is blind to the fact that she doesn't have a lot or she knows, but doesn't let it get her down.

In our class, we watched a documentary about the life of learners in their final year of school. These learners also came from poverty and didn't attend a great school. Their biggest aspirations was to complete matric and this would also bring great joy to their families (since they would be the first to matriculate). Some of them did pass, but the story ends with the death of one learners, gang related, and the pregnancy of another, left without a job. My question or worry lies with the fact that the system is failing these learners. Even if they do matriculate, some of them aren't better off. Poverty, unemployment and inequality is maybe some of the biggest issues in South Africa. This leads me to the first barrier to learning, systemic barriers.

Some learners are put in a position, where they have to work in order to contribute to the household's income. Other learners can't concentrate in schools because they are malnourished, cold or under emotional stress. Lack of basic services, like transport is another barrier to learning. Learners are excluded from the learning process because they simply can't get to schools. Even if there is transport available, disabled learners can't access these services because no consideration has been taken to them. Disparities among urban and rural communities, as a result of inequality, contributes to a further uneven distribution and widening of the gap because rural communities already lack basic services and facilities. They fall behind even more and they can't get caught up. It is an endless cycle, and it has to be broken.

BAp60
1 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 4,4

Hello, this is my first post and I feel very lost... no idea how this works, or who can even read this? Also have no idea how to submit the weekly question?

I guess this is part of my digital pedagogy learning process!

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2 - PGCE learning **prompted - FKGL 10,9**

Interdisciplinary learning - Combining different subject areas. Through the use of digital media various subjects are combined and make more applicable to everyday life.
Discovery learning - Activities designed in such as way that pupils discover knowledge for themselves. Technology makes this very easy and accessible.

Differentiated learning - Different learning styles are sued to develop cognitive and effective domains. Through the use of technology many different senses and ways of thinking can be developed. Experiential learning - Experiences are used as learning, similarly to discovery learning, pupils find knowledge for themselves an learn how to apply it through experience. Teachers need to facilitate the process and encourage it.

These are some of the approaches to pedagogy and can be heightened through the sue of technology. How this would be applied in the classroom is up to the teacher.

3 - Learning project - FKGL 10,8

I'm not very sure of the subject that I want to learn about yet, I mean there are so many interesting things out there, but I also want something substantial and which can be applied to my subjects (Life Science, Natural Science and Mathematical Literacy). So I decided to research SKA (Square Kilometer Array) telescope. This more preliminary, knowing me I will probably find something more interesting and change my mind. Like a meerkat popping in and out of its hole.

4 - PGCE learning **prompted - FKGL 10,8**

What is the role of training? Are some people born with the ability to be an excellent teacher or are they born with the desire to become one? What role has training had in my journey thus far?

I think training plays a very important role, but that the desire to be a good teacher needs to be there first. The term pedagogue has some negative connotations such as being pedantic and very strict. Is this as a result of training? I think that is partly nature, but also the system that the teacher finds them self in, there are so many minor administrative details which have to be correct, so many forms which must be filled in. Further training if it is too legalistic may create the need for teachers to become like this if they wish to pass the training.

Curriculum technicians I think are produced by the education system. This has forced teachers to follow a set regime and has removed so much chance for imagination and creativity.

Teachers I think find a balance between curriculum expectations, administrative duties and still add the personal joy which originally lead them to follow this career path.

5 - Learning project - FKGL 6,3

Originally I decided to learn about the meerkat telescopes but I also warned that I would very likely change my mind and I have. This past month the Cape seems to have been engulfed by flames. Fynbos needs to burn every 10 to 15 years. I know the reasons why; seeds being activated by smoke, old growth being removed and nutrients being cycled. What I am unsure of is how these natural fires start. This is what I will be investigating.

BAp61

1 - Other - FKGL 1,5

"It's never too late to be what you might have been." George Elliot

2 - PGCE learning - FKGL 7,5

For the most part of my undergraduate degree, I was on the firm path to journalism.
I did a stint at a home and lifestyle publication, was part of the PLakker blog community in my first year

(side note: what on earth happened to it?!), had a personal blog for just over a year and reached 100 followers, worked for a solid amount of time at the campus newspaper and even got the status of Bylaagredakteur for a year.

Then - in what can only be described as a "fifthter" life crisis - I had a gut feeling that journalism just wasn't right for me right now.

So what turned me back to teaching? A profession that I had stopped striving for in my matric year after I decided (in all my teenage angst) that I could not bring myself to ever go back to high school?

As the title of this post reads and as Aristotle once said, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.". I'm not in it for the salary. I'm not in it for reaching the ranks of a fancy private school. I'm not even in it for the teeny weeny feeling of fame that comes with being "Miss [redacted]".

All of those things would be nice; but teaching, for me, is more than passing on knowledge (I'm sorry if I sound like the philosophy lecturer...). It's about passing over a piece of your soul about a subject/s you are truly passionate about and sparking that passion in students.

For me, that passion is music but unfortunately I don't have that qualification (five years in the University Choir count? Grade 1 in piano? No? Ok .). So the next best thing is English (I'm lookin' at you, Fitzgerald (slightly looking at you too, DiCaprio)). I've always had a passion for the English language and I really hope PGCE can teach me the teachy ways that I can pass my passion on to future students.

To quote another philosopher that haunted my undergrad, "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.".

3 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 15,1

Digital pedagogy goes beyond the mere use of technology and also incorporates how to use technology competently. It therefore follows that there are several different approaches to digital pedagogy of which I shall discuss four.

The first of these approaches is constructivism which advocates for the active and meaningful construction of knowledge. A constructivist approach to pedagogy emphasizes the teacher to act as facilitator to the learner as the responsibility of learning lies within the student. Therefore, in digital pedagogy, the onus of constructing meaning from technology is the obligation of the learner.

An expansion of constructivism and another approach to digital pedagogy is social constructivism. Social constructivism advocates that "students engage in processes of the co-construction of learning that involve explaining, negotiating, sharing and evaluating through the social exchange" (Brewer et al., 2002). When digital pedagogy is approached from a social constructivist point of view, a value is placed upon collaboration, peer interaction and student-centered learning. Furthermore, learning is understood as occurring within the zone of proximal development in this approach.

The zone of proximal development also relates to the third approach to digital pedagogy which is known as scaffolding learning. In the zone of proximal development, learners are able to reach a level of knowledge when provided with the appropriate support and scaffolding is that support which is needed. Approaching digital pedagogy via an approach of scaffolding learning builds on the knowledge, skills and previous experiences that learners have with technology and supports them in expanding these criteria.

The final approach is activity theory which should be noted as it is "useful in situations using digital technology because it provides a systematic means of describing and analysing artefact-based interactions within a social context" (Stevenson, 2007). Activity theory recognises the interaction between individual and collective action and, when applied to digital pedagogy, technology is seen as "[a vehicle] for transforming activity procedures" (Engeström, 1987).

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The above has been a brief summary of some of the different approaches to digital pedagogy. Ultimately, the choice of approach is dependent on various factors including a teacher's pedagogical values and the need of learners.

4 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 13,5

Pedagogues, teachers and curriculum technicians may sound like they have similar day jobs but they do not. The following post briefly examines the way in which these professions differ and also discusses the different ways that I would train a pedagogue vs. a teacher vs. a curriculum technician.

A pedagogue is similar to that of a teacher but teaches in a pedantic and strict manner. Not all teachers are necessarily pedagogues and vice versa; but all pedagogues treat the classroom as a place for experimentation in learning and teaching. They focus on learners being able to take what they have learnt in the classroom to the outside world.

Training a pedagogue involves more than fixating on curriculum studies and is, rather, focused on pedagogy studies. The pedagogue is trained in critical thinking and "is concerned more with big ideas, the themes of education, its ethics and morals and goals, and a lot less with grading mid-terms, quizzes, and preparing well-researched lectures" (Morris, 2014).

In comparison to a pedagogue, a teacher is more formally trained and it is often expected that a teacher has a degree, diploma or certificate in their curriculum specialisation. Traditionally, teachers are trained with the expectation that their work is relevant inside the parameters of the classroom and necessary for student assessment.

Unlike a pedagogue and teacher, a curriculum technician works behind the scenes. Curriculum technicians are expected to support learners, teachers, the school and, specifically, the curriculum as well as being able to administer technical and clerical tasks.

There are qualifications available in curriculum specialisation but, often, the main requirement for a curriculum technician is secretarial work. I would therefore train a curriculum technician on the basis of administrative, secretarial and digital knowledge but also ensure that they have an understanding of how curriculums are developed and how they work.

Although there is no concrete way in which to train a pedagogue, teacher or curriculum technician, I hope that the above has shed some light on the general manner in which one could do so.

5 - Other - FKGL 4,3

Isn't this amazing?
When teaching gets rough, I'm going to remember this photo.

BAp62

1 - Learning project - FKGL 6,4

I have recently moved back to Stellenbosch, after being away for 4 years. A lot has happened in these four years, both to me and Stellenbosch.

First I will tell you what happened to me... isn't that what self reflection is all about? Self reflection shared with THE WORLD WIDE WEB. Anyways... After I graduated, I went to South Korea for 13 months (no, I cannot say '1 year' because that extra month made a difference) to teach English to a bunch of cute, yet naughty, 6 year olds. After that I came back to the rainbow nation, the land of wild animals and even wilder people, to became a qualified game rangers (since my undergrad was in BSc Conservation Ecology). So, for the past 18 months, I have been in the African Bush (No, not THAT kind...wink wink). Confusing sexual innuendo aside, I have to say I miss it with every fiber of my being. More on this later... Now, I find myself here, in this 'lab' full of computers and people.

I cannot help but draw certain parallels between wild animal behaviour and "wild matie" behaviour. I am sure this insight (for lack of a better word) will go away over time, but for now, I still find

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myself needing to analyse animal behaviour, and since there are no pride of lions, or herd of impala's around, the jocks, nerds, 'poppies' and misfit maties will have to do.

This is not all I will be writing about on the blog. I am passionate about a lot of things, and mildly interested in even more. So, since this platform is here, I will use it, as often as possible.

Peace out!

Photo: 2 male dung beetles fighting over this very well constructed dung ball. How acuurate!

2 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 8,6

If you think of what pedagogy is, the philosophy of learning, then digital pedagogy should be the philosophy of learning through technology. To me, it is much more than that. It is about discovering new thins whilst look for your answer. If you think about it, have you ever googled something specific, and then 30min later you realise that you are learning things about a topic that is not really related to your original topic. Yet, it is. Everything is connected! You start looking at a cute cat video on Youtube, that leads you to big African cats, then it's hyena's attacking lions, leading to vultures feeding on a carcass, leading to harmful chemicals in natural water sources... Cats lead to harmful water sources, in a sense at least.

3 - Learning project AND PGCE learning - FKGL 8

We were told that we can write about anything. That we need to choose a subject and learn about that throughout the year. Well my subject is environmental education.

I have been interested in this for a very long time.I was fortunate enough to be in charge of the outreach to local schools at my previous job. Living and working in Limpopo really oped my eyes to the different challenges that we all face on a daily basis. Where I lived, on a private game reserve, we had no power and we were totally seperated from the world. I remember moving back to Stellenbosch and listening to the radio while driving around. I had this overwhelming sense that the world was ending because I would hear of murders and people kicking babies, and accidents and death. I asked told my mom one day that I think something in the world has shifted, people are acting crazy all of a sudden, doing horrendous things, she just said "No, you've just been out of society, away on your island of the African bush". In that moment I felt so sad, lost almost, what has happened to people? More importantly, how could I allow myself to become so oblivious to everything? I felt so selfish.

Anyways, back to the topic at hand, environmental education, and what my current education is teaching me.

In diversity and inclusivity we learn about how a child's background can affect their learning, their school life and social life. That economic status gives a child an advantage or disadvantage of sorts. I found this very interesting, and a lot of things makes sense since I have been learning about this.

I have also learned more about the affects of nature on learning, or what people do with knowledge about the environment.

I am not quite sure exactly what I am going to do with this new knowledge, but I am sure we will find out together.

Here's to peace and love and and that jazz!

4 - Other - FKGL 5,8

This weekend is the 12th Annual Cape Town Gay Pride parade. It will be the second one I attend, since I have been away the past 2 years.

This year is extra special because my family and I are going to have a float, all decorated and stuff. My [redacted] are kind of the "managers" of the Cape Town PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays). By managers I mean they started the group on Facebook and try to give advice to those who ask. I am obviously extremely proud of them for doing this, and I love them even more for supporting

me.

My family is kind of sprinkled with a lot of homosexuals. Like, A LOT! So this is a great weekend to celebrate all that is, and was and will be. Celebrating life and family and freedom and of course RAINBOWS!

5 - Other - FKGL 6,3

Books. I like to think that I am a reader, meaning I like to sit down and read. Genre of choice, fantasy and Sci-fi. Garth Nix introduced me to fantasy with "Sabriel". AAAhhh Sabriel. That book was one that changed me, it opened this whole new realm of possibilities!! Magic, love, defeat, treachery, dragons and all that follows. Another great writer, the great and late Terry Pratchett. Man, he really got me hooked. Not only can you have fantasy, you can have humour, and death and birth and all that on the back of a giant turtle world!

My point... My girlfriend is an avid reader, as in, finishes a book in a day! she is also in the literature industry, and she has a very extensive library at her house. So the other day, when I ignorantly asked: "Who is Margerat Atwood, and why do you have so many of her books?" she almost fell off her chair. It's little reactions like that in a person that makes you know they are passionate about something. I instantly recognized this reaction in her, because I too have that reaction when people don't know what a pangolin is, or "Rhino's are being poached?"...let's not go there, yet. Anyways, i digress. She immediately gave me two books of Margaret Atwood, insisting that I will like it. And low and behold... I love it.

Oryx and Crake takes place after an apocalypse of sorts (I am a sucker for a good apocalypse). The human race basically drove themselves to extinction, and they played the creator by making new animals. You have things like the wolvog (wolf and a dog), a cunning creature that lures you in by acting like a puppy and then the pack attacks, or a rakunk, skunk and racoon (adorable apparently). What is most striking about the book is that it would seem we, as a race, are heading in that direction. They found a way to grow human organs with in pigoons (pigs). People can give stem-cells, and then any organ can be grown within the pig, in case you might need it one day. They also talk about cloning as an every day thing. There are disturbing bits in it, like the fact that, before the apocalypse, people took part in very questionable activities. There are all these different sites on the internet where you can watch people being beheaded, or being legally injected, websites where people assist and film people committing suicide, or eating life animals for prices. The most disturbing are the pornography sites they describe, I won't go into it but, the problem is, some of these things are out there. Messed up things.

The point of this blog, books can change you. Books can change your mind about the world, people around you, and most importantly, it changes your thoughts, ideas, and you. It changes you in such small ways that it isn't even noticeable at first, then you read more, and then one day, you just know you are different, something in you just clicks.

6 - Other - FKGL 5,6

Faith. Such a small word with so much meaning. Faith can make people do anything, it can make miracles happen. Faith can also make people kill, it might actually be the number one killer in the world.

Sometimes, I can truly feel my faith in humanity slipping away, ever so slowly. The way we speak to each other, the way we judge. Even me, I judge people who don't do what i believe to be right. the way we exploit nature and destroy the natural world. The same natural world that was apparently so well thought out by the one and only. The truth is, not enough people care.

In times like these, when i am truly at a loss of faith in humanity, i recite a list of names. Dian Fossey, Jane Goodall, David Attenbarough, Steve Irwin, Bette White, RuPaul, Harvey Milk, etc. All the people that have done good in the world, people that have fought through things no matter the cost. Yes, it's mostly made up of people who fight for conservation and gay rights, but that's my truth,

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they restore my faith.

I it was up to me the world would be filled with a bunch of Lgbtqi people and allies and we would all be vegan! And if you want meat, you take responsibility for killing and butcehring and preparing the animal, no life lost without meaning.

Maybe one day!

BAp63
1 - Prac - FKGL 8,2 [Afrikaans]

Vir die van julle daarbuite wat nie bewus is nie, NOS is die nuwe HOD - OF as dit maar net was...

So begin ek in 2015 met my NOS kwalifikasie...rocky start nadat ek al in Maart n emosionele breakdown gehad het voor n dosent (skaam my dood), maar die **werkslading was werklik oorweldigend**. ELKGEVAL...

Nadat ek n rol aangebied was op 7de Laan - trek en verander ek my studierigting na my MA in drama binne 24h - net om uit te vind dat die SABC my storielyn gesny het...soooo na 3 weke in wonderlike Johannesburg, kon ek darem terug na die NOS kursus (met genoeg goedkeuring van dosente - waarvoor ek baie dankbaar is). Haal ek gou vining-vining die werk in, of so het ek gedink, en die lewe gaan toe maar weer aan.

Elkgeval

Die inskrywing handel nie oor die verlede nie, ook nie oor die bevoegdheid van die horderde doktors binne die Opvoedkunde Fakulteit nie, ook nie of ek n passie het vir die opvoedkunde professie nie, die gebruik van tegnologie binne die klaskamer nie...dit gaan oor die tonne vrae oor die praktiese module, getiteld proef.....................oh poef.

Ek moet eerstens noem dat hierdie geensins n refleksie is op die skool waarby ek betrokke is nie, maar eerder die module.

Ek het n fees by die skool en die personeel is werklik toeganklik. n KLEIN probleem wat ek wel het, is die volgende, en indien iemand daarbuite dieselfde voel soos ek, asb deel graag:

Ons, by die US, betaal ten duurste vir die kursus. Vir enige kursus for that matter.

#Vraag1: ons het geen kontakure met die US personeel tydens die 3de kwartaal nie (omtrent 10 weke). Hoekom moet ons dan die volle bedrag betaal...?

#Vraag2: hoekom op aarde moet my ouers se hardverdiende geld bestee word aan n kwartaal waar ek geen onderrig ontvang nie (US).

#Vraag3: ek moet daagliks omtrent 20+km (eenrigting) na my skool ry, op my eie onkoste (wat ook my ouers se probleem raak). Hier word dit weer eens ons probleem om by die skool uit te kom...

#Vraag4: die opsie is aan studente gegee dat hulle x-bedrag (omtrent R2000) kan betaal aan skole vir koshuisverblyf - die bedrag moet dan by bereken word op studente se koshuis/privaatverblyf (persoonlik R3300 p.m.).

#Vraag5: die proeftydperk is ongelooflik lank. Hoekom deel mens dit nie op in twee skole (een maand elk)...aangesien ek reeds al my waarnemings en krit lesse afgehandel is...

Hoekom kan die department nie (aangesien ons nie klas loop in die derde kwartaal nie), die bedrag verminder sodat vervoer- of verblyfuitgawes deel word van die kursus. Dit maak die finansiele las vir ons ouers minder.

Op die ou einde ervaar van ons studente finansiele druk, en al wat die departement kan se is: "dis nie ons probleem nie"...

Om die logistiek van omtrent 200+ studente se plasings te doen moet chaoties wees...en ek is seker dat die betrokke personeellede tog akkommoderend is, en baie hate mail moes kry. Not a nice job to do, maar dit moet gedoen word.

2 - Other - FKGL 5,7 [Afrikaans]

Om werk te soek, is geen grap.

n Skool, n vooraanstaande tersiere instansie, die kerk of pilletjies, kan jou geensins voorberei vir hierdie fase van jou lewe nie...

Ek trek nou al by n minimum van 40 aansoeke - regoor SA, maar meer tussen GP en WK - waarvan ek darem drie kortlyste gehaal het. Nodeloos om te se, het ek nog geen pos gekry nie. Terugvoer van die skole sluit die volgende in:

*Om die skole se identiteit te beskerm sal ek pseudonieme gebruik...

H/skool1: "Ongelukkig het u nie die top drie gehaal nie, maar u het ons baie beindruk". (Duidelik nie genoeg nie...)

Laerskool1 per telefoon: "Goeie more, ongelukkig het u nie die top 3 gehaal nie. Die paneel voel u is meer geskik vir hoerskole". (Nou dit het ook geweet...of die feit dat die skool TE ingestel is op hulle Christelike waardes en ek heelmoontlik te alternatief is om die arme broeitjies te onderrig).

H/skool2: "Jou ondervinding is die probleem (die feit dat ek nie het nie)". (Of die feit dat ek te eerlik is oor my toekomsplanne en die onderhoud meer geneig het na drama...).

So, nou wag ek maar vir nog. Verder vreet die angs maar aan my dikderm, saans en soggens, en moet ek seker begin dink aan ander werksopsies- moontlik my MA, Engels gee in S.Korea of acting n kans gee in Kaapstad of Johannesburg.

Die ander dag ontvang ek n epos van bleep-skool. Die inhoud op n Sasko brood is meer formeel as die van die epos. Die inligting lui opsommend as volg:

Die skool het n Afr/Eng gr.8-12 pos beskikbaar. Dit is tans n tydelik departementele pos wat voltyds kan raak. Ek moet my CV aanstuur indien ek wil aansoek doen. Groete *Babs.

Nou kyk, ek het geen idee waar die skool my besonderhede gekry het nie; wie op aarde is die informele *Babs is, asook waar die besonderhede is oor hierdie poste asook briefhoof/inligting aangaande die skool?

Tot op hede het ek nog niks van *Babs of die skool gehoor nie. Of die skool weklik bestaan, dit weet ek nie. Maar ek wag maar nog.

Wat ek geleer het van my drie onderhoude:

Moenie te eerlik wees nie.

Laat die paneel hoor wat hulle wil hoor.

Wees voorbereid.

Doen jou huiswerk oor die skool.

Probeer dit maar geniet.

En laastens,

Ruk n haas uit die hoed. Menigmaal.

3 - Other - FKGL 4,8 [Afrikaans]

Eerstens vra ek sommer nou al omverskoning vir skryftekens wat ek nie insit nie: ek probeer nou al 2 jaar uitfigure hoe om dit te doen sonder om heeltyd insert te druk, plus ek weet nie mooi waar hierdie funksie op die Blogger nie.

So, kom gou oor dit as dit jou pla, en dan gaan ons aan. As jy sukkel, hier volg n gratis ontspanninsoefening:

Asem in...asem uit........uit....uit...hou hom daar...tot voor jy wil flou val...haal diep asem. Nou weet jy daar is erger dinge in die lewe as n ou skryfteken. Kosbare lewe.

Elkgeval.

Hier sit ek nou, eet n vinnige ontbyt, hier en daar sien ek lede van die US Kuko span...wit geklee met die swart emblem, nie groter as n Coconut Wheel nie, geprint op die linker tit...check your move (n slogan wat ek nou nog nie lekkkker verstaan nie, maar nou goed, ons sal ons moves check). Dit mag dalk net ek wees, maar daar is n aantasbare energie in die lug, dit, of n elektriese storm kweek weer

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erens.

Die afgelope jaar het ek baie goed ontdek, ervaar en begin doen. Ek het besef dat n gebrek aan discipline my tot in my kleinste kiem irriteer, dat die lewe nieso ernstig hoef te wees nie, en dat mens so af en toe net moet asemhaal. Maar wat my die meeste irriteer, erger as Ser politiek, gerugte wat by n plaaslike koerant uitkom en suur verloorders, is mans in langbroeke met....plakkies. Vir die wat nie weet nie, dis daai plastiese-rubber-mengsel kledingstuk wat tussen die groottoon - wat se nael gewoonlik te lank is - en groottoon se maatjie pronk. Met die skoen se ontwerp, kleur en brand het ek nei n problem nie. o nee! Ek dra dit self. Maar hoekom, hoekom moet dit gedra word met n langbroek. Soos my ma altyd gese het: kry jy warm my kind, of koud?

Ek blameer nie die ou wat hierdie afskuwelike tendens volg nie, ek blameer die samelewing (soos meeste maar doen). Hoekom jy n warm oorjas, jeans - of daai broeke wat n rek het om die enkels - en die plakkies dra, weet g'n mens nie. Wel ek doen nie, maar ek kan probeer. Hier volg dan wenke vir die man op straat wat dit nodig ag om so aan te trek, wat dit meer verdraagsaam kan maak vir die mense om jou, en dan ook inherent, ook vir my:

1. Was die voete. Ek weet jy mag dalk bietjie neig om alternatief te wees, maar menslike higiene is noodsaaklik. Dalk lok jy iets anders as n vlieg.

2. Knip maar daai toonnaels wat so oorkrul.

3. As jy nou daar onder besig is, maar bietjie skoon, of kry iemand wat vir jou lief is om daar uit te help.

4. Die plakkie moet darem die styl wat jy volg weerspieel.

5. Wors-toontjies moet eerder die styl vermy: lang, maer surfer voete lyk net beter. Feite.

Mag hierdie kort, kragtige wenke jou motiveer om daadwerkliks n verskil te maak in die samelewing, saam kan ons die samelewing red, plakkie vir plakkie.

4 - Other - FKGL 6,3 [Afrikaans]

Ek was onlangs bevoorreg om my eerste pantomime oudisie by te woon. Soos meeste seker teen die tyd weet, is my mantra (of ten minste een van my mantras) "dis die klein dingetjies wat saakmaak". So, een van daardie klein dingetjies is in die vorm van n e-pos wat lui: "you've been requested to audition for...". Daardie paar woorde sal enige persoon se selfbeeld n hupstoot gee. Shame.

Nadat ek wanted gevoel het vir so twee dae, het ek begin voorberei vir die groot dag. Indien van julle nie weet nie, die proses werk as volg:

Jy ontvang n brief deur jou agentskap/manager waarop al die inligting aangaande die produksie (wie,wat,waar en wanneer) verskyn.

Dan word daar mooi uiteengesit wat van jou as kunstenaar verwag word om voor te berei. In die geval van n pantomime is dit n musiekstuk in die musiekteaterstyl, asook die afle van n dans oudisie. Dum-dum-dummmm...

Nou, laasgenoemde is maar n teerpuntjie aangesien jy moet meeding met professionele dansers. So, vanaf die tyd wat ek daar aankom vir die oudisie, tot net voor ek loop, sit ek met n moddemagie as gevolg van spanning, en om ander te hoor se "ja, I just finished with West Side Story and doing Sweeney Todd later this year", help nou glad nie die saak nie. Inteendeel moet pollie meer knyp. Dansers se nonchalant houding is eintlik fantasties. Kyk, as die land regeer kon word deur n dansende party,sou die land flureer. Die eintlike rede is maar net dat hulle ongelooflike selfvertroue het. En goeie postuur. En n goeie figuur...need I go on. Vir n danser, is geen danspassie te moeilik nie. Vir ons as leuke, is dit n ander storie. Tydens die oudisie het n nie-so-dierbare danser van ons onder sy vlerk geneem so tussen sessie om oor die passies te gaan. Tot nou toe weet ek nie wat my die meeste van hom gepla het nie. Eerstens dra hy n wifey (ook geken as wife beater of vest), waar die tepels koekeloer aan weerskante aangesien hy dit goedgedink het om die kledingstukkie nog kleiner te knip. Tweedens het hy ongelooflike selfvertrou gehad. Dalk te veel. Maar Tepel, saam met die ander

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professionele dansers is toe beide rondtes deur...asook, wag daarvoor...ek! Take that Tepel!

Nou, nou sit en wag ek maar om te hoor of ek n callback gekry het vir die panto. En verder gaan die lewe maar aan. Die dansers dans hulle harte uit en bou aan hulle figure in die gym. En ek? Ek sit in n klaskamer vanaf 08:00 tot 14:20 en kyk hoe die toekoms van ons land leer oor direct en indirect speech en pouse eet ek my regular, n samoosa.

5 - Prac - FKGL 5,6 [Afrikaans]

Ek wil eerstens begin deur net te noem dat ek werklik geen idee het waar die taalfunksie is nie, en tweedens dat spellcheck my lelik in die steek laat deur woorde te verander na hul Engelse maatjie. Not nice. So, byt maar op jou vinger, potlood, begin jou hare uitpluk of kneus die persoon langs jou stadig, ek kan nou eerlik nie help vir taalfoute nie. Deal with it, asb.

My proeftydperk is nou amper in die laaste pylvlak...uiteindelik. Moet my nie verkeerd verstaan nie, ek geniet die skool. Dis die vroeg opstaan wat my nou begin vang. Oh! en dat my vriende met vakansie is (wees trots julle taal fundi's! ek het gese met en nie op nie). Kyk, as jou ma ooit vir jou se "my kind, word eerder n prokureur of dokter". Luister vir haar. Skool is beslis rof. Ek verwys nou nie na die leerders nie, die is van nature rof. Met hulle hormone wat teen die mure drip, ongeskikte aanmerkings en die af en toe boelie, is die uitkoms nou nie juis die van n opknappingskool nie. Nee! As ek se skool is rof verwys ek meer na die admin. Wow. Wanneer het n skool n mini besigheid geword?

Finansiele beampte, hoof van bemarking, leier van dit en portefeulje van dat. Dan wil dit voorkom asof leerders gekeur moet word om toelating. Stom. "Jammer mevrou, maar ons moet kyk na *** se punte voor toelating oorweeg kan word", want behoed dat *** swak vaar op skool, want dan raak dit die skool se slaagsyfer in matriek.

Dan verdien die WKOD (Wes-Kaapse Onderwys Dept) om genoem te word. Kyk, in baie provinsies gaan dit sleg, maar in die Republiek van die Wes-Kaap kan ons werklik nie kla nie. Of probeer om minder te kla (dit bly immers n nasionale instelling). Die arme opvoeders moet gereeld vir opleiding gaan: dan vir rekenaars, dan moet almal in n ding met wiele gelaai word om te gaan registreer vir iets anders. Elke oggend moet ons 5 arme proefstudente dit aanhoor wat die dept. nou weer laat weet het: eers word die ANNAS (of so iets) geskryf, dan word dit die volgende dag afgestel weens vraestelle wat besaai le in een of ander kantoor erens.

Vir die van julle wat nie weet nie, soos enigiets in die lewe, gaan die onderwys oor beplanning, en as jy die tipe mens is wat nie kan beplan nie moet jy 1) eerder my unfriend op Facebook en 2) die onderwys glad nie oorweeg nie. Dinge kan binne n paar uur verander. Wel van die dept se kant af. Binne die skool opset, kan dinge in n oogwink verander. Sarel slaan vir Karel, dan kry hy n aantekening op een of ander bladsy. Of, Sarel se ouers word gekontak. En moenie kommer nie, as niemand dit gesien het nie, kan ons altyd gaan kyk na die CCTV materiaal. Smile! Gevang!

En deur dit alles sit ek rustig, neem ek alles waar, en eet my R5 beef samoosa. Want dis lekker.

6 - Other - FKGL 5,8 [Afrikaans]

2 Maande is agter die rug, en my plan om soggens in die gym te verkeer voor ek regmaak vir skool het wel, nooit gebeur nie. Die afgelope naweek het ek dit goed gedink om wel die tekke af te stof en die tog gym toe aan te pak. Dis nou nie asof hierdie tog 3 dae te perd is of te ver om te ry en te naby om te loop is nie, nee. Glad nie! Luiheid was hier die rede. Wel, in all fairness, luiheid en die feit dat proef, sêr, koor, skoolgee, drama en oudisies bietjie van my tyd opgevat het. Nou sit ek met arms wat nie reguit kan oopmaak nie, wat beteken dat as ek staan lyk ek soos n bulldog.
Hierdie inskrywing handel oor 'n aktiewe en produktiewe naweek.

Ek was nou nog nooit een om Facebook updates te maak oor gym sessies of foto's op te laai oor my "progress" nie. Ek moet bieg dat SOU die dag kom dat ek n before en after foto kan oplaai, sal ek nie skroom om dit te doen nie. Soos iemand al vir my gesê het: "ek werk hard om so te lyk, ek sal sonder 'n hemp loop". Nou ja toe. Daar het jy dit. Die afgelope naweek het ek 'n paar goed gesien wat

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eerder moes gebly het en ek kan nou sommer julle ook waarsku dat die manne regmaak vir somer, Stilbaai gaan weer bewe onder die spiertiere!

Die eerste keer in my lewe het ek twee bodybuilders gesien in die gym. So, terwyl ek op die treadmill stap - wat uitkyk oor die gym, wat my 'n lieflike 180 grade gee van waarneming - gewaar ek dié twee. Wat my effens ontstel het was dat die een sulke twee ongemaklik knoppe op sy skouers het. Vir die gewone mens mag dit lyk soos goed geoefende skouers, maar vir my, nee. Dit lyk asof dit groeisels kan wees, aangesien dit sy kop nog kleiner laat lyk. Ek moet hom wel komplimenteer dat daar verder goeie balans tussen bolyf en bene is. My tweede gril het gekom toe ek die man se partner sien. Ek kon eers nie verstaan hoekom die outjie so aansienlik kleiner is as die bul nie, totdat ek die rompie gewaar het...ja, dit was 'n vrou. Dit alles was wel vermaaklik deur te sien hoe hulle tussen oefeninge poseer voor die spiel. Nee, ek is nie jaloers nie. Ek het ook besef dat soos ons as akteurs ook maar oefen, moet die skepsels ook werk aan hulle voorkoms aangesien dit hulle passie is.Of mens 'n loopbaan daaruit kan maak, weet ek nie. Ek sal Google maar raadpleeg en uitvind.

Op die sewende dag betree ek toe weer die gym...die keer, links agter my gewaar ek iemand geklee in swart...op 'n treadmill...skat haar so 50, wag daarvoor...sonder 'n bra. Ja dames, ons kan sien wanneer die susters te veel skud. En alhoewel dit moontlik vir ander hope plesier kon verskaf was dit vir my nou nie juis aangenaam nie. Ek het so gehoop dat sy, soos meeste, haar laaste 10minute op die apperaat gaan voltooi en gaan...maar nee...toe ek weer sien stap sy en haar suster oor na 'n volgende masjien...teen die tyd maak ek my laaste 5minute klaar en gaan na onder na die ander gewig apperate. Ek kon nie meer nie.

Basiese etiket tel orals, maak nie saak van die venue nie.

Dis nou my sesde jaar in Stellenbosch. Ek dreig al jare om die Jonkershoek roete te gaan stap. So besluit ek en Nina om aktief te wees en dit te gaan doen. R50, 5km en 'n drawwende oom wat water afslaan langs die pad, later is ons by die parkeerarea. Alhoewel ons 'n padkaart gehad het, was dit nie juis maklik om die eerste ingang te kry. Ek sal weer R50 betaal as daar bietjie beter aanwysings aangebring word. Genade.

Uiteindelik betree ons die uitgelegde padjie. En nadat [redacted], wat voorloop, so paar keer die Nasionale blom op my Nasionale voël geklap het, kom ons by die eerste waterval. Mooi. Alhoewel ek oortuig was dat dit die twee waterval was, want ons het aan die begin so klein poeperige waterval gesien. So, vat ons weer die pad...

Soos ons loop, kom ons af op twee vroue. Soos ons Afrikaansprekendes mos nou maar is, praat mens mos Engels tot die ontvanger die swaar Afrikaanse aksent hoor en die gesprek dan voortsit in Afrikaans. Met die liefde in ons hart en opgewondenheid in ons stem, vra ons uit oor hoe ver die tweede waterval is. Hulle reaksie het meer waarskuwings ingehou as aanmoediging: as julle hoogtevrees het, sterkte. Daar is 'n plat klip as julle moeg is. Wees versigtig vir die grot gedeelte.

Nou maar goed, 20 minute later betree ons toe die waters van die waterval...na ons moes klouter oor rotse, deur koue water en oor bome.

Vind ons toe rustigheid. Kalmte. Vrede.

Dit wys jou net, deur 'n bietjie aktief te wees, brand jy nie net kalorië nie, maar kan 'n mens vrede vind saam 'n sielsvriendin.

BAp65
1 - Other - FKGL 2,1

Basic warm up for homosapien. Ideal for combat and contact sports.
Parts of our general warmup done before training.
1. Heaven and earth stretch
2. Bear crawl. Forwards. Backwards.
3. Forward roll with hop.

4. Forward roll into combat posture.
5. Back roll
6. Back roll with hip flop.
7. Cartwheel.
8. Handstand walk.

2 - Other - FKGL 5,9 [quote]

William James, 1840 "...do every day or two something for no other reason that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test."

3 - Other - FKGL 7,2

On the Ontology of Being
"I think therefore I am"

This dualism Descarte has left western thought with glorifies the mind, thought, consciousness? over the body.

But what of Being?
In the Western mind we tend to conceptualize consciousness as a product of our physical manifestation. But is this mistaking the image of a process for the process itself. Are neurons firing in the brain, the origins of consciousness, or merely a representation thereof?

Consciousness does not proceed the physical, however the former seems to be possible without the latter, as when we dream. But yet we look out onto the world from the perspective of a body. The experience of consciousness is always from the perspective of a body, a being.

So what of being? What of the felt experience of being an organism? A being, a primate, a human being.

The body, this apparent generator of consciousness influences consciousness. The 'master' influenced by its vehicle and vice versa.

Thus we are not a mind within a body, but rather a mind body system. A manifestation of consciousness. The incarnation of the mind at large.

4 - Other - FKGL 13,5

Minister of Sport and Recreation, Fikile Mbalula, July 2014.
"Our consistent call to have physical education de-linked from the subject life orientation, and made a stand-alone subject has been ignored and disregarded. We strongly and firmly believe that physical education is key to ensuring that sport at schools becomes an integral part of the curriculum."

I would disagree with the minister on 2 points, the first with reference to the curriculum statement on life orientation:

"Life Orientation is the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It is a unique subject in the Further Education and Training Band in that it applies a holistic approach to the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners."
-National Curriculum Statement
Department of Education

A separation of the physical education component from the rest of the life orientation curriculum would not contribute to the development of a holistic person. It is precisely the integration of the physical along with the intellectual, emotional and spiritual that would serve to create holistic individuals. To this end I would argue that rather than dividing the teaching load, life orientation teachers should aim to show learners the connection between their body and mind. Secondly, although sport is a great vehicle to introduce physical activity to learners, this should be a tool used in a larger framework rather than an end in itself. What should be at the heart of the physical aspect of the curriculum is a focus on basic

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human movement patterns. Able bodied learners (and adults) should be able to perform a range of basic human movements, many of which are often neglected in our desk ridden, electronic lifestyle. From this starting point different sports can be introduced to learners who would hopefully develop a love for movement and the social aspect of sports.

Exposure to sports is secondary to having students who can move well and keep their bodies physically healthy. Most important is an understanding of the connection between the physical and the mental. An understanding that our mental and emotional states are often influenced by our physical bodies.

5 - Other - FKGL 14,1

Peter Diamandis touches topics such as the possible future role of artificial intelligence in education, as well as how the availability of information can democratize and "de-monetize" education. He is also Chairman and CEO of the X PRIZE Foundation. which encourages in me a kind of childlike wonder at the possibilities for innovation and a utopian future.

6 - PGCE learning AND prac - FKGL 6,9

Just some prezis I've done recently.
1. Learning techniques, good for a Life Orientation lesson but also good for any high school level grade class.
   https://prezi.com/3xzq8kvyt9cl/learning-techniques/
2. English specific lesson. The 6 types of essays.
   https://prezi.com/ep_prt_xtpqg/six-different-types-of-essays/
If you're unfamiliar with how Prezi works;

It's free to use but anything you create is freely available online for anyone else to use. You can privatize your prezis by paying a fee (a kind of crude copyright if you will), **but it functions very much like a community of creators and consumers freely exchanging information.**

7 - Other - FKGL 8,2

In his book "The One World School House, Education Reimagined" Salman Khan makes the case (among the many other compelling arguments he makes for educational reform) for the 'One Room Schoolhouse'. This refers to the seemingly out-dated model of the big red schoolhouse, as one might see on a farm. Children of different ages are placed together in the same class. Modern approaches to this can be seen in the Montessori method, which does the same with some stratification. Our traditional model of age group cohorts is so ingrained in the educational system that many take it as self-evident. "To state what should be obvious, there is nothing natural about segregating kids by age. That isn't how families work; it isn't what the world looks like; and it runs counter to the way that kids have learned and socialized for most of human history. Even the Mickey Mouse club included kids of different ages, . . . The older ones take responsibility for the younger ones. (. . .) The younger ones look up to and emulate the older ones." (p.192-193)

This approach relies on other assumptions espoused by Khan; That the traditional model of 'receptive' learning, where students are passive recipients of broadcast type lectures should be replaced by active learning where students are encouraged to engage with their learning. In this view there is not set path where groups of students are moved along all at the same pace (in theory anyway), but rather students learn at their own pace and review or advance at their own speed.

This approach is analogous to what happens in a jiu-jitsu class. Students of different levels are grouped together, and while there may be an instructor, everyone is at the same time a teacher and a student. While learning and pra Ownership of the learning process is the common denominator between the 'One Room Schoolhouse' and the 'One Mat Jiu-jitsu academy'. Students need to engage with their learning; the one size fits all approach bores those ahead of the pack and leaves behind those who

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learn at a slower pace. The best approach as always, has been to learn by doing, whether on the mat, or in the classroom.

Salman Khan: Before founding his Khan academy www.khanacedmy.org , he was a hedge fund analyst. He's also worked in venture capital and engineering at Oracle and several Silicon Valley start-ups. Khan hold an MBA from Harvard Business School, where he was president of his class, and three degree from MIT.

'The One World School House Education Reimagined. Salman Khan' Hodder & Stoughton. 2012.

If you are interested in beginning the journey of self-development that jiu-jitsu brings and you live in the Stellenbosch area, check out: [redacted] which offers excellent coaching and training partners.cticing new techniques, students simultaneously learn and teach, helping their partners hone their skills by providing feedback and advice. It is an approach that is more relevant when one considers how different body types (read different learning styles) lend themselves to certain approaches. The tall skinny guy shows the other tall skinny guys what works for him, while the nimble smaller ones brainstorm on how to beat their larger classmates.

BAp66
1 - prac - FKGL 10,6

The journey of being a student Teacher at [redacted]!

It has been an eventful week with the first day being very overwhelming as I find myself in an environment once well known many years ago as a scholar, but this time unknown as I enter my journey of being a teacher in the future. As many has warned me and the entire PGCE group that teaching requires a lot of planning and commitment from teachers and the entire school governing body and this was noticeable from the very first day of school.

Throughout the week I've observed a variety of different teaching methods. From the approach being teacher centred, learner centred and teacher-learner centred. I've found that when it is mostly the teacher speaking during a lesson learners tend to get bored and start to lose their concentration. In comparison with the learner centred approach, there is a lot of freedom given to learners to participate within the lesson, they are allowed to discuss answers in groups, but this can only work if the lesson is structured, because it may result in the discussions going off point. Thus the teacher needs to take charge and facilitate the discussion at all times. I've learned this week that it is best to make learners aware of what will be expected of them within the lesson, so that this can also help keep the lesson structured.

I'm fortunate that I was placed at a multiracial school as this brings a certain dynamic into the classroom. I observed in one class where a student called the teacher a racist, because according to this student, the teacher sided with the student of his race. In this I learned to be fair to all at all times and not be placed in a situation where my actions appear to be favouring anyone. I also learned that as much as a teacher motivates a learner to do their class activities or homework the responsibility lies on the learner as there is only so much a teacher can do. There were teachers that would check the homework and then there were teachers who didn't care whether learners did their homework or not, but all teachers gave feedback on the homework.

I had a good week, after the first day everything got better, as I had to find my feet the first day, learning the names of teachers and where their classrooms are, so there was a lot of running around the first day. As the week progressed I felt more comfortable, I became more confident about that which is expected of me to do at the school. When I presented my first lesson on Friday, I've put into practice all the things we've learned during 1st semester, by being assertive the first day so that learners may know where they stand with me. And also the better you're prepared, the more confidence you'll have in the classroom when teaching. Throughout the week I was thinking about how I will deal with telling a learner to behave. I questioned whether they will respect me as the age gap between me and them is

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small. I look forward to see when the time comes to address a certain situation how I will deal with it.

The lack of interest of some grade 12 learners in class got me thinking a lot, because they had an attitude of I don't care and that is scary. I approached some of them to ask why this view, then they explained that they're not planning on going to study further, or the subject(Mathematical Literacy) is too easy. I tried my best to motivate them and encourage them to think about their valuable input during class!

Hopefully next week will be a great week of learning as well!

2 - prac - FKGL 10

Boy oh boy, I thoroughly enjoyed this week!
Firstly, let me say that presenting is definitely way more fun than observing. There was absolutely no nerves and everything about teaching felt natural. From Monday I was assertive and told both classes that no behaviour that will disturb the process of learning will be tolerated within the classroom. I knew that when I'm well prepared and know the subject content that things will go well and presenting my first ever lesson in the school bunks was a super special moment and I will treasure it with me always.

This week I started to learn the dynamics of the school. There is great room for improvement regarding the discipline of the school. The behaviour of some learners towards teachers are utterly disrespectful and the young people of today (not all) do not seem to know what it is to have respect for the elderly. As someone who came from an era where you listened when an older person speaks to you, this is sad to see and I have to stop myself from stepping in when a learner is rude toward a teacher. Only afterwards I would approach a learner and try and pick their brain as to why this attitude. Here I learned that the learner is troubled and are experiencing something that the teacher is not necessarily aware of, but in the same breath, some certain learners are just rude and it's not the teacher that is dispositioning them as such, but their behaviour that allows for this disposition.

Also in this week one learns about the staff room politics and I try my best to not notice things, but it is unavoidable and sometimes I have to stop myself from not laughing when I see how one teacher gets annoyed with another during staff meetings! Definitely eye opening, learning how a group of people with different personalities have to stand together at the end of the day to create a cohesive school environment!

The thing I've looked forward to most was to see how I will handle any disciplinary problems. It was refreshing to know that when learners are reprimanded with gentleness they do feel bad about their behaviour and show respect. With regards to discipline in the observation of lessons, I feel that teachers need to pick their battles more carefully. It is not wise to create an unpleasant atmosphere within the classroom about something that's completely unnecessary.

For my extra mural activity I have chosen to sit in with the school choir. The only thing about music I know is how to love it and appreciate it. The school choir is fairly small, but they're are competent and are exciting about their performance at the school's talent show next week.

Saturday's the big inter schools competition between [redacted] High School and a neighbouring school. It was a busy week with finalising all the details as the school is hosting the event this year. Friday the school had their "Big Brag" introducing all their teams of respective sports and also getting all the learners excited for the encounter. It was great getting to see this aspect of school, besides the academics and management of a school.

Next week should be another great week of learning and personal growth!
I look forward! :)

3 - prac - FKGL 8,3

I had an amazing week of pure brilliance and learning galore!
But, first let me say that [redacted] High School won the derby on Saturday against a near by rival school. Thus the mood during the assembly on Monday morning was filled with excitement as all

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the learners and teachers that contributed to this win, were celebrated! I am truly finding my rhythm as a teacher, all the time I make a concious decision about what type of teacher I want to be! I think this is very important, that one needs to know how they want to present and conduct themselves within the classroom. I had a few special moments within this week. I found complete freedom about the choice to do a course in education when I was able to assist learners in understanding certain concepts better. It truly is rewarding like dr Davids shared with us, when a child's face lights up and their eyes sparkle, because you were able to be that help they needed to understand something.

I am starting to form a relationship with the learners. By now they know what to expect from me and they behave accordingly. So when the grade 8's entered the classroom disorderly on Wednesday, I gave them I good pep talk. I told the class that I will not tolerate this type of behaviour and that I expect better from them as the standard have been already made aware to them. During all of this I spoke with them in a gentle, calm tone. I refuse to succumb to anger or raising my voice when learners behave the way they're not suppose to. I'm aware that this can easily change after a good few years in the teaching profession, but I too think that it is important to handle learners with care and the out most respect, although they lose their respect for you it doesn't give you any right to lose your respect for them. This will truly be my aim and most probably be my greatest challenge maintaining an attitude such as this. Kids are special and I don't know what circumstances they come from or how they're treated at home, but the time I'll be graced with their presence they will know that they're worthy and deserves nothing but the best from me!

I also noticed in the grade 8 Natural Science class and after confirming it with the principal, that there's a boy with a learning disability within the class. He has been medically diagnosed as a special needs learner. He has a short concentration span. His parents have tried to put him in a school to accommodate his needs, but at the moment the school is too full, which is really unfortunate. He has caused quite an uproar in some classes and today he tried to be disruptive which has never happened out of the classes I have taught them. When I noticed his seek for attention, I asked him questions regarding the content and he would answer, although he was wrong I still thanked him for his contribution and one could see it on his body how good it feels to him to be given praise. I look forward to see how I will deal with him in the future.

My best time at the school is really that 45minutes I get to teach a specific class. This journey gives so much more meaning to my life, to my existence. I didn't think I would enjoy it this much, especially being the only one out of our PGCE group at this school.

The week was eventful. The matrics had their 40 days on Thursday, which made for a very chaotic day. They truly came full force with an agenda to disrupt the norm, they "kidnapped" (tying hands, feet and mouths) teachers out of their classes, while teaching a lesson and held them prisoner in the quad. Not quite sure why I say them, because I too was "kidnapped", but I chose to go willingly, meaning I walked down to the quad and not carried by anyone. Out of the few teachers that went through this "traumatic" ordeal, most teachers laughed it off, while one teacher was really upset. All the time I was just saying/asking myself "Is this really happening?". "How can such disruption occur in a school?" School which is a place of order.

I too have to admit it was exciting to behold the fancy costumes and this type of behaviour displayed by them as my school never had these events. It however affected the behaviour of the other grades as well and this made it unpleasant for teachers. But everything did stabilise and returned to somewhat normal.

It is also the Matric Farewell Tonight, so I look forward to hear how their night went. When I get a chance to finally teach the grade 12's.

I am very pleased to know that I will be able to sleep a little bit later on Monday, before the teaching and learning commences on Tuesday!

4 - prac - FKGL 9,2

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The experience of this week was super bitter sweet!

There has been a few moments within this week that made me appreciate the teaching profession so much more! In this week I again learned that it's more than just about teaching content. At this stage I'm able to form relationships with young people that goes beyond Natural Sciences and Mathematical Literacy. Although I have a stance of pure professionalism, the children just find it easy to share things about their life's, their interests, dislikes and passions without me having to intrude.

My favourite moment of this week was when a grade 11 learner called me while the class is doing an activity and handed me 5 of his poems to read. He also whispered that no one has ever read his poems before as he doesn't share them. It felt super special that he could entrust me with reading his personal writings. I too do some writing of my own and I too don't share it with others therefore I could relate in many ways.

He is super talented and really creative. After reading his poetry I thanked him and told that maybe I too can build up the courage to share some of my writings with him.

The bitter part regarding this week is that the personnel is not a united front when it comes to certain aspects and the meetings before school starts brings such a heaviness that one's day starts off unpleasant. I realise that this is a group of different individuals therefore everyone has his/hers own opinion, but I believe there is a certain standard that should be maintained when disagreeing with a fellow colleague. I'm not involved in any of this and steer clear from any negativity. It is an eye opener and I think this journey is preparing me how to conduct myself in the working environment in the future.

For the first time this past week I got to teach the gr 12 learners. I felt apprehensive as I already formed a working relationship with the gr8's and gr11 and I wasn't sure how the lesson will go, but I was excited at the same time. The attitudes of some learners is disheartening, because some of them wouldn't bother to take out a pen or book to work with the class and as much as I try to engage, encourage and motivate them to participate, they simply don't care at all. I however had to realise that I cannot waste my energy on those that chooses not to participate, but my focus has to be on those that wants to work, that comes to school to learn. Despite their I don't care attitude I will continue to not lose hope and will continue to try and inspire them to reach their full potential.

On Friday I had my evaluation for Mathematical literacy. The planning went well and the learners worked well with me to have a successful lesson. The lecturer was pleased and he advised that me to involve learners by writing/doing sums on the board, which I have in other lesson, but this didn't take place in Friday's lesson. Nonetheless, it was a good lesson. There was no nerves, I was comfortable and well prepared. I look forward to see what this 5th week holds!

The 2 [redacted] students had their last day of practical on Friday, I will now be the only student teacher at the school, it should be interesting!

5 - prac - FKGL 10,1

The week started off on a sad note, as the principal told the staff on monday morning, that there's been a break in at the school. The 5th one for the year and again it was projectors that were stolen out of classroom. It left many teachers baffled as no one understands how this can happen. The school management is now closely looking at measures to ensure that this won't happen again.

This has been a week solely focused on academics. All of the grades had test scheduled this week and teachers wanted to give revision lessons, thus there was less presenting of lessons for me than any other week.

This week I have experimented to see whether I'll be able to control a situation where I invite grade 8 learners to give their feedback on the board. I have done this before and it worked well with the Senior grades, but I was sceptical with the Juniors as I don't want any learner to be offended when they make a mistake and some learner shouts it out in a manner that is disrespectful. I wanted to avoid doing this at all cost, but deemed it as a good challenge. Prior to asking learners their contribution on the board, I have explained to the class what will be expected from the other learners. I think it went fairly

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well, but there was the occasional random shout out's from other learners, "That is not the answer" but I would immediately address the individual.

I'm also learning that it helps to speak to learners that are misbehaving after a lesson as they leave to the next class, by just gently saying, I didn't appreciate that or I expect better from you! One can then see on their body how guilty they feel about their actions and it's during this time one needs to motivate them to be better, but not just in my class, but all other classes.

On certain days the interaction between me and the learners is better than other days. When learners find the content interesting they willingly and freely participate within the lesson, but their are days where I need to create the hype about learning something that doesn't seem to make sense to the learners. On Thursday morning I felt despondent when there was a few learners that didn't understand a certain concept (Right Hand Rule, Natural Sciences). Which have been explained in a series of lessons before, this period was used as revision as they had a project the Friday on Electromagnetism. Thus I felt the way I did as this has been dealt with before. I would ask them questions on the content and they struggled to answer correctly during the lesson, even after I've simplified the explanations and using other visual aids, such as pictures demonstrating. I had to remind myself that I cannot allow how I feel to show on my face and that it's not a reflection on me. I did question myself whether it's me that's creating the hurdle, but again I had to realise in reality there will be learners that will grasp something quicker than others. This is where doing revision and homework is of cardinal importance as learning shouldn't just occur within the classroom. After the lesson I then stretched the importance of home work to the class, hopefully it made an impact on them.

On Wednesday a lesson I was observing was interrupted by the police. All the learners were shocked, me included as it came unexpected. The police was there to search the boys, the girls were asked to leave the classroom. The principal that he suspects that learners are using illegal substances on the school grounds and he felt that the police should intervene so that learners may understand how important it is to the school that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Although it was drastic, it surely made the impact it had to.

The prefects for the year 2016 have been nominated as well within this week. At the high school I attended only the teachers had a say, but this school uses a different system where fellow learners can nominate as well, which I found interesting.

On to week 6, for some more teaching and learning!

6 - prac - FKGL 10,2

This past week has been physically draining as I have become sick and started losing my voice to the end of the week.

Throughout my life I have been the silent, deep in thought guy. Being a quiet observer is a part of my nature, but when it is required to speak up I do which has been required of me this past week more than any other.

I had to keep vigil of a teacher's class for the entire week. Unfortunately this is an English teacher, thus I jumped at the opportunity with less excitement as my subjects are Natural Sciences and Mathematical Literacy and I knew I wouldn't be able to teach as I do in my other classes, I however could explain what a 'Metaphor' and 'Simile' is and also make use of relevant example, felt quite chuffed about this. I deemed the experience as another learning moment and looked forward as I knew it will come with many challenges to further build my character as a teacher. The school has a strict policy of not leaving student teachers alone with a classroom, but with this teacher being absent as she's been invited to a seminar and other teachers being absent on various days, the vice principal stepped in and asked for my help, which they have avoided up until now. Fortunately I have completed all my Evaluations and Observations, thus it didn't infringe on any of my work.

"Baby sitting" a class can sometimes be an unpleasant experience. As the students know and have the mentality of "He's a student teacher, there's not much he can do", this has been the attitude

of a select few. It amazes me how certain learners have no respect, they enter the classroom the way they please, others sit and then there's only a few that stands orderly at their desks waiting for me to greet. Although this week required "more" from me as any other, I did appreciate it. As I only grew from each encounter having to discipline a learner, figuring out which works and what doesn't. I can honestly say, that I didn't have to shout like a mad man, but only had to be firm and unwavering. It was a challenge with the bodies that filled the classroom, as I haven't formed a relationship with them as I have with the other classes I have taught. It surely became better later on in the week. The teacher left worked for each grade to complete each day, but in my opinion, she made the mistake of handing out the schedule to them the week before, thus many have completed it at home, and they eagerly showed me their workbook as their proof, so they entered the classroom thinking that it's an off period for them. I made it very clear that no one will enter the classroom with that mindset and will have to find other work and be productive. Hence, the reason why I have lost my voice, as I had to talk an awful lot this week and the added sickness has helped with the voice running away!

In between the teacher's off periods I could still manage to teach Natural Science to the grade 8's. We did revision as they had an investigational research project and a test due within in the week. I was also allowed to mark these assessments. Which also have been a learning curve. My mentor teacher warned me to never take it personally when a learner fails in knowing the work I have explained to them. It is so easy to take it personally though, as you question yourself, but then you find reassurance in those students who have done exceedingly well. Made me realise again that certain learners are just quicker in understanding and also as a teacher I have to bear in mind what that child is facing outside the classroom and not positioned that child as a lazy learner.

There's only 3 weeks remaining of this journey, can't believe that 6 weeks have passed. Still remember that very first day so clearly. I have one more lesson that will be evaluated by a lecturer this week, hopefully it'll go well like all the other lessons! The boys at the school is really passionate about their rugby and it is always good watching them play, win or lose!

7 - prac - FKGL 8,7

This past week flew by so quickly and I'm starting to realise how this journey is drawing to a close. The feelings surrounding this fact is rather mixed as I terribly miss Stellenbosch, but I know for sure that I will miss being a student teacher at [redacted] High School as well.

There has been many things happening on our campus and throughout the week my thoughts have been with Stellenbosch and it's students. Times I wished I was there and not just see things on the news and read information on social media... But I also understood and accepted that this is where I need to be.

Teaching this past week went extremely well and it started to feel more and more like second nature. When learners enter the classroom they know what is expected and they behave accordingly, thus the structure of one's lesson is important especially for the junior grades, but without falling into the trap of everyday feeling monotonous. This is where excellent planning plays a role. If one plans well, then the lessons will go well. I've learned over the course of teaching, that it is important to keep the learners occupied from the start to the end of the lesson. I'm in the fortunate position where I don't have any heavy workload in comparison to teachers. Thus I pay attention to them throughout the lesson. I often witnessed how teachers would give learners a class activity to complete, then they remain stationery at their desk, not to sit and do nothing, but to complete work. If you're firm with a class then this can work, as learners do need to battle with the content of a subject on their own. However there are moments where learners decide to do as they please, because they know the attention of the teacher is elsewhere. Again, this is where efficient planning and time management is key as a teacher and hopefully I will try and succeed at this to the best of my ability as a teacher in the future.

I've also had my second lesson evaluated for Natural Sciences as I didn't get a chance to present Natural Sciences during fish bowl. I was very apprehensive about the behaviour of the learners.

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They're grade 8 and is super energetic and struggle to pay attention, because they get distracted easily. I had to tell myself that I need to get rid of the thought that an excellent lesson is a lesson without any reprimanding or ill behaviour by learners. Nonetheless, the lesson went well, it was a great teaching-learning moment and the Evaluator was very pleased with what he observed.

The school has a youth worker and over the weeks I've formed a good relationship with him. We are the same age and could relate on many things. He is loved by the learners of the school. He deals with the learners and the struggles they face as young people. Every Wednesday there is a time after register class where he meets with the school in the hall, which is not compulsory, as he shares a message with the learners that is Christian based, thus it's not compulsory out of respect for those with other belief systems. A school having a Youth worker is definitely an advantage.

Looking forward the upcoming week! Will miss teaching the grade 12's, because they have started with their preliminary exams. Wish them all the best!

8 - prac - FKGL 8,5

As the school term is drawing to an end, it was a full academic week. Not only are the matrics writing their preliminary exams, but all the other grades had test scheduled within this week as well.

There was a few definite lows this past week, where I got to close to knowing what it feels like when a parent is disappointed in their child. Whilst teaching the grade 8's on Tuesday after break time, I noticed that there was a few boys acting differently than normal and I got a slight smell of marijuana. I proceeded with the lesson, but their behaviour became a problem as all the other learners knew what they did during break time. I stopped with the lesson and gave the class a good pep talk, because I have formed a good relationship with the class, they were listening and the guilt was evident on the faces of the boys involved.
I however gave a general speech about how disappointed I am in their behaviour and how important it is for them to take care of their lives. I was real and honest as well and said that I know that there are a few learners high on weed.

After talking to them I remained silent for a while. I could see how the silence in the classroom is getting uncomfortable for some learners. We eventually continued with the lesson, during this I had to hide my disappointed and carry on as normal and make sure that I still interact with the learners with great enthusiasm. After the lesson I asked one of the boys who I knew definitely smoked as could see on his face, his eyes to stay behind. He admitted to me. He didn't try to hide it or lie and that I appreciated. Had a good conversation with him about it and he kept on saying sorry, he is a good boy, always eager to answer in class, has good grades. Reminded him of how valuable and precious his life is. I unfortunately had to report to the grade head what I've learnt as it's a serious offence. Have to admit there was a part of me that didn't want to inform the grade head on black and white (if it's not on paper it's vapour) as I didn't want the learners to get into trouble, but of course this had to be reported to keep myself out of any trouble. The grade head then followed up on the situation, they got detention and with discretion the parents were informed and of course the grade head had to use language such as, "their might be a possibility", "we have heard" that your child smokes marijuana during school time.

Another few lows were, learners that stole English question papers. This left the English department up in arms as the teachers learned about it very last minute, which meant new papers had to be drawn up.

Interestingly enough, the high light of my week was with the grade 8 class mentioned before. The lesson was about "how do we see objects" in terms of our eyes. The learners were eager to learner about how the eye and it's different functions allows us to see. The learners were full of questions. They asked why we have as humans have different eye colour and I got so excited having to explain to them. It was good being able to use that which I've learned during my undergrad in the Genetics classroom to help learners understand better. Class was much more well behaved then the previous lessons.

I've learned that although there is a scheduled followed, that it is okay to stop with a lesson and

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talk to the learners. To share life with them without over stepping any personal boundaries. I believe it is important for young people to know how special they are and it felt like that I've reached my own person goal, which is to inspire learners beyond just Science and Math.

I've also spent more time this week observing lessons that is not my curriculum modules. Was great to see the different teaching styles of teachers, the interaction between the teacher and the learners or lack thereof.

Again I lost my voice on Thursday, it is really unfamiliar to my vocal chords for me to speak a lot, I think lol. As I've mentioned before, I'm generally the quiet, loner, observing kind. Thus speaking a lot takes some getting use to.

All in all, week 8 was packed, but it was a wonderful week of learning especially about how the teaching profession gives meaning to my life.

One more week to go! Feeling rather bitter sweet!

9 - prac - FKGL 8,4

The final week of the teaching Practical!
When I woke monday morning I was just in awe of how quickly these past 9 weeks went for me. I still remember the very first day stumbling in the staff room awaiting to be greeted and seated by some teacher.

As with everything in life, things come to an end and I felt at peace with what has been accomplished thus far! The week although it was the last, felt like any other week and the focus was on the learners, academics and making sure that I soak up all other moments to learn.

As I'm writing(typing) this I'm thinking of all the learners I have met and formed a relationship with. Again reminded of how special young people are and I'm pleased to know that I could make a mark in the lives of young people that goes beyond the classroom. The learners were absolutely fantastic, they knew it was our last week together and they fully cooperated, which I truly appreciated.

One of the highlight's of the week was meeting with the principal and having a relaxed conversation about him regarding education and his personal journey. Talking with him felt comfortable and one could see his passion for teaching. His heart for people is truly evident especially in the way he engages with the naughty learners. We both agreed that a teacher's personality is of out most importance along with their subject knowledge. One cannot be a teacher and not have a warm, positive attitude toward people. Loco parentis is truly what a teacher should be striving to be at the school.

I know that is natural that there will be certain aspects miss regarding school, but I too feel the time has come to be back at campus. As mentioned before I miss Stellenbosch and I look forward to engage in thought provoking conversation that will challenge my thinking. I enjoyed being at the school and being the only student teacher after the [redacted] students left for 5 weeks made often feel despondent. As I always wondered how this journey would've been if there was fellow class mates with me at the school.

Ending off Friday was super special, a few learners wrote me letters to thank me for the time teaching them and reading it made me learn how valuable I was. I'm truly appreciative of this gesture and these letters I will forever keep in a safe place, to return to them when the going gets tough.

Was all in all a good week. All teachers were busy finishing their marking, here and there I could help out my mentor teacher with that. I must say I had one of the sweetest mentor teacher's. She has such a warm, kind heart and was at all times helpful and encouraging!

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1 - prac - FKGL 9,3 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie week was my heel eerste keer van proef en die aand voor die tyd was ek beide op my senuwees en opgewonde. Ek het nie geweet wat om te verwag nie. Ek was onseker of ek die regte

klere gaan aantrek, of ek op die regte plek gaan parkeer, of ek by die regte ingang ingaan en of ek op die regte plek in die personeelkamer gaan sit.

Ek het toe, korrek geklee en parkeer in die skool ingestap. Eers was dit als baie vreemd: Die leerders weet nie wie ons is nie, en ons nie wie hulle is nie. Maar dit het in die week verander en ek het gesigte leer ken. Aan die begin van die week het ek baie uit plek uit gevoel. Dit was ongemaklik en vreemd in die nuwe omgewing sonder al die gemaklikheid van die gewoonte. Soos my persoonlikheid is, het ek positief en vriendelik probeer bly, en dit het toe baie beter geword, en ek het gemakliker begin voel.

Wat ek in die skool gesien het in die eerste week is die volgende: Hierdie skool is baie anders as wat ek verwag het. Ek moet gewoond raak daaraan en aanpas by die feit dat die skool nie klem lê op dissipline nie. Leerders kan basies lyk en doen wat hulle wil- wat eers vir my na choas geklink het, maar dit werk in die skool. Eers was dit vreemd, omdat dit nie is wat ek gewoond is nie, maar ek het begin aanvaar dat dit nie noodwendig 'n slegte ding is nie. Dit wil blyk dat, as gevolg hiervan, daar n baie geoeie en gemaklike onderwyser-leerder verhouding in die skool vorm. Dit sal heel waarskynlik een van die belangrikste dinge is wat ek sal aanleer in my skoolbesoek.

Wat ook duidelik is, is dat die onderwysers die proef studente makliker aanvaar, wanneer ons bereidwillig is om deel te neem in verskillende aktiwiteite. Dus het ek myself beskikbaargestel om te help by funksies reël, sport afrig en by sportdae uithelp ens. Dit het my gehelp om met verskillende onderwysers te skakel, en dit het my gemakliker gemaak in die skool en personeelkamer.

Iets wat vir my hirdie week 'n uitdaging was, was om die onderwysers te leer ken en gemaklik om hulle te word. Die grootste deel daarvan is om die onderwysers aan te spreek. Daar is baie jong onderwysers in my skool, wat soms slegs 3-5 jaar ouer as ek is, dus is dit vir my vreemd om hulle as "Meneer" en "Mevrou" aan te spreek, eerder as op hul name. Dit is steeds n uitdaging.

Iets wat ek gedink het n uitdaging sal wees, was die rooster omdat ek nie gewoond is om so baie in die klas te wees nie. Tot my verbasing was dit glad nie n probleem vir my nie, intendeel ek het dit geniet om in die klasse te wees en die onderwysers se styl te leer ken.

Verder was die eerste week genotvol, omdat my skakelonderwyser my baie uithelp en gemaklik laat voel.

Ek sien uit daarna om die leerder beter te leer ken, en hulle vir my, want ek glo dat dit die klasomstandigehde sal vergemaklik wanneer ek volgende week my eerste les moet aanbied.

2 - prac - FKGL 8,4 [Afrikaans]

Week TWEE, dankie tog!! Die sprong van week een na week twee was so groot en het soveel verbetering gebring. Hierdie week was leerders meer gewoond aan die proefstudente, ons het begin klas aanbied en ons voel nie meer uit nie. Ek raak al hoe meer kreatief met my kosblik wat ek elke dag inpak :), en bestuur ook deesdae my tyd na skool beter. Hierdie week was 'n goeie week.

Daar is 'n tema waarop ek hierdie week wil fokus, wat ek ook in van my kollegas te blogs gelees het oor: Die idee dat daar ondersky moet word in 'n klas tussen die "stout" kinder en die "soet" kinders. Wanneer ek klasse waarneem, of insit by my mede proefstudente se lesse, maak dit my hart seer om hierdie onderskeiding eerstehands te sien gebeur.

Dit is algemeen om te sê: "Oe, ek sien al die stout kinders sit aan hierdie kant van die klas", of "julle groep is stout, so skuitf uit mekaar uit!", of selfs "julle is stout so ek gaan nie julle antwoorde aanvaar nie".
Ek weet nie of ek al die hele jaar lank in 'n verskillende klas as jy was nie, maar dit gaan teen alles wat daar vir ons geleer word. Die kinders moet opgebou word, nie afgebreek word nie!

Wat het geword van, "jou gedrag is nie aanvaarbaar vandag nie"of "die antwoord was nie gepas nie". Ek dink die probleem moet eerder aangespreek word, as wat die leerder beledig word. Dus het ek hierdie week besluit om 'n punt daarvan te maak om geen leerder as "stout" te label nie, want watter positiewe invloed kan dit nou eintlik op die leerder hê?

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Op 'n ander noot, het ek ook hierdie week besluit om my proef planne te verander. Ek het aanvanklik gedink ek gaan al my obserwasies in die eerste week uit die pad uit te kry, maar hierdie week het ek besef dit is dalk nie die slimste move nie. Ek het my lesse so versprei dat ek elke week klass aanbied behalwe die laaste week. Nou het ek besluit om die helfte van my obserwasies vir die laaste week te hou, sodat ek nie net in die klas sit en die tyd om wens nie, maar eerders 'n goeie, besige einde aan my proeftydperk kan hê.

Hierdie week oor die algemeen was goed en BAIE beter as die vorige een. Die "soet"/"stout" kwessie het my besig gehou die week, omdat ek in elke klas baie oplettend was hieroor. Ek kom agter ek geniet my een spesialiserings vak baie meer as die ander een, en volgende week bied ek lekker baie van my gunsteling aan. Next week's got nothing on me.

3 - prac - FKGL 7,2 [Afrikaans]

Iets van hierdie skool maak my baie opgewonde. Dit is werklik n skool vir die leerders. Wanneer daar iets gebeur is dit volkome deur en vir die leerders. Ek wens eintlik my skool was meer so.

Wanneer daar n dans gerëel word, doen die leerders dit. Wanneer daar n saalbyeenkoms is, hanteer die leerders alles. Daar is nie eens onderwysers op die verhoog nie, want die leerders praat met mekaar. Dit skep n baie goeie verhouding tussen leerders en tussen onderwysers en leerders.

In die personeelkamer word daar ook gedurig gepraat oor hoe om die leerders te hanteer en hoe om hulle gemaklik te laat voel en aan te pas by wat in hul lewens buite akademiese werk gebeur. Dit maak my baie gelukkig, en dit wys my regtig wat dit vat om n goeie onderwyser te wees.

Skool is nou lekker, maar hierdie week het verskriklik stadig verloop! Ek het lesse aangebied en dit baie geniet, omdat dit nou al voel of my klasse MY klasse is. Ons kan al grappies met mekaar maak en daar is n gemklike atmosfeer in die klas (Hulle het selfs virmy gesing op my verjaarsdag). Lesbeplanning raak vir my makliker en aktiwiteite opstel is nie n groot berg wat voor my lê nie. Oor die algemeen was ek baie positief hierdie week.

Hierdie week het ek iets baie belangrik geleer. Ek het na een van studente kollegas se klasse gaan kyk, waar sy Engel moes aanbied. As n Afrikaanssprekende, kan ek getuig dat dit baie intimiderend kan wees. Sy het n pragtige les voorberei, maar sy het haarself baie betwyfel, en dus het leerders nie baie respek getoon nie. Dus - 'n onderwyser MOET selfversekerd wees in die vak wat aangebied word. Flip, selfs al is jy nie seker oor wat jy sê nie, is dit belangrik om selfvertroue uit te straal. Leerders wil glo jy kan hulle iets leer, anders mors jy hulle tyd. Ek betwyfel myself baie, maar ek durf nie dat die leerder dit raaksien nie.

So, ek is gelukkig waar ek is, maar dit put my uit. Ek leer baie! Maar vir nou is dit tyd vir langnaweek, na hierdie lang week.

4 - prac - FKGL 9,1 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie week het goed begin, maar nou aan die einde het ek regtig 'n breuk nodig. Ek was vir die eerste keer gekrit hierdie week, en ek dink dit het darm goed gegaan. Hierdie week het ek 'n bietjie meer ervaar hoe dit in die "regte lewe" is om 'n onderwyser te wees. Verkeie dinge het my buite die skool besig gehou, en ek moes baie goed my tyd bestuur en beplan om by alles uit te kom. Die ervaring van skool was dus tot nou toe in my oë kunsmatig - om skool toe te kom en dit is al wat ek het om te doen. In die regte lewe, wanneer ons regte onderwysers is, gaan dit nie so gebeur nie, omdat jou persoonlike lewe ook nog aangaan. Jy moet tyd maak vir vriende en onvoorsiene omstandighede. Hierdie week het my dit geleer – om gebalanseerd te wees is baie belangrik. Ek kan nie vir 5 dae alleenlik aandag aan skool gee, en dan 2 dae alleenlik aan persoonlike sake nie. Ek moet 'n manier kry om hierdie twee te kombineer. Hierdie week was dit vir my 'n skok toe ek dit agterkom, maar nou dat ek weet daarvan en doelbewus kan werk hieraan, sal ek die res van my proeftydperk 'n beter gebalanseerde daaglikse roetine volhou.

Die leerders was hierdie week baie woelig, daar was 'n markdag, dit was 40 days en die koor

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het gesing vir die skool. Hierdie alles het bygedra daartoe dat die periodes se tye verander het, wat vir die leerders op 'n heel ander golflengte plaas. So almal was bietjie besiger en remoeriger as gewoontlik, maar steeds kon alles goed verloop en klasse kon aangaan soos normaal. In weke soos hierdie sal die onderwysers in die peroneel vergadering ook mekaar aanmoedig om bietjie rustiger op die kinders te wees en nie so streng soos gewoontlik te wees nie, omdat die personeel verstaan dat die leerders op hierdie dae bietjie uit hul nate sal wees en dit probeer akkomodeer. Ek vind dit baie spesiaal en bedagsaam van die personeel. Soos ek al voorheen gesê het is hierdie skool regtig vir die leerders en hulle behoeftes kom eerste. Ek dink dit is 'n baie goeie en belangrike eienskap van 'n skool.

Volgende week sal seker weer so week wees omdat dit volgende naweek interskole is. So ons sal maar sien wat in daardie lesse gebeur. Vir nou is ek uitgeput en moeg, maar ek is bly ek proef en ek is bly ek sien wat dit regtig vat om 'n onderwyser te wees.

5 - prac - FKGL 8,5 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie week het ek geleer dat dit een van die heel belangrikste dinge is om goeie verhouings te bou in die onderwyse beroep. Met dit bedoel ek goeie verhoudings met jou leerders en kollegas. Hierdie week het ek aktief gekyk na verhoudings tussen leerders en hul onderwyser, en ek glo regtig (sonder om idealisties te klink), dat leerders wil hê dat hulle onderwysers van hulle moet hou.

Ons het n klein debat tussen van die proefstudente daaroor gehad hierdie week, omdat party mense baie sukkel en van mening is dat leerders nie regtig omgee wat die onderwyser dink nie. Ek stem nie saam nie. Baie leerders kom na die skool toe om aanvaarding te kry, iets wat baie kinders nie baie die huis kry nie. Dus glo ek hulle het n soeke na aanvaarding by die skool.

My skakelonderwyser is n toonbeeld hiervan. Wanneer hy n af tydjie het in klas, gesels hy met die leerders oor nie-akademiese sake. Oor hulle vakansie, of sport, of ouers, of enige belangstellings wat hulle het - omdat hy goeie verhoudings met sy leerders het. En die leerders is MAL oor hom. As gevolg hiervan respekteer hulle hom makliker en luister wanneer hy praat en ernstig is.
Aanvanklik het ek gedink hierdie tipe optrede gaan leerders laat voel of die onderwyser sy/haar 'buddy' is, maar dit is nie my obserwasie nie. Uit my ondervinding het dit net n goeie uitwerking. Dit vorm ook deel vam die "holistiese onderwyser" leefstyl wat ons al behandel het in die klas.

Ek sien uit na die res van die proeftyd, want hoe meer ek die leerders leer ken en verhoudings op bou. Hoe makliker en natuurliker kom die onderwys vir my. So dit is waaraan ek nie kon ophou dink hierdie week nie - verhoudings. Want in enige beroep is dit belangrik, maar in onderwys is dit (na my mening) , heel bo aan die lys.

6 - prac - FKGL 9,2 [Afrikaans]

Ons word so baie geleer dat leerders self gemotiveerd moet wees in hul skool werk, en in die skool waar ek myself bevind pas hulle ook hierdie ideologie toe. Hulle werk nie volgens reëls nie, maar eerder volgens waardes. Daar is nie 'n dissiplinêre stelsel nie, en geen strawwe wat aan die leerders gegee kan word indien hulle ongehoorsaam is nie. Leerders word dus aangemoedig om self die regte besluite te neem, self goeie punte te wil kry, en self verantwoordelikheid te aanvaar vir hul skoolwerk. Tot dusver het ek gedink hierdie is die beste benadering vir 'n skool, maar na hierdie week het ek 'n ander siening gekry.

Ek het in een van my vakke vir die leerders 'n aktiwiteit gegee, en hulle die hele periode gegee om dit te voltooi. Ek was ook beskikbaar en het my hulp aangebied indien hulle iets nie verstaan nie of vrae wou vra. Ek het geweet dis 'n hoë standard aktiwiteit, en dus het ek hulle voor die tyd voorberei en seker gemaak hulle weet ek is daar om hulle te help. Niemand het hulp gevra nie, en toe ek die aktiwiteite terugkry, was die uitslae pateties. Nie eens net swak punte nie, maar geen moeite is gedoen aan die aktiwiteit nie. Sommige leerders het dit nie eens gedoen nie, of slegs een word antwoorde geskryf.

As gevolg van dit, dink ek dissipline in 'n skool is belangrik. Hierdie leerders is gewoont daaraan

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dat hulle kan doen wat hulle wil, want die skool gaan niks aan hulle doen nie. Hulle hoef nie klas toe te gaan nie, want die onderwysers doen niks as hulle bunk nie. Leerders word gewoont gemaak aan 'n spesifieke standaard in die skool, en omdat hulle nie aangemodig word om te presteer nie, aanvaar hulle dit te maklik om net "average" te wees.

Dus, leerders moet geleer word van dissipline in hul skool werk, en reëls is nodig vir jong mense. Hulle is nog nie volwasse genoeg om aan hul eie lot oorgelaat te word nie. Hulle het nog nie daardie insig nie. Onderwysers en skole moet rigting gee, en deur geen reëls in die skool te hê nie, word leerders gewoont daaraan om nie aan nagevolge te dink nie. Leerders moet dus, volgens my mening, konstruktief opgevoed word binne 'n sekere raamwerk.

Dissipline is nodig, dit hoef nie op 'n hoë skaal te wees nie, maar jong kinders kan nie vertrou word om altyd die regte besluite te neem, sonder leiding van die skool, onderwysers, of beheer sisteem nie.

7 - prac - FKGL 7,7 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie proeftydperk kan vir baie mense 'n breeze wees. 9 weke waar jy as proefstudent dag na dag in die personeelkamer kom sit en Facebook. Om 'n onderwyser te wees verg baie selfmotivering en positiewe denke en verantwoordelikheid. Om 'n top klas onderwyser te wees is regtig jou eie besluit. Niemand gaan vir jou sê hoeveel moeite om in te sit nie. Dit is alleenlik jou eie keuse waar jy jou eie ervaring konstrueer. Aan die ander kant kan die proeftydperk ook 'n tyd wees waar jy jouself in jou werk in gooi, en baie baie leer!

Aanvanklik het ek gedink onderwysers doen maar almal dieselfde, maar ek is defnitief verkeerd. Selfs in die skool waar ek geplaas is, is dit baie duidelik. Sommige onderwyser sit geen moeite in nie, nie in hul klaskamer of les aanbiedings nie. Onderwys is nie vir hulle meer lekker nie - nie 'n passie nie. Ander onderwysers weer aan die ander kant, maak nie saak hoe oud, raak SO opgewonde oor onderwys. Hulle doen moeite met die klasse, doen moeite met die kinders, en dis so tipe onderwyser wat ek strewe om te wees.

Ek kan my indink dat dit moeilik is, en dat mens later nie meer lus is nie. Maar as jy 'n passie het, sal jy jouself weer optel en dit doen omdat onderwyser jou eerste liefde is. Om eerlik te wees, kan die tipe onderwyser reeds nou in die proeftydperk gesien word.. Om te proef is kunsmatig, en dit is nie vir almal lekker nie. Dit weerspieël defnitief nie wat jou ervaring as onderwyser gaan wees nie. Maar dit is tog nodig, en dit gee perspektief. Dit is 'n tydperk waar jy kan oefen en alles kan probeer om te sien wat vir jou werk.

Hierdie week was daar baie take by die skool waarby die proefstudente betrokke kon raak, maar slegs 'n handjie vol student het opgedaag om deel te neem. Dit is hier waar ek kan sien dat alle onderwysers nie gemaak is vir onderwys nie. Ek hoop hulle kom gou genoeg agter dat dit nie hul passie is nie, wat onderwys is nie net iets wat jy ligtelik moet opneem, of iets wat jy moet doen omdat jy nie weet wat anders om te doen nie. Dit is die belangrikste beroek daar buite. En ons moet sorg dat ons dit goed doen!

'n Onderwyser moet baie dinge kan wees, en bereidwillig wees om AL die nodige posisies vol te staan. Een en ding waarvan ek verseker is – 'n onderwyser kan NIE lui wees nie. Dit is die een beroep waar die ekstra myl sowaar lewensveranderend (vir jou en jou leerders) sal wees.

8 - prac - FKGL 7,8 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie week het ek basies net geskarrel om al my dinge klaar te kry. Daar is baie om te doen, en ek wil so gou as moontlik alles uitsorteer, sodat ek 'n regte vakansie kan hê sonder werk. Dit lyk wel nie of dit gaan gebeur nie, want voordat ons eens terug is, het ons alweer take wat moet in wees. So my kop is op tien verskillende plekke met take, portefeulje, aansoeke, refleksies ensovoorts. Ek bied nie meer klas aan nie, so ten minste het ek tyd om hieraan te werk. Dit is duidelik dat die onderwysers ook nou moeg raak vir ons, en ek is gereed om klaar te maak.

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Hierdie week was wel baie lekker, juis omdat ek nie die stres vir klas aanbied het nie. Ons moet toesig hou by die matrieks se eksamen, en dit laat my so terugdink aan toe ek matriek was. Dit is so opwindend, alles wat op hulle wag, wat hulle nog moet ervaar. Terselftetyd is dit wat in my lewe ook aan die gebeur is. Ek moet ook nou my horisonne verbreed. Ek moet begin aansoek doen vir poste, en dit maak my so opgewonde om 'n onderwyser te wees. Aan die begin was ek baie huiwerig, maar nou is ek verseker dat ek dit sal geniet om 'n onderwyser te wees. Dit is 'n baie rewarding werk, en wat jy in sit, sal jy uit kry.

Ek sien uit na die laaste week volgende week, maar ek raak wel 'n bietjie sentimenteel oor die laaste bietjie tyd wat ek oor het. Op 'n vreemde manier dink ek ek sal die skool mis, maar aan die ander kant is ek BAIE opgewonde om net weer 'n student te wees vir die laaste rukkie. Om weer te kan uitgaan op weeksaande, om nie meer woorde soos "pouse", "na skool", "ekstrakurrikulêr", "klok lui" en "eerste periode" in my allerdaagse gesprekke te gebruik nie.

Dit gaan vir my 'n baie groot aanpassing wees om die skuif vanaf student na werkende mens te maak, soos die matrieks nou moet skuif van skool na student. Maar dit lyk nie meer so boos nie, ek is nie meer bang daarvoor nie. Ek is eintlik meer opgewonde, en ek kan nie wag om te sien waar ek op eindig nie. Om my eie klaskamer te hê, en bande met die leersders te vorm. Dit gaan amazing wees, en ek kan nie wag om offisieël Juffrou [redacted] te wees nie.

9 - prac - FKGL 7,1 [Afrikaans]

Die laaste week! En dit was 'n besige een. Hierdie week het SO vinnig verloop – seker omdat almal allerhande dinge probeer uitsorteer. Al die vorms moes geteken raak, en al die ekstra papier moet na skool geprint word en gespellcheck word. My portefeulje is klaar, en nou is ek tevrede, en kan ek 'n lekker vakansie hou (soort van). Daar is nog so baie om te doen voor die kwartaal weer begin, maar vir nou fokus ek op die positiewe.

Hierdie week het ek my tyd goed probeer benut. Die laaste bietjie met die leerders gesels en my laaste bietjie skool ingeasem. Ek was nie skaam om ekstra werkies te doen nie, want ek weet dit is die laaste, en ek dink (snaaks genoeg) dat ek hierdie plek gaan mis as ek weg is. Ek dink terug aan die eerste dag wat ons hier aangekom het en glad nie geweet het waar om te wees of met wie om te praat nie. nou is dit so gemaklik en almal het hul plekkie gekry. Een ding waarvoor ek oneindig dankbaar is, is die goeie vriende wat ek tydens hierdie proeftydperk ontmoet het. Dit maak my ook opgewonde oor die personeel saam met wie ek eendag sal werk.

Ek het nie verwag om goeie vriende met van my mede proefstudente te word nie, inteendeel, ek het verwag dat ons almal baie geïrriteerd met mekaar gaan word, omdat almal onder stres is en in 'n omgewing is wat vir ons almal ongemaklik en vreemd. Maar nou ken ons mekaar, en almal was saam deur die moeilike en lekke-lag oomblikke. Ons kan nie op gepraat raak oor waar ons volgende gaan uiteet, en tee drink en koek eet nie. Ek waardeer dit, en dit het my proeftydperk soveel beter gemaak. Dit laat my ook dink aan student wat alleen by 'n skool geproef het. dit moes baie moeilik vir hierdie student gewees het, omdat daar niemand is wat dieselfde ondervinding as jy op daardie oomblik het nie. Ek sou graag wou hoor hoe hulle dit ervaar. Ek glo ek kan iets daarvan leer, want wanneer ek in 'n pos aanvaar word, gaan daar nie noodwendig nog ander jong onderwysers saam met my aangestel word nie. Then I have to stand my own ground.

So, hierdie week was 'n gelukkige week. Gelukkig dat ek die kans gekry het om by 'n skool te kon skoolhou en 'n band met leerders kon maak. Gelukkig dat ek nuwe vriende kon maak. Gelukkig dat proef klaar is. Gelukkig dat ek weet ek kan teruggaan na 'n goeie universiteit. En gelukkig dat ek nou 'n lekker, welverdiende vakansie kan neem.

BAp69
1 - Other - FKGL 3,0

Never stop believing in Love as God never stopped loving us! Cheers to the month of Love

2 - Other - FKGL 1,2

You gotta do this for you. This is for you. This isn't about anybody. Live for you. Honor you. Never lose sight of that.

3 - prac - FKGL 9,8 [Afrikaans]

[redacted] Sekondere Skool te [redacted], gelee binne die hartjie van die Swartland, se missie is volhard en oorwin. As ek terug kyk na my eerste week van my onderwysprakties, dan besef ek weereens dat ek 'n groot liefde het vir leerders en om hul te motiveer om hardwerkend en toegewyd te wees tot hul studies. Ek het baie onseker gevoel op my eerste dag, maar terselfde tyd positief en angstig. Ek het hoe verwagtinge gestel teenoor die opvoeders en die bestuur van die skool, maar inteendeel, was ons soos mede-kollegas ontvang en hanteer en nie soos proef-studente nie. Dit het 'n positiewe impak gehad op hoe ek die leerders in die klaskamer benader het en dit het ook my taak vergemaklik in die aanbieding van my kurrikulum vakke. Daar was ook ander proef-studente van [redacted] wellington en Mowbray. Ons is altesaam 20 proef-studente. Die eerste dag het elke kampus se studente hul eie groepies gemaak en afsonderlik gesit en gesels. Dit het my baie ongemaklik laat voel, aangesien almal net mekaar aankyk en niemand 'n woord praat nie, maar weens die aangename verwelkoming vanaf die skool, het die ongemaklikheid verdwyn onder die studente en van dag 2 ruil ons studiemateriaal, handboeke en moontlike lesse onder mekaar uit. Ek dink dat elke proef-student het besef dat ons almal vir dieselfde doel daar is, ongeag dat ons van verskillende kampus en/of universiteite is. Ek neem ook waar dat die skool dissiplinere probleme ondervind. Soos ek agterkom en verneem van ander opvoeders, kom meestal van hierdie leerders uit minderbevooregte huishoudings waar sommiges se ouers nie teenwoordig is in hul lewens nie. Dit kan dalk bydrae tot die destruktiewe gedrag wat leerders toon. Ek het geleer dat hierdie leerders versigtig hanteer moet word en dat ek as opvoeder hul omstandighede moet verstaan om hul as individu te verstaan. Die skool het op hierdie stadium 'n tekort aan administratiewe personeel gehad, maar die skoolhoof het 'n tydelike reel in plek gestel dat sekere proef-studente die rol as sekretaresse moes vervul, onder andere was ek een van hulle. Woensdag, 22 Julie 2015 het ek die administratiewe pligte nagekom. Ek het 'n begrip wat die rol van 'n sekretaresse is, maar na my ervaring het ek 'n dieper begrip oor die verantwoordelikheid wat gepaard gaan met sekretariele werk. Ek het besef dat die administratiewe afdeling van die skool en die opvoeders speel 'n gesamentlike rol in die funksionering van 'n leerder se opvoeding. Deel van my pligte was die volgende: 1. Ek moes 'n toestemmingsbrief rig aan die plaaslike kliniek om 'n leerder so gou as moontlik van hulp te wees. 2. Ek het die skool se busdiens stelsel vir 2016 opgestel. 3. Ek het ook telefoniese navrae hanteer asook fotostate vir die opvoeders gedoen. As 'n sekretaresse, het ek my goeie komunikasie- en rekenaarvaardighede toegepas wat my in staat gestel het om my pligte korrek as moontlik uit te voer. Wat positief was, is dat die bestuurspan beindruk was met die administratiewe rol wat ek vervul het. Die negatiewe aspek was dat ek nie georienteer was ten opsigte van die verskillende toerusting van die skool soos die fotostaat- en faksmasjien nie, m.a.w. toerusting wat kodes vereis waarvan ek nie blootstelling voorheen gehad het nie. Alreeds in my eerste week het leerders my benader om vir hulle ekstra klasse vir Fisiese Wetenskap aan te bied na skool. Dit was vir my 'n riem onder die hart en 'n groot inspirasie in my loopbaan. Dit was vir my verbasend dat die gr. 10 en 11 Fisiese Wetenskap leerders meer interaksie getoon het as die gr. 12 leerders. Tydens my observering in Wiskundige Geletterdheid, neem ek waar dat leerders baie onverantwoordelik is teenoor die vak. Die leerders is baie laks en my opinie is dat leerders hierdie vak onderskat. Die Junie maand uitslae was aan my gekomunikeer en dit was kommerwekend. Dit gaan wel harde werk kos, maar ek is vol vertroue dat ek beter resultate sal bewerkstellig tydens my tydperk by die skool en dat ek met tyd die probleemareas in Wiskundige Geletterdheid sal oorbrug soos ek meer ervaring opdoen. Vanaf dag 1 het ek baie selfvertroue gehandhaaf en ek het van dag 2 klas gegee vir die Fisiese Wetenskap klasse

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van gr. 10-12. Dit was vir my aangenaam om klas te gee vir hulle, aangesien die leerders respek getoon het en deelgeneem het aan die klasgesprekke. Sommige leerders was baie verlore en verward, maar ek het spesiale aandag aan hulle geskenk en dit het my goed laat voel toe ek agterkom dat hulle die werk nou verstaan. Na afloop van die klasse wat ek aangebied het hierdie week, is beperkte tyd een van my vrese. Alhoewel dit vir my voel dat ek alreeds 'n onderwyser is, vrees ek dat ek nie die werk in 'n bepaalde tyd sal kan voltooi nie en of alle leerders tevrede sal wees nie wanneer ek werklik 'n opvoeder is. My hoogtepunt van week 1 was die sportdag teen Hoerskool [redacted]. Saterdag, 25 Julie om 06:15 het die busse vertrek na [redacted]. Die leerders was verskriklik opgewonde, ek self was en dit was 'n gedoente om hul rustig te kry. Ek was in beheer van die 0.14 en 0.15 netbalspanne, aangesien hul afrigter nie die sportdag kon bywoon weens persoonlike verpligtinge nie. Ek kon my skeidsregter kwalifikasie toepas en het as netbal skeidsregter opgetree vir hierdie twee spanne. Die wen was 'n bonus, maar die leerders se sportgees was vir my kenmerkend. Ek kon aan hul gesigte sien dat hul moeg is, maar as opvoeder het dit my gekos om hul moed in te praat en hulle het nooit opgegee nie. Dit was net AMAZING vir my! Hoe al die spanne mekaar ondersteun en elke speler hul hart uitgespeel het. Dit het my net laat terug verlang na my skooldae en toe ek my weer kom kry, sing ek saam die leerders ter ondersteuning vir die 0.19A-span. Ek het net goeie herinneringe van hierdie dag, want elke oomblik was vir my lekker met my mede-kollegas en die leerders. Ek is verskriklik opgewonde oor onderwys as 'n professie. Ek wil regtig 'n verskil maak in my vakgebied en die probleemareas wat leerders huidiglik ervaar, aan te spreek. Op hierdie stadium verskil uitdagings van gemeenskap tot gemeenskap, skool tot skool en leerder tot leerder, maar ek is vergewis dat ek met mettertyd dit sal kan oorbrug, want in elke beroep is daar maar uitdagings. My entoesiasme is my hoop in onderwys as beroep.

4 - prac - FKGL 9,7 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie week het ek my eerste formele krit les vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid en Fisiese Wetenskap aangebied. Ek het die aanbieding van my les vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid baie geniet. Die dissipline van leerders was al probleem wat ek teegekom het tydens my aanbieding. Die aanbieding van die les het direk na eerste pouse geskied. Leerders het onophoudelik gepraat en ek moes eers hul fokus op my rig. Ek het dit gedoen deur te praat oor die naweek se sportdag en rugbywedstryd tussen die Springbokke en All Blacks. Die seuns kon terugvoering gee oor die spel en het deelgeneem aan die gesprek, terwyl die meisies nie kon saam gesels oor rugby nie, maar darm kennis neem van die uitslae. Ek het die gesprek oor rugby so kort as moontlik gehou en dit by my les laat aansluit. Die negatiewe aspek van my aanbieding was die tyd. Die periodes is slegs 45 minute lank en die leerders neem 15 minute om by die klaskamer uit te kom. Dit is oor die algemeen 'n probleem in die skool. Dit blyk asof die opvoeders self nie beheer het oor die leerders se laatkomery nie. Dit beteken jy het ± 30 minute om jou les aan te bied. Ek besef dat ek beter klaskontrole moet toepas deur leerders se aandag gevestig te kry voor ek met die aanbieding van my les begin en nie net begin met die aanbieding van my les nie. Ek het een les aan twee graad 10 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse aangebied. Die twee lesse was direk agter mekaar en die opvoeder kon tydens die tweede les sien dat ek moeg en uitgeput is. Die uitdagings wat ek in die gesig staar, is dat hierdie klasse verskriklik groot is; ongeveer 40 leerders in 'n klas. Ek het dit moeilik gevind om beheer uit te oefen, want almal vra vrae op dieselfde tyd. Beide graad 10 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse kon die aktiwiteite met gemak uitvoer en het dit nie moeilik gevind nie, maar hul aandag is baie afleibaar. Hulle gesels meer as wat hulle werk en ekt so magteloos gevoel. Ek was baie moedeloos tydens die tweede aanbieding van my les, want toe is my bekommernis dat ek nie die uitkomste van my lesbeplanning in 'n bepaalde tyd sal bereik nie en dat ek nie almal sal kan help op dieselfde tyd nie. Ek dink moontlike oplossings kan wees om leerders in groepverband te laat werk en dan die instruksies in groepverband verduidelik, maar dan het ek ook waargeneem dat leerders beter werk individueel as in groepverband. Die opvoeder laat ook alle aktiwiteite en tutoriale individueel voltooi. Leerders is nou baie meer gemakliker met my, want hulle begin persoonlike vrae

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vra en geselsies aanknoop met my wat niks verband hou met die inhoud van die werk nie. Die Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse het so 'n traak-my-nie houding en maak grappies die hele periode deur. As 'n toekomstige opvoeder, is ek bekommerd oor die houding wat leerders toon teenoor hierdie vak. Ek was vol entoesiasme, maar ek begin alreeds negatief voel wanneer ek die Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse moet observeer. Die leerders se dissipline speel grootliks 'n rol in die ontwikkeling van my negatiewe houding teenoor die waarneming van die Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse. Hiermee se ek nie dat ek 'n negatiewe houding ontwikkel teenoor die vak nie, slegs teenoor die leerders se dissipline. Terselfde tyd leer ek hoe om leerders te behandel met 'n tekort aan dissipline. Ek neem waar dat dit beter is om leerders aan te spreek met jou oe en lyftaal eerder as om op hulle te skel. Dis belangrik om ten alle tye leerders met respek aan te spreek en dit op 'n mooi manier te doen, andersins gaan jy dissiplinere probleme ondervind. Tydens my aanbieding het ek ook besef dat my woordeskat bo die verwagtinge van die leerders is. Ek moes aan graad 10 leerders verduidelik wat die woord vanselfsprekend beteken. Ek het verwag dat 'n graad 10 leerder bewus sal wees van die betekenis asook van die gebruik van die woord in konteks. Dit was vir my moeilik om in Afrikaans te verduidelik sodat die betekenis duidelik uitgelig word, maar ek het my toe in Engels uitgedruk sodat leerders dit makliker kon verstaan. Dit het my weereens laat besef om eenvoudige woordeskat te gebruik binne die klaskamer; op 'n vlak dat elke leerder sal verstaan. Ek verstaan nou wat ons in Engelsmedium geleer het oor hoekom dit belangrik is dat leerders geletterdheid geleer word in alle vakke en nie net in tale nie en waarom hulle woordeskat binne elke vak bevorder moet word. Die wil voorkom dat die leerders wat Fisiese Wetenskap as 'n vak het, baie meer ernstig is oor hul skoolwerk en beter dissipline handhaaf. Die leerders luister as met hulle gepraat word en hulle voer die opvoeder se opdragte spoedig uit. My eerste aanbieding vir Fisiese Wetenskap was vir die graad 11 klas. Wat vir my positief was, was dat ek kon onmiddelik identifiseer wie sukkel met die aktiwiteit wat ek aan hul gegee het en wie kon dit met gemak klaarmaak. Anders as die graad 10 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klas, het ek beter beheer oor die leerders en voel ek in beheer van die klas. Hierdie klas was baie entoesiasties en het goed interaksie getoon met die aktiwiteit wat ek aan hul voorsien het. Ek het baie goeie verhoudinge gebou met hierdie klas binne die eerste twee weke van my proeftydperk. Die leerders voel so gemaklik met my en deel hul toekomsplanne saam my. Dit is 'n riem onder die hart vir my en terselfde tyd kan ek hul net verder motiveer. Dit voel goed om woorde te hoor soos: "Juffrou gaan mos vir ons help om 'n A-simbool te kry". Die graad 10 en 11 Fisiese Wetenskap klasse is baie gewillige leerders. Altyd vol moed om te werk en my opdragte/aktiwiteite uit te voer. Dis aangenaam om hierdie klasse waar te neem en les te gee. Tydens my aanbieding was ek bietjie senuweeagtig en die leerders kon dit maklik optel. Ek dink het energie aan hulle oorgedra, want die leerders het nie baie vrae gevra nie, maar net aandagtig geluister. Ek het die spanning verlig om vrae aan die klas te stel, waarvan enige een kon antwoord. Ek neem waar dat meisies meer gewillig is om te antwoord as seuns. Ek tref geen onderskeid tussen meisies en seuns nie, maar die meerderheid van die leerders werk saam in groepe met leerders van hul eie geslag. Leerders het in hulle gemak sone getree nadat die aktiwiteit aan hulle uitgedeel is en het lekker interaksie getoon met die leerstof. Na afloop van my les, besef ek dat ek moet meer fokus op die strategiee om wetenskap aan te bied. Ek moet ook fokus om meer inligting aan leerders te gee en te verduidelik eerder as om meer tyd te spandeer op die toets van voorkennis. Ek was verbaas dat leerders die aktiwiteit kon uitvoer en was trots op hulle. Tyd was weereens 'n probleem. Meeste het nie klaar gekry met die aktiwiteit nie, maar ek het dit toe laat voltooi vir huiswerk. Ek het verwag dat ek nie my uitkomste binne 'n bepaalde tyd sal bereik nie, maar sommige leerders het my regtig verras. Die groot klasse is vir my 'n uitdaging en hoe om klaskontrole te handhaaf in hierdie groot klasse. My grootste fout wat ek maak is dat ek aanvaar dat leerders ken die werk wat ek met hul behandel. Daarom is dit belangrik om te toets of leerders die vorige dag se werk kan toepas en ken. Ek neig om baie stadig te werk wat 'n nadeel vir my gaan wees in my professie. Ek moet beter onderrig strategiee toepas sodat ek elke leerder se leerbehoeftes bevredig en die tempo waarteen hulle werk. Ek geniet dit om betrokke te wees by al wat 'n buitemuurse aktiwiteit is. Hierdie week het ek kooroefening bygewoon en ek vind

dat leerders die liedjies maar verveeld vind. Ek het ook gehelp met probleem areas, aangesien ek ook koor gesing het. Minder as die helfte leerders het vir kooroefening opgedaag en dit blyk dat seuns nie belangstel nie. Ongeag die destruktiewe gedrag wat leerders toon, kruip elke leerder in my hart. Ek is lief vir een en elkeen van hulle; dis hulle wat onderwys as professie die moeite werd maak. Meeste van die tye vertel hulle grappies net sodat ek kan lag en om reaksie by my uit te lok. Ek vind dit baie kostelik. Ek glo dat ek 'n motivering vir leerders sal wees en sal werk aan die negatiewe aspekte van my praktiese ondervinding. Laastens wil ek almal bedank vir die positiewe kommentaar en motivering.

5 - prac - FKGL 10,4 [Afrikaans]

Soos dit landswyd bekend is dat die week van 3 Augustus tot 8 Augustus 2015 Nasionale Wetenskap week is,het die Fisiese Wetenskap en Lewenswetenskap leerders van [redacted] Sekondere skool ook nasionale wetenskap week ervaar by die skool. Maandag, 3 Augustus 2015, het ek en die Fisiese Wetenskap onderwyser die huidige werk prakties ondersoek. Ons het eers gefokus op die graad 10's en hul is tans besig met magnetisme. Nadat die opvoeder die inhoud van magnetisme behandel het, het ons fisies gaan kyk hoe die magneetveldlyne lyk van gelyksoortige en ongelyksoortige pole. Die leerders was gefasineerd deur die praktiese ondersoek en het baie vrae gehad betrekking tot die ondersoek en hoe dit verband hou met die teorie. Dit was duidelik dat die praktiese ondersoek die leerders se gedagtes geprikkel het en hul belangstelling in die teorie van magnetisme verhoog het. Na afloop van die praktiese ondersoek en die leerders se houding teenoor die werk nadat hulle self waargeneem het hoe magneetveldlyne lyk, dink ek dis n goeie idee om die teorie prakties voor te stel. Ek het waargeneem dit het n positiewe uitwerking op leerders se houding teenoor die inhoud daarvan en dit verdiep hul belangstelling. As toekomstige opvoeders moet ons in gedagte hou dat leerders leer verskillend, so dis beter om verskillende onderwysmetodes toe te pas om elke leerder se leerbehoeftes te akkomodeer. Dit het duidelik na vore gekom tydens hierdie praktiese ondersoek. Die negatiewe aspek hiervan is dat die skool nie altyd die geriewe het om die inhoud prakties voor te stel nie en as opvoeder beperk dit jou om die teorie doeltreffend te fasiliteer. Die ander nadeel is dat dit baie tydgedrewe is en die KABV streng toegepaste tyd voorskryf aan elke onderwerp. Dus, is daar nie altyd tyd om eksperimente uit te voer, terwyl dit grootendeels leerders se begrip verdiep. Dit was vir my kenmerkend hoe leerders weer die teorie gaan op lees het. Ek hou daarvan hoe die opvoeder ander vakke se inhoud soos Aardrykskunde en Biologie by die inhoud van Fisiese Wetenskap aansluit en alledaagse voorbeelde gebruik om die konsepte van chemie uit te lig. Ek dink dit sal vir my n uitdaging wees in die praktyk, alhoewel ek my inhoud ken, is ek nie baie bekend met die toepassing daarvan nie. Ek besef dat ek baie moet gaan op lees oor die toepassing van chemie in die praktyk, veral dit wat betrekking het op die vereiste inhoud in die KABV. Hierdie praktiese ondersoeke help leerders vaardighede aanleer soos die gebruik en lees van n kompas. Ek het ook toesig gehou in n juffrou se plek wat afwesig was en wat vakke aanbied buite my kurrikulumvakke/veld. Ek was toe verplig om die graad 10 Lewenswetenskap klasse waar te neem. Alhoewel ek in die diep kant gegooi was, kon ek my biologie kennis toepas om hierdie les waar te neem. Soos ek voorheen genoem het, neem ek waar dat die skool meestal dissiplinere probleme ondervind by die graad 10's. Dit is vir my onaangenaam om hierdie klasse waar te neem, want die leerders praat onophoudelik en luister nie as daar met hulle gepraat word nie. Dis eintlik hartseer dat ek dit nie geniet om die graad 10's klas te gee nie, aangesien ek aan die begin van die proeftydperk baie van hulle gehou het en goed oor die weg gekom het en hulle die meeste interaksie getoon het met my en die leerstof as die graad 11's en 12's. Nou is die posisies omgeruil en die graad 11 en 12 klasse toon beter interaksie en ek bou goeie verhoudings met hierdie klasse. Ek voel nog steeds asof ek nie die graad 10's kan beheer nie, maar slegs die wiskundige geletterdheid klasse. Die Fisiese Wetenskap klasse is te oulik en ekt n groot liefde ontwikkel vir hierdie klasse (van graad 10-12). Nie dat ek die ander graad 10 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse nie lief het nie, maar ek raak moedeloos. Die graad 10's hou van persoonlike vrae vra en gesels oor dinge wat niks verband hou met die leerstof nie. Ek voel dat ek moet begin ferm wees met die leerders, maar wys

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ek gee om terselfde tyd. Ek besef ek moet my manier van klas gee verander, aangesien ek te vriendelik is teenoor die leerders. Alhoewel ek moedeloos is, hou ek nie op om die graad 10's te motiveer en te bemoedig nie. Ek besef dat dit vir my n uitdaging gaan wees om leerders met dissiplinere probleme aan te spreek, alhoewel ek nog nie die outoriteit het om die skool se gedragsmaatreels toe te pas nie. Hierdie proeftydperk sien ek nie net as n leergeleentheid nie, maar dit voel alreeds of ek al my professie as onderwyser beoefen. Ek geniet dit vreeslik ongeag die uitdagings soos leerderdissipline en die swak slaagsyfer. Dit gee my die moed om n verskil te maak en n motivering vir ander te wees. Die buitemuurse aktiwiteite laat my verlang na my skooldae. Ek mis dit om koor te sing en om betrokke te wees by die skoolkoor gee my meer perspektief oor leerders se gedrag binne die klaskamer en buite die klaskamer en hoe dit in strook staan met mekaar. Tydens kooroefening is die verhouding tussen my en die leerders meer informeel, terwyl dit tydens skooltye bietjie meer formeel is. Hiermee wil ek byvoeg dat ek elke dag sien as n tweede kans. Met ander woorde, as n leerder ontwrigtende gedrag toon, gaan ek nie die leerder kenmerk in n negatiewe lig nie, maar elke dag n nuwe kans gee. Dis wat ek huidiglik waarneem onder die opvoeders. As n leerder net eendag ontwrigtende gedrag toon, word daardie leerder gekenmerk in n negatiewe lig. My omgee vir leerders verdwyn nie ongeag hulle gedrag. My hart het oorgeloop van blydskap toe n leerder, wat ontwrigtende gedrag toon, vir my se dat ek vir haar soos n tweede ma is. Dis snaaks hoe baie leerders van jou as opvoeder dink en hoe hoog hul jou ag as jy hulle hanteer met die regte houding. Vrydag, 7 Augustus 2015, was die hoogepunt van my week. Ek moes die gr. 10 Fisiese Wetenskap klas, 1 gr. 11 leerder en een gr. 12 leerder vergesel na die Nasionale Wetenskap vasvrae kompetisie te Moorreesburg. Omtrent 15 hoerskole in die Weskus Distrik omgewing het aan die Wetenskap vasvrae kompetisie deelgeneem. Alhoewel [redacted] Sekondere Skool nie onder die top 3 skole geeindig het nie, was ek trots om te sien dat ons die skool was met die meeste ondersteuning. Die leerders het hul puik gedra en dit was vir my n riem onder die hart om te sien hoe baie leerders in Fisiese Wetenskap belangstel. Meeste van hierdie leerders het n visie vir die toekoms en dit maak my bly en ek besef dis hierdie klein dingetjies wat onderwys die moeite werd maak. Soos tyd verloop begin ek hierdie professie al hoe meer waardeer. Nadat die Wetenskap aangeleentheid klaar was, het ek in n restaurant saam die leerders gaan sit. Die een leerder het vir hom kos bestel, terwyl hy weet hy het nie genoeg geld nie. Nadat hy klaar geeet het, het hy my kom vra vir geld en om hom uit te help. Ek het dit eintlik baie snaaks gevind daardie moment, maar dan besef ek die leerder is so gemaklik om na my toe te kom en vir my te vra om hom uit te help, maar aan die anderkant kan hy net sowel dit tot sy voordeel gebruik. Nietemin, ek vind berusting daarin om ander te help, aangesien ek nie altyd bewus is van die leerders se huislike omstandighede nie. Met tyd raak ek al hoe meer opgewonde om n opvoeder te wees, daar is so baie leerders wat ek wil help en wil bystaan. Ek was nog altyd lief vir kinders, ekt net nooit besef hulle sal so diep in my hart kruip nie.

6 - prac - FKGL 9,7 [Afrikaans]

"Time flies when you having fun". Vier weke van my onderwys internskap te [redacted] Sekondere Skool is al verby en ek het elke oomblik geniet tot so ver. Alhoewel ek nog net n gedeeltelike gevoel het van wat onderwys behels, sien ek uit na die voltydse toepassing van onderwys as professie. Hierdie week het ek my derde les vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid aangebied. Hierdie keer het ek n gr. 12 klas gekies om my les aan te bied. Weereens het ek waargeneem dat die gr. 12 Wiskundige Geletterdheid leerders beter dissipline handhaaf as die gr. 10's en 11's. Ek het meer in beheer gevoel en kon beter klas-kontrole toepas as in my vorige aanbieding. Ek het dit makliker gevind om met die graad 10's te kommunikeer as met die graad 12's, maar dit was moeiliker om die graad 10's gefokus te kry. Die graad 12's oefen selfdissipline uit, terwyl die graad 10's nog gedissiplineer moet word. Tydens die aanbieding van my les het ek besef dat dit belangrik is dat jy as opvoeder moet seker maak dat die leerders verstaan wat van hulle verwag word, dat hulle die vrae van die aktiwiteit verstaan asook die konsepte wat na vore kom in die aktiwiteit. Ek het verwag dat leerders nie die aktiwiteit sal verstaan en voltooi nie, maar die teenoorgestelde het gebeur na afloop van die les. Die leerders kon die aktiwiteit

baas raak met n bietjie leiding van my. Ek was so trots op hulle daardie oomblik. Ek dink elke opvoeder moet dit vir homself/haarself beleef wanneer n leerder jou bo jou verwagtinge verras. Dit laat jou hart en gesig blom. Ek het ook opgelet dat 2 seuns se aandag afleibaar is, alhoewel hulle eerste klaar was met die aktiwiteit. Nadat ek self-ondersoek ingestel het, kom ek tot die gevolgtrekking dat daar nooit verwagtinge tydens n les geskep moet word nie, maar altyd voorsienning gemaak word vir leerders wat vinniger werk as die ander leerders om hul ten alle tye gefokus te he. Ek het ook besef hoe belangrik dit is om aktiwiteite op te stel na gelang van die groeppotensiaal en nie net altyd wat die KABV verwag van die groep nie. Ek self neem waar dat daar enorme vordering in my lesaanbiedings is. Ek het verbeter op die toepassing van klas-kontrole. Ek het nie net aanvaar leerders weet als wat hul veronderstel is om te weet nie, maar ek het eers seker gemaak leerders is bekend met die wiskundige konsepte wat in die aktiwiteit voorgekom het. Die klein getal leerders in die klas het n voordelige uitwerking gehad op my aanbieding van my les en ek kon individuele aandag gee binne groepsverband en die probleemareas vinniger aanspreek. My betrokkenheid by die skoolkoor maak nie meer deel uit van die verpligte buitemuurse aktiwiteite nie, maar omdat ek dit baie geniet. Ek oefen saam die leerders en luister na probleemareas, maar mees belangriker, ek bou verhoudings op met die leerders wat ek nie elke dag in kontak kom nie. Ek begin leer hul ken op n meer persoonlike vlak. Ek kom agter dat jy leerders beter hanteer indien jy hul op n meer persoonlike vlak ken en leerders respekteer n opvoeder meer as die opvoeder belangstelling toon in die leerder. Die gevoel was oorweldigend, maar tog vol blydskap toe n leerder vir my se dat ek vir haar soos n tweede ma is. Ek is so jonk en n leerder sien my as n ma-figuur, dan kan jy mos nie help om net meer lief te word vir hulle nie. Ek moet byvoeg dat ek baie van hierdie leerders jammer kry, want baie opvoeders posisioneer die leerders in n negatiewe lig a.g.v. hul ontwrigtende gedrag, maar eintlik verlang hul net aandag en iemand wat omgee. Aan die ander kant voel ek dat die graad 10 Fisiese Wetenskap klasse bietjie te gemaklik raak met my, maar hul het nog steeds soveel baie respek vir my. Die leerders begin vat kanse as hul opvoeder nie teenwoordig is nie en ek die klasse moet waarneem. Ek het beheer oor hierdie klas, ongeag die groot getal leerders in die klas, en ek wens dat my Wiskundige Geletterdheid graad 10 klasse ook net so kan luister as ek met hulle praat. Hierdie leerders het selfdissipline en vra onverskoning as ek hul optrede aanspreek. Ek vind dat die graad 10 klasse baie aandag verlang en soms jou reaksie uitlok om aandag te verkry. Ek het geleer dat dissiplinere probleme nie n faktor sal wees indien jy n verhouding bou met die leerders waar hul sien dat jy omgee nie en net die beste vir hul wil voorsit nie. Laastens voel ek dat ek nie baie uitgedaag word met vrae nie. Leerders vra weinig vrae wat verband hou met die werk in die praktyk of industrie. Vir die eerste keer hierdie week het n leerder vir my n vraag gevra waarop ek die antwoord nie weet nie. Ek het dit met alle eerlikheid hanteer en leerders laat verstaan dat ek weet nie als nie. Hulle was verbaas op my antwoord en ek dink die leerders kon by my leer dat dit okay is as jy nie verstaan nie, dat dit okay is as jy nie weet nie. Ek dink ook nie dat hul my as onbevoegd sien nie, maar dat hulle meer besef het dat ek ook in n leerproses is. Ek kon dus die tablet gebruik binne die klaskamer en die antwoord op die vraag gaan opsoek en vir die leerders n beter verduideliking gee oor die onderwerp wat self onbekend aan my is. Weereens was dit vir my n bewys dat as opvoeder kan ek self baie van leerders leer en nie net anderste om nie. Ekt besef dat ek ten alle tye die lewe en die skool as instansie as n leerproses moet sien eerder as n opvoeder wat die bron van inligting is. Ek sluit af dat ek baie wysheid op doen soos ek elke dag met kinders in interaksie kom, sommige dae het meer uitdagings as ander, maar die tydperk kan n fees wees as jy altyd die positiewe in die negatiewe sien.

7 - prac - FKGL 11,5 [Afrikaans]

Ek voel alreeds of ek in die skoene van 'n voltydse permanente opvoeder staan. As ek terug kyk na dag 1, kan ek waarlik se dat ek myself goed aanpasbaar gemaak het in die konteks waarin ek myself bevind en voel ek dat ek deel uitmaak van die skool se opvoeders. Aan die begin van my internskap het ek die tydperk om gewens, maar nou loop die tyd bietjie te vinnig na my sin en wil ek nie he dit moet tot 'n einde kom nie. Die leerders maak elke dag die moeite werd en jy sal dit net verstaan

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as jy dit self ervaar. Die liefde wat jy as opvoeder ontwikkel vir jou klasse en die ander leerders is onbeskryflik. My passie vir onderwys as professie het baie verdiep vandat ek in die praktyk is. Ek was angstig, verlore en het nie geweet wat om te verwag nie, maar nou weet ek onderwys is die beste opsie ooit wat enige een kan kies as professie. Die respek wat leerders ontwikkel vir jou as opvoeder, die feit dat daar na jou opgekyk word en na jou uitgereik word as 'n ondersteuningsmeganisme maak onderwys genotvol bo jou verwagtinge wat jy eers vir jouself geskep het. Na 5 weke by [redacted] Sekondere skool, het ek min of meer 'n idee wat die rol van 'n opvoeder behels. Hiermee verwys ek na al die administratiewe pligte wat gepaard gaan met onderwys. Na afloop van hierdie week het ek besef dat die rol van die opvoeder nie net akademies gerig moet wees nie, maar ook moet fokus op die sielkundige en sosiologiese aspekte van onderrig. Ek het dit eerstehands ervaar toe een van die leerders se ouer my inlig oor die huislike omstandighede van die leerder. Dit was weereens 'n bewys dat die leerders se persoonlike omstandighede 'n bydrae lewer tot hul gedrag binne die klaskamer. Ek vind dit baie oorweldigend dat ek alreeds tydens my internskap in aanraking kom met die sielkundige en sosiologiese probleme van leerders. Terselfde tyd leer ek hoe om die sosiologiese uitdagings in die gesig te staar binne 'n akademiese instansie en weet ek nou watter prosedures om te volg in die toekoms. Alhoewel onderwys sy positiewe punte het, ontstaan die negatiwiteit ook. Hierdie week het 'n leerder uit een van my gunsteling klasse my verskriklik geirriteer. Daar was konstant onderlangse geluide gemaak, maar ek het dit geignoreer. Ek was eintlik bang om haar aan te spreek weens haar arrogante houding wat sy daagliks teen oor haar eie opvoeder toon. Ek dink sy het probeer reaksie uitlok om te kyk hoe ek sal optree as sy my gaan irriteer. Ek het probeer kalm bly die hele periode lank alhoewel dit hier binne my gekook het. Ek besef ook dat 'n leerder moet aangespreek word indien hy/sy die klas ontwrig ongeag hoe die leerder daarop sal reageer en of dit haar persepsie oor my as opvoeder gaan verander. Ek dink my grootste vrees is dat ek nie skade wil doen aan die goeie verhoudings wat ek saam die leerders gebou het nie. Dit wil voorkom of die dissipline van die graad 10 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse by die dag vererger. Alhoewel die leerders ontwrigtende gedrag toon tydens klas, gee ek nog steeds om vir hulle. Ek is eintlik baie meer lief vir hulle as al die ander klasse, omdat al die opvoeders van hulle kla en negatief posisioneer in die skool. Alhoewel hierdie klasse dissiplinere probleme toon, het elkeen van hulle groot respek vir my en dit waardeer ek. Die hoogtepunt van hierdie week was die matriekafskeid. Vir die eerste keer na my eie matriekafskeid in 2010, het ek die matriekafskeid van [redacted] Sekondere skool as 'n opvoeder bygewoon. Dit was interdaad 'n ander gevoel, want vandag sit ek om die tafel met dieselfde mense wat eens op 'n tyd my opvoeders was. Dit is vir die ander opvoeders 'n riem onder die hart om te sien hoe ons as proef-studente belangstelling toon in die sosiale aangeleenthede van die skool asook betrokke is by buitemuurse aktiwiteite en nie net daar is vir ons eie akademiese doeleindes nie. Ek het terug verlang na my matriek-jaar en sosiale aangeleenthede soos die matriekafskeid en kultuuraande is wat ek die meeste verlang van my skooldae. Ek het waargeneem dat die matriekulante baie onrustig was tydens die toesprake en dit is kommerwekkend om te sien hoe vroeg die leerders die matriekafskeid verlaat om te gaan kuier ("afterparty" te hou). Uit die oogpunt van 'n opvoeder, dink ek dat die matriekafskeid is 'n mors van geld en dat 'n gradeplegtigheid in plek daarvan ingestel moet word.

8 - prac - FKGL 12,3 [Afrikaans]

Die week van 24 - 28 Augustus was 'n baie stil week by die skool. Die matriekulante was besig met kontrole toetse wat aanleiding gegee het tot langer register-periodes en korter klasperiodes. Na afloop van die week, het ek baie lesse aangebied vir Fisiese Wetenskappe. Dit is vir my aangenaam om met die Fisiese Wetenskap klasse te werk, omdat hierdie leerders hardwerkend is en belangstelling toon in die vakgebied alhoewel sommiges nie akademies sterk daarin presteer nie. Die grootste probleem of uitdaging wat ek in hierdie vakgebied ondervind, is dat leerders baie stadig werk. Ek bereik nie my lesdoelwitte en uitkomste nie. Ek het al aanpassings gemaak soos om my les te verkort. Ek het ook gesien dat dit beter is, indien moontlik, die konsepte en inhoud te verduidelik in die vorm van sketse

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op die bord sodat leerders die leerstof vinniger kan begryp as wat hulle moet luister na baie informasie en dit terselfde tyd moet prosesseer. Ek probeer werk aan oplossings om leerders aan te moedig om vinniger te werk soos blitstoetse op te stel waar leerders 'n aantal vrae in 'n sekere tyd moet voltooi. Die voordeel van blitstoetse is dat leerders die dag se werk gaan leer wat ek met hulle behandel het en so word die inhoud van konsepte vasgelê. Dit bevorder ook leerders se skryftegnieke en forseer hulle om te leer, aangesien daar nie tyd is om te dink oor die antwoord nie. Tydens my internskap, sien ek hoe belangrik dit is om verskillende onderwysmetodes toe te pas. Ek het waargeneem dat leerders hou van aktief betrokke wees by die leerstof en deel te neem aan klasgesprekke. Die feit dat klasgesprekke leerders intellektueel stimuleer kom sterk navore. Ek besef ook dat leerders hou van in groepe werk en sommiges individueel, daarom is dit van kardinale belang om verskeie onderwysmetodes in een lesaanbieding toe te pas. Wat vir my as 'n Fisiese Wetenskap opvoeder van belang is in my vakgebied, is dat leerders die teorie in verband moet bring met die werklikheid. Laasweek het ek hersienning gedoen op elektriese stroombane en die komponente van elektriese stroombane en dit was vir my 'n riem onder die hart toe die leerders 'n werklike stroombaan op pen en papier kon voorstel. Ek het ook besef dat die tipe verhouding wat jy met die leerders bou het 'n groot invloed op hul akademiese prestasie. Die leerders is nou baie meer gewillig om saam my te werk as aan die begin van my internskap, aangesien ons mekaar beter ken en 'n goeie verstandhouding gebou het vanaf dag 1. Na afloop van my lesaanbieding vir die graad 10 Fisiese Wetenskap klasse, het ek waargeneem dat die een klas die konsepte vinniger begryp as die ander klas. Dus, moes ek verandering aangebring het aan die aanbieding van my les en die manier waarop ek die inhoud fasiliteer. In plaas daarvan om net te aanvaar dat dieselfde onderrigmetode vir beide klasse sal werk, moes ek gebruik maak van verskillende onderwysmetodes om vas te stel watter metode beter werk vir watter klas. Daar is 'n groot verskil tussen die graad 12 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse en die graad 10 klasse. Ek het verwag dat ek dieselfde houding onder die graad 12's sal waarneem, maar inteendeel is dit die teenoorgestelde. Die graad 12 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klasse toon meer belangstelling in die vak as die graad 10's. Hulle is hardwerkend en dit is duidelik dat hul interpretasie as 'n tegniek bemeester binne die vakgebied. Wat opmerkend was vir my as opvoeder in die graad 12 klasse, is dat die leerders wie se aandag afleibaar is gewoonlik vinniger werk as die res van die klas en hul antwoorde die mees korrekste is. Ek kan dus nie vasstel of hul die aktiwiteite te maklik vind nie en of hul van daardie tipe leerders is wat kan werk terwyl hulle gesels, aangesien ek nie kennis dra van hul akademiese prestasies nie. Die uitdaging met graad 10's is dat meeste van hierdie leerders se aandag afleibaar is. Ek probeer nog oplossings vind om die leerders gefokus te kry deur die wiskunde toe te pas in alledaagse onderwerpe waarin hul belangstel soos musiek. Daarom kan ek die afleiding maak dat hul geen belangstelling toon in die vakgebied nie, nie net omdat ek waarneem dat hulle aandag afleibaar is nie, maar ook omdat ek kennis dra van hul akademiese uitslae. Ek besef dat dit van kardinale belang is om entoesiasties te wees oor jou vakgebied en die aanbieding van jou les so interessant as moontlik te maak om leerders se belangstelling in die vak te verdiep. Dit moet vir leerders lekker wees om wiskunde te doen eerder as om vir hulle te forseer om deel te neem. Ek let ook op dat beter uitslae verkry word wanneer leerders uit eie wil wil deelneem aan klasaktiwiteite as wat hul forseer word om die oefeninge uit te voer. Die uitdaging wat ek in die oë staar is hoe om leerders tot by die punt te kry om uit eie wil deel te neem aan die klasaktiwiteite en leerstof wat aan hul gebied word eerder as om hul te forseer om hul werk te doen. Dis goed en wel dat leerders hoë verwagtinge vir hulself skep, maar alles moet nie om punte en uitslae draai nie. Ek voel ons moet leerders se denke rig daarop om uit hul foute te leer as wat dit gefokus is om hoë punte te behaal.

9 - prac - FKGL 11,2 [Afrikaans]

Hierdie week was ek deur die dosente ge-evalueer vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid en Fisiese Wetenskappe. Alhoewel die uitkomste van die lesaanbiedings vir beide vakke goed afgeloop het, was ek baie gespanne met die aanloop van die lesaanbieding vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid. Ek dink die feit

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dat ek bewus was dat ek ge-evalueer word het grootliks bygedrae tot die senuweeagtigheid,maar ek het meer gemakliker geraak met die verloop van die lesaanbieding. 'n Positiewe aspek van die lesaanbieding was dat die graad 12 Wiskundige Geletterdheid klas uit 16 leerders bestaan en ek kon individuele aandag skenk aan elke leerder binne groepsverband. Ek het besef dat leerders 'n beter begrip het van wat van hulle verwag word indien jy as opvoeder die instruksies en die probleem weer saam leerders lees en aan hulle verduidelik. Tydens die verloop van die les het ek waargeneem dat leerders dit moeilik gevind het om die inligtingstabel te interpreteer, aangesien hulle nie die opskrifte en vrae deeglik lees nie. Ek het ook waargeneem dat die leerders wie se aandag afleibaar is vinniger werk as die res van die klas en die aktiwiteit voltooi het voor die res van die klas. Ek beskou dit as 'n tegniek om te werk en te gesels terselfde tyd. Dit was vir my aangenaam om te sien dat leerders die vertroue geneem het om my te raadpleeg indien hul vashaak met die probleem. Die negatiewe aspek van die lesaanbieding was die korter periodes en sommige van die leerders het nie heeltemal klaar gekry met die aktiwiteit nie. Ek het dit baie geniet om die Wiskundige Geletterdheid les aan te bied, aangesien leerders hul samewerking gegee het en deelgeneem het aan die klasgesprek. Ek het verwag dat die leerders die aktiwiteit kon uitvoer, omdat dit eintlik as 'n hersienning les dien vir die graad 12's. Soos ek verwag het, kon meeste leerders die aktiwiteit uitvoer. Die lesaanbieding vir Fisiese Wetenskap het baie beter afgeloop as vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid. Dit was vir my 'n riem onder die hart om waar te neem hoe die leerders interaksie toon met die leerstof en aktief betrokke was by die lesaanbieding. Die leerders was ywerig om die aktiwiteit te voltooi en ek het waargeneem dat daar gesonde onderlangse kompetisie ontstaan tussen die leerders in die klas. Ek het leerders aktief betrek by die les deurdat hulle die antwoorde op die bord doen. Die leerders was ook nie in staat om die aktiwiteit in die klaskamer te voltooi nie weens die kort periodes, maar ek het dit as tuiswerk gegee om te voltooi. Dit was vir my moeilik om individuele aandag te skenk aan leerders, aangesien dit 'n groot klas is. Ek het die leerders in groepe verdeel sodat elke leerder die aktiwiteit individueel voltooi binne groepsverband. Leerders leer die vermoë aan om opdragte individueel uit te voer asook binne groepsverband. Die positiewe aspek van die lesaanbieding was die samewerking wat leerders getoon het en die deelname aan die klasgesprek. Ek moes op die ou einde klas kontrole handhaaf as gevolg van leerders se gewilligheid. Ek was baie meer gemakliker met die aanbieding van Fisiese Wetenskappe as met Wiskundige Geletterdheid. Ek het die les so baie geniet dat dit voel die tyd het gevlieg. Ek kon aan die leerders se gewilligheid sien dat hulle ook die les geniet het en selfs die leerders wie se aandag afleibaar is, het die meeste samewerking getoon. Na afloop van die Fisiese Wetenskap lesaanbieding het ek waargeneem dat leerders dit moeilik gevind het om die stroombaan kringdiagram van 'n gekombineerde serie- en parallelle skakeling te ontleed. Leerders het 'n goeie agtergrond oor die onderwerp gehad en kon hul voorkennis toepas om die stroombaanprobleem op te los. Ek het ook waargeneem dat sommige leerders vinniger werk as die res van die klas en daarom het ek 'n ekstra probleem as uitdaging by die aktiwiteit ingevoeg en ook 'n bonusvraag. Ek het meer aandag geskenk en leiding gegee aan die leerders wat dit moeilik gevind het om die aktiwiteit uit te voer, terwyl ek kort-kort seker gemaak het oor die res se vordering met die aktiwiteit. Afgesien van die lesaanbiedings, was die skool in rep en roer die week. Die leerders het 'n nuwe speletjie agtergekom genaamd "Charlie Charlie". Hierdie speletjie veroorsaak ontwrigting in die klasse waarvan die opvoeders geen beheer het nie. Dit is vir my so snaaks dat leerders eintlik 'n groot vrees vir die speletjie het, maar tog so nuuskierig is om dit te speel. Ek neem waar dat hierdie speletjie baie meer gewild onder die jonger grade is nl. die graad 8-10's. Die graad 11 en 12 leerders is baie meer volwasse en het nie 'n behoefte daaraan om dit te speel nie. Gelukkig het die Fisiese Wetenskap klasse nie vir hulle opgehou met die speletjie tydens klas nie, aangesien die opvoeder goeie klas kontrole toepas en leerders nie sommer kanse sal vat nie, terwyl die leerders in ander leerareas uit die klasse gehardloop het en ander klasse ontwrig het. Ek neem waar dat leerders die opvoeder(s) se reaksie uitlok deur die klasse te ontwrig d.m.v die "Charlie-Charlie" speletjie. Dit blyk dat dit ekstra moeilik is om leerders op 'n Vrydag te beheer. Daar heers 'n opgewondenheid onder leerders en 'n traak-my-nie houding. Dit is vir my kommerwekkend hoe leerders nie op 'n Vrydag wil

werk nie en ek neem waar dat daar 'n onrustigheid heers binne die klaskamers. Die uitdaging is dus om leerders gefokus te kry en hul te motiveer om te werk tot die einde van die dag. Ek dink dit gaan ook 'n groot uitdaging wees wat ek as opvoeder in die gesig gaan staar wanneer ek in die praktyk is. Die matrikulante het ook Vrydag met hul Nasionale September eksamen begin. Dit was vir my kommerwekkend om te sien hoeveel matrikulante nie skool bygewoon het hierdie week nie. Die opvoeders het hersienning gedoen of die laaste afronding van werk gedoen. Leerders kan nie geforseer word om skool by te woon nie, maar ek dink daar moet riglyne in plek gestel word wat leerders motiveer om skool by te woon. Dis altyd die leerders wat goed wil vaar wat ten alle tye by die skool is en binne die klaskamer. As opvoeders moet ons nie net konsentreer op die leerders wat wil werk nie, maar 'n motivering wees vir die leerders wat nie hou van werk nie of laks is om te werk. Ek het waargeneem tydens my waarnemingsklasse met die graad 12's dat die leerders wat nie hou van werk nie, kort net bietjie motivering van hul opvoeders. Ek besef dat dit belangrik is om vir jou leerders te wys dat jy glo in hulle en dat jy 'n ondersteuningsmeganisme is vir hulle binne en buite die vakgebied.

10 - prac - FKGL 11 [Afrikaans]

Tweede laaste week van my praktiese tydperk by [redacted] Sekondere skool. As ek terug kyk na my proeftydperk, besef ek net weereens dat ek in die regte professie is. Ek het elke dag in kontak gekom met verskillende persoonlikhede, verskillende uitdagings in die gesig staar en verskillende situasies betree. Die feit dat elke dag anders is maak hierdie beroep opwindend. Uit die oogpunt van 'n opvoeder, kan ek waarlik se dat ek "my leerders" al hoe meer begin lief geword het by die dag. Ek dink nou al aan hoe moeilik dit sal wees om afskeid te neem, aangesien die 7 weke jou leefstyl begin word het. Netsoos onderwys sy positiewe aspekte het, is daar ook die negatiewe aspekte en uitdagings wat die skool en onderwyssisteem in die gesig staar. Dit is vir my kommerwekkend om te sien hoe baie skoolleerders dwelms misbruik op die plattelandse skole. Hierdie week is leerders deur 'n opvoeder gevang delms gebruik op die skoolgronde. Dit het my hart so seer gemaak om te weet dat leerders so jonk soos graad 9 hul lewens vergooi en hul assossieer met dwelms. Ek vra myself af waar is ons leerders heen oppad? Dit blyk of dwelmsmisbruik al hoe meer gewild raak onder leerders in die jonger grade. As opvoeder het ek baie vrae vir myself gevra soos: waar het dinge verkeerd gegaan? Ek het besef dat jy kan die leerders ondersteun, motiveer, moed in praat, waarsku, vermaan en praat met hulle, maar as opvoeders is ons nie naweke by hulle nie en dra ons nie altyd kennis van die vriendekringe en/of omstandighede waarin leerders hul bevind nie. Leerders moet 'n sterk persoonlikheid het en doelgerig wees in vandag se lewe om negatiewe uitdagings soos groepsdruk dwelmsmisbruik teen te staan. Alhoewel opvoeders dit nie hoef te doen nie, voel ek dat ons leerders moet inlig oor die gevolge van dwelmsmisbruik en tienerswangerskap. Die getal tienerswangerskap is ook hoog onder die dogters en woon meeste nie meer klasse by nie, maar kom skryf toetse en/of le hul eksamen af. Weereens besef ek dat ons as opvoeders moet ook voorligting aan leerders gee rakende hierdie twee onderwerpe. Ek voel dit is nie net ons werk om die kurrikulum te fasiliteer nie, maar meeste van die tyd moet ons ook optree as 'n sielkundige, maatskaplike werker en sosiale werker ens. Leerders het leiding nodig, iemand om hul vertroue in te stel asook iemand na wie hul kan opkyk. Ek weet ek wil daardie mentor vir my leerders wees as ek onderwys as professie betree. Hierdie week was ons ook gevra om toesig te hou by die graad 12's tydens hul eksamen. Ek moet se dat ek baie blootstelling ontvang het in terme van eksamen prosedures asook die prossessering van eksamenvraestelle. Toesighouding tydens eksamens is immers een van die opvoeders se pligte. Ek besef dat dit baie belangrik is om leerders se gedrag te beheer asook om kontrole toe te pas tydens toesighouding. As opvoeder moet jy leerders gefokus kry, terwyl jy self gefokus moet wees. Toesighouding het my baie vaak gemaak en ek het die tyd om gewens. Ek het nuwe begrip vir die mense wat toesig hou wanneer ek toetse en /of eksamenvraestelle afle, want dit voel die tyd staan dood stil. Ek is defnitief voorbereid vir die praktyk en weet watter prosedures gevolg moet word. Hierdie week het ek ook nog lesaanbiedings vir Wiskundige Geletterdheid gehad. Ek het al hoe meer selfvertroue begin bou en ek

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verbeter in terme van klas kontrole. Ek het dit moeilik gevind om klaskamer beheer uit te oefen weens leerders se dissiplinere probleme. Ek probeer werk aan die kritiek vanaf die opvoeder en gebruik dit om my onderrigstyl te verbeter. Met die aanloop van elke lesaanbieding probeer ek die leerders gefokus te kry deur 'n alledaagse onderwerp van hul belangstelling te verbind met die inhoud van die les om sodoende hul belangstelling te verdiep. Ek neem waar dat leerders meer gefokus is op die les en dit dra by dat hul die aktiwiteit met ywerig uitvoer en as 'n uitdaging beskou. Met verloop van tyd kan ek waarneem dat ek beter beheer het oor die leerders en dat ek in beheer voel van die onderriggebeure. Tydens die verloop van die lesaanbieding het ek waargeneem dat sommige leerders die aktiwiteit baie maklik vind en ander het nie 'n idee gehad wat om te doen nie. Ek kon my probleemareas identifiseer en ek besef dat ek moet meer fokus op leerders se voorkennis en stelselmatig bou tot die ontlokking van nuwe kennis. Ek het ook besef dat voorkennis en nuwe kennis kan nie afsonderlik behandel word nie, maar dit maak 'n integrale deel van mekaar uit en moet volgens diktatiese onderrigswyse aan die leerders bekend gestel word. Sodoende kan ek dan verseker dat al die leerders in die klas dieselfde agtergrond van kennis het en weet wat van hulle verwag word. As opvoeder het ek defnitief gegroei en ervaar ek 'n verbetering in my onderrigstyl. Ek begin al hoe meer verduidelik na gelang van die klas se potensiaal en nie net na gelang van sekere leerders se potensiaal nie.

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1 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 8,1

What is digital pedagogy?

Let's break it up to make it just a little bit easier to grasp:

Digital: in this sense the word is in reference to the use of electronic media and aid.

Pedagogy: pedagogy is the art of teaching.

thus: digital pedagogy can be said to be the art of teaching using electronic media within the classroom as an aid or supplement to the lesson you are presenting as a teacher.

You're welcome.

2 - prac - FKGL 9,1

Wow. All that I can say is wow. I had been to supervise at my father and mother's schools before so I had an idea of what I was to expect, but then I got to school and could see the vast difference there is between primary school and high school. I was told to prepare myself for the kids who are sassy, hormonal, clowns, and hard to get into gear. Heck, when the teacher told them that it was time to work I felt that same sinking feeling I used to feel when I was in school and my laughter and fun was abruptly cut off by that four letter word, "work". Not something any kid wants to hear when they're clowning around with their besties or chatting about how "I was sick and so I gave it to Kyle" – in reference to how a grade 10 girl was talking about her transmitting the flu to her boyfriend, via kissing is the best guess I could come up with (I might look like I'm not listening but watch out for me, I'M A MASTER at dropping eves), but, I digress.

On my poegie I arrived at school and the teaching body was very friendly. I saw quite a few younger teachers which was slightly comforting in a way, knowing that I wouldn't be working with a whole warehouse of old geysers was refreshing! (I joke!). I must say that after today, all the respect I could have ever had for teaching has unquestionably quadrupled. I was allocated a teacher who is in her second year teaching and she and I seem to be getting on very well seeing as the age gap isn't too large at all. Since the school is relatively new in terms of English Home Language being offered to learners, the grades only went up to grade 11, no matrics.

Class after class I could see the distinct difference in grades and their general rapport. I noticed that the grade 8s and 9s are ridiculously childish and will laugh at a bag of potatoes if allowed. They were terribly hard to get into order and into the mood of studying. They generally lacked manners and

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the ability to take the work- or themselves seriously. The respect they had for their teacher was minimal if judging from the standpoint of their behaviour. Their ability to be influenced by others in their class was through the roof, and off the charts. I have never seen this domino effect in full effect until today and boy, is it infectious.

I felt that as a student teacher I had to remember my place in a class and not say anything unless asked to contribute, because after all, the class and all its contents is under the dominion of their teacher, and in giving random inputs I felt I would be out of place. However, the one class of grade 8s just brought me to saying something. I regretted it afterwards. Not because of it being wrong or me saying something horrible but because I felt like I was being "that teacher" who tells kids to be quiet. The one the kids don't like, and it is quite sad that I still somehow find myself wanting their approval in some way. I need to work on that. The teaching style of my mentor I found to be questionable at times. Though I am in no position to judge, not having had a single class to teach in my life, I must add that perhaps writing down memos on the board for a test they had written in June exams wasn't the best way of dealing with their mistakes. Some girls asked for their papers back so that they could see what they had done wrong, which the teacher chose to not return to them yet. I would have rather discussed the paper with them and have them write down the corrections as they came to terms with the mistakes they made than have them spoon-fed answers, like robots. She did not always look very prepared for her classes as she looked to be searching in the text books for things they could read. This left a lot of time for the children's minds to be idle and for the talking and disruptive behaviour to take flight. I feel that when it comes to younger children, their minds need to be kept constantly busy, which is something that she didn't really excel at in doing.

The grade 10s and 11s were notably more organized, though there were a few learners who were class clowns as usual, to the point where I had to take a long stick from one of the boys. I saw they were vying for my attention as they were continually looking for my eyes when they did something they knew was wrong. The grade 10s were very engaging and the grade 11s had a whale of a time talking about Orwell's iconic piece: Animal Farm. Although they digressed immensely at times I could see that they were interested in the subject matter and were having a good time, being quirky and pushing the boundaries with their teacher, inch by inch. The teacher offered them extra classes and told them that she was always available, something that I found to be wonderful.

All in all, I had a good day. I could see that it was the first day after a holiday and the kids were bursting from their seams! Hopefully tomorrow will be better, calmer and more productive.

3 - prac - FKGL 8,2

This week has been a whorl wind of an experience. Arriving at school I was overwhelmed to say the least. He kids seemed so unruly to me, I felt as though I had absolutely no control over their shouting and screaming. These kids showed absolutely no sign of wanting to work, which disheartened me, to say the least. This however, was not an accurate representation of who they are as a school. I had to revisit my experiences and in so doing I realised that the reason for their unruliness was obvious. They had just come from a long holiday of doing as they pleased to having to sit in restricting desks and being made to keep quiet. Understandably! I battle to get myself into gear after a long holiday, imagine being just 14 and having to sit still when all you want to do is excitedly chat to your buddies on the other side of the class about the holiday! Throughout the week I saw how they gradually tamed down to the point where they were almost entirely manageable. I must say that over the course of the week I have grown to like these children whom I dreaded seeing on the second day. So much change in one week. I have grown used to the teacher and her teaching style and realize that everybody has their own way of teaching and hers is different but custom made to who she is. I had the opportunity of presenting y first ever lesson to a high school class. The class was to be repeated to the other class in the grade which sounds simple enough although in practice it lacks this simplicity. I found myself trying very hard to perfectly replicate the lesson to the other class and felt very frustrated when I missed

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something or the children didn't react in the way that the other class ha read. I had slightly more discipline issues with the grade 8F class than I did with the G class. The astonishing thing though is that the naughty class (just look how I'm positioning them! tisk tisk!) produced the best work! I was so glad that they got the message that I was trying to bring to them about descriptive essay writing. The G class however completely missed the point, with some boys not having down anything at the end of the period which was frustrating since I gave them ample time to complete what they had to do. I followed up with the today, Friday about what they did wrong ad what I really liked about their work. Besides simple issues like the distinction between too and to or their, there and they're, they wrote as though they were writing a diary entry. This however cannot be generalised to the whole class as some did perform and came up with delightful pieces to read. I marked the pieces and wrote some constructive comments, some of which can be viewed in my portfolio.

Initially at the beginning of the week I was terrified of the classes because I didn't really know how to approach the situation. It turns out that the influence I have over the kids is far greater than I could have imagined. I was always kind to them but ha to remember that they are not my friends, since I am someone who enjoys being playful a laughing. I had to remember that there is a time to be friendly and a time to be stern, something that I am learning how to manage more and more every single day. I had the grade 10's today for a reading period where I read to them. They seemed to really enjoy this because I can remember that for most of the period you could hear a pin drop! I gave others a chance to read when I felt tired and gave as many as I cold the chance to participate, especially those who seemed to not be paying much attention.

There was this one boy who sat in front of me who was lying with his head on his arms. My instinct told me to let him be, but when it came to his chance to read I gently touched him and asked him to read, which he did with no problems. After this I could see that even though he had his head down, he was paying attention. At the end of the period I jokingly told him that it looks like he got his afternoon nap in! He is a very shy boy who had been bullied throughout his high school carer so his demeanour is that of a child who doesn't want to be seen. In my showing him kindness and respect this seemed to have opened him up towards me which made me feel so honoured. He told me that he wasn't feeling well and I wished him well so that he could come back next week feeling better. Shyly he said "miss has a nice voice" and I thanked him. On his departure he gave me a hug. To this I had mixed emotions because we are told that we cannot touch a student, that we have to keep our distance at all times, but I felt hat this boy needed this kind of affirmation from me and I understood an appreciated his display of affection. I spoke to their teacher later and asked me if that's normal and she said that he has had some issues with bullying and that I should feel good that he came to greet me like that. I felt so validated as a teacher, as though even though we have to deal with nonsense from unruly children, it's these moments that make it all worthwhile. If I could make that kind of impact on even just one child, it makes it all worth it in the end. Looking forward to seeing those kids again, and I mean this with all the sincerity in my heart. I love being a student-teacher.

4 - prac - FKGL 8,4

What an intense week this last one has been for me. When I look back I wonder how I made it. As a student teacher we want to do things properly and when we plan lessons we tend to PLAN the hell out of them. They can take up to four hours to compile, if you include an activity and well-thought out lesson plan material and ideas to keep today's children interested. I had five lessons, some of which I had to repeat to another class in the grade. Five lessons over five days meant planning into the wee hours of the morning most days. It was exhausting but I absolutely love teaching so it just seemed to be worth it in the end. I had to give one class a serious talk about their behaviour in my classes. Their register teacher had been so upset with them because of how badly they had been behaving in the last week, and they did the same in my class with their incessant talking and devil-may-care attitude towards their work. When they found out that their behaviour was causing me to do poorly in a lesson that is

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being assessed (yes, they don't know that us student teachers are actually there to be ASSESSED), they changed their attitude because although they were chatty, they seem to genuinely like me, and continued to behave in the rest of the class, for which I am grateful. I thanked them afterwards for understanding.

One thing that stood out to me this week was the fact that there are so many things going on in that school that the teachers are aware of but choose to turn a blind eye to because either they know that they are fighting a loosing battle or because to take action is simply too much effort. Once the rain had penetrated some of the prefabs that I work in, we were forced to move to the old section of the school that had been scheduled for demolition but still stood for some reason. These classrooms obscure the view of the back of the school and the abandoned tennis courts behind the school. As I was sitting in class one break time I saw something that ignited an anger within me - streams of children walking on a mission to the abandoned tennis court walls. I had one thought at what they were doing and I was right. I decided to go and investigate and to my horror, the smell of marijuana hung heavily in the air with cigarette smoke and who knows what else. I took one look at the mass of about 80 children hanging in masses hidden by the abandoned tennis court walls. They become high during breaks and then we have to deal with children who are absolutely unable to take anything in. The smell of marijuana stinks of failure and lost opportunities.

I spoke to my mentor teacher about this and she told me that they are aware of the problem but something is being done. The worst punishment a child can get would be detention which they seem to enjoy because all their friends are there too. My heart breaks for these children in masses throwing their lives away for a fleeting feeling. It makes no sense to me. The next day I saw that not only are these children smoking weed, they get SOLD weed by people who sneak in through the gates and sell these drugs to school children. Men in hoodies, who are obviously gangsters. One I saw walking with a scissors - not to cut out pictures from a magazine I can guarantee you. It just breaks my heart because there are young girls on the grounds, and impressionable young boys who are put at risk by these gangsters and strangers on a school premises that should be a safe haven for any child. This is totally unacceptable and I intend to write a letter to the head teacher to report what is going on.

My heart breaks for these children and I feel like I have my hands tied. Is school still a place of learning or just a place children come to smoke, socialize, get high and do the bare minimum? Am I looking at this the wrong way? What can be done? Where do we go from here?

5 - prac - FKGL 8,4

Phew, once again what a week! As a follow-up to the drugs and gangsterism post I made last week, I am happy to say that something is being done. The teachers are patrolling the school grounds better than ever before. I can see change happening which makes my heart glad. There are still a few children who come to class high as kites which makes me very sad. They think they are sooo slick by speaking in their code language for the drugs and being high but they forget that I am only 22, I've seen enough and heard enough about that side of life to know what they mean. I confronted one boy about this and asked him if his respect is really SO low for me that they will blatantly speak about their drugs in code word they think I wouldn't be able to pick up or glean from the context right in front of me. He was shocked and denied it to my face of cause. Of cause. I however am sad to sat that I have developed a kind of tougher skin being in this environment for a while now, where I have made the conscious decision to be there for those who need me and want me to teach, and that those who make the conscious decision to come to class high or smelling like smoke will always be there. I need to use my energy where it is most beneficial and not waste it on something that won't result in the greater good, because there are children who are willing to learn and participate and they outnumber those who do not. It is not fair to then neglect the masses who pay to be there just so that I can give a lecture to one, two or five children who think life and school is a joke. SO! Onward and forward!

I presented my first ever poetry classes this week and boy were they nerve-wrecking. Because

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of the fact that I love literature so much as well as teaching it, I felt a lot of pressure to do the work justice. I also had a brilliant English teacher throughout high school and to feel like I had to be something like her was also so much pressure that I felt I unnecessarily placed on myself. I enjoyed the literature lessons endlessly. I taught gr11s a poem called "The Meeting" by William Wadsworth Longfellow which is a beautiful poem to say the least. I felt like I really helped the learners understand what the poet was trying to bring to the reader. I enjoyed it so much that I sped through the lesson and my mentor teacher told me afterwards that I had to slow down because it looked like some of the kids struggled to get down what they had to. I felt very bad about this because in no way would I want to hinder their learning by being too fast! I decided that in the next lesson given to the gr10s I would do better - and I could tell that in being slower and more thourough I did way better than my first lesson - which is understandable. I was very proud of that lesson and still am. The grade 10 learners however, as well as the gr11s caused me some concern in that they did not take many notes, even after I had asked them to and expressed the importance, which was scary to think that they do not care enough to write things down that would help them now as well as in future. I do understand, though. Nobody is in the mood to write down things, and children can get very bored very quickly, but -- Work is work!

After a long week of having to prepare lessons (which is very tiring!) I had to honour my commitments to teach dance to some girls for the cultural week. I was pooped after school as anybody would be and in no mood to teach dance to anybody. I just wanted to go home and sleep but I made a commitment. As soon as we started, my hunger faded away and as we were doing one of he things I love the most - dancing - I cold feel how I slowly came alive again after the soul-deadening day at school. Since its a small group of girls who are very respectful and lovely to work with, I found myself enjoying the lesson very much! It's important to have something like this to bring yourself back to life after a tough school day else who knows what might happen to you! Remember to always take part in something or get involved in something that makes you feel human again and not the monster you might feel yourself becoming. I am thankful for moments like that when I can be that Carefree [redacted] again when I dance both in teaching others to dance as well as dancing in my private time - it keeps me sane. Here's to another week of teaching! May week four four times better than we've hoped.

6 - prac - FKGL 8,9

WOW! On Tuesday afternoon the staff was called in to an urgent meeting in the staff room after school which excited the inner drama queen inside me. I was so curious to know what had happened. On Wednesday morning the school started at half past 8 and we were sitting in our little library area that is designated to us students, wondering what the heck was going on in the staff room. as it turned out, the principal had just decided that enough is enough, she was quitting her position as head of the school and reverting to her old position. the staff was in a tizz. they were like a chicken without a head (excuse the pun), everybody having different opinions about Mrs X and her quitting the job. NOBODY wanted to take on the responsibility of being the head of [redacted]. NOBODY. i had to remind myself that I should not get caught up in all the hype and just do my job. we were asked to keep the news from the children but naturally the children knew that something was up. children have the remarkable ability to suss something out, which is what they did, and before long we had some questions asking if Mrs X had resigned. I have no idea of the inner workings of the school and in my opinion since nobody wants to take on the responsibility of being principal, nobody has the right to judge Mrs X, even if her job as principal was wanting.

The controversy aside, I have been having a wonderful week. Us as students have organised a week of activities for the girls at the school and I was part of the Beauty portfolio where I spoke about the importance of inner beauty and how important it is for us as women to stand together and be kind and supportive of one another. The girls seemed to take in what I had to say and the fact that they chose to be there and listen made it so much easier to manage the girls since they wanted to listen. We all decided to make something nice for the girls during break and on Wednesday night I baked

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THREE huge cakes for the girls, which got some raving reviews! I really enjoy working with girls, I wonder if it might be one of my callings :)

In terms of classroom management and teaching, I can see a definite preference developing in me. I love teaching grades 10 and 11 where I find myself dreading, ABSOLUTELY dreading the grade 9s! The grade 8s are still super cute and I find myself managing them well in class. I have taken to this small group of little boys in my gr8 classes who need help urgently in terms of their work. While the teacher teaches the general class I would work remedially with those few and I find that it works for them. I just need to remind myself not to baby them too much and make them lazy to try and understand things themselves. I love teaching them though, they respond well to me and I feel some kind of motherliness coming out of me. One of the naughty boys, [redacted], has turned over a new leaf and I use the respect he has for me to get him to work and try to impress me. I have taken him on as my project and I will keep my readers updated on his progress because not only do I see him as a little boy who needs love, attention and kind work, I also see him as someone who has so much potential that the other teachers do not see because he is very talkative and has a lot to say. Also, he doesn't respond well to people shouting at him which brings out attitudes that I don't feel are native to his character. I love teaching and I can see more and more that teaching isn't teaching a class or teaching a curriculum but it really is teaching a CHILD. Many of them, all with their idiosyncrasies, personalities and quirks. working closely with them opens them up and I experience each child with enthusiasm and intrigue - IF THEY LET ME. Many children sadly come with the highest brick walls around them from their backgrounds, which is SO SAD. And then there's me like a woodpecker, pecking at their crusts.

Woodpecker. Miss Woodpecker.

On to a new week!

7 - prac - FKGL 8,3

They say that women are like teabags, that we don't know how strong we are until we get put into hot water. How true this saying is. I must say that over the past few weeks I would have never imagined I would be sitting in class with the type of kids, in the type of school environment that I do now. I'm being brutally honest. We all dream of teaching at [redacted] or [redacted], we all have dreams of an easy teaching experience and who is to say those schools don't have their own problems? We dream of a school where children drink in our every word and there's no need to shout or reprimand 1000000 times every day. we DREAM of comfort, of staff-rooms with coffee flowing and air-con running. BUT, will we grow? Will we become the best person we could possibly be in perfect conditions? I come from a privileged middle-class background, my parents both teachers, and I was blessed to go to a good school and to be surrounded with a certain type of mindset and mentality. The idea that education is my only way upwards and towards the independence that I so hungrily craved was etched into my mind before I knew what I wanted to do with my life. And yet, I struggle to find that school of thought in the environment I am currently situated. I grew up in a bit of a bubble, and BOY has my bubble been burst.

I have learnt to swim in an environment that I never thought I could survive in (and of cause the tuck-shop has helped me through this in my neediest times - I am NOT kidding here - it's been a huge crutch). An environment where the leadership is lacking and the children feel it within the school. An environment filled with drugs, bunking and ill-discipline, where a culture of learning is not fostered, and this makes me sad. I have been exposed to things I only heard about from other people BUT here I am, swimming and loving the trip this is taking me on. I am one of those people who are able to adapt to adversity (just don't douse me in it!!!) and grow. I have been cat-called more times than I can count, disrespected and unappreciated, but I still wake up every morning with a will to go on because deep down I feel like somehow I am making a difference to someone. That somehow I can possibly be that role model to a child, someone they can look up to.

I have become attached to some of the children, and surprisingly they aren't the boffins that

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one would expect. i have grown attached to little group of boys who to me are the cutest little things on this darn earth. they are greatly overlooked and left to fend for themselves in the back of the classroom., their teacher doesn't expect much from them in terms of work and as a result of this does not even check their homework. they tend to be a little chatty and this is what initially brought me to sitting with them. they're little boys, far smaller than they should be for grade 8 and I suspect they come from impoverished backgrounds. by sitting with them to keep them quiet and working I realized that they are just normal little boys who have so much character. they like me and the stickers I give them when they do their homework and try hard to impress me, because they like me but - I suspect - ABOVE ALL they think I'm pretty - and who doesn't want to impress a pretty lady? I enjoy working with them as a group and I see the tendency within me to gravitate to the needy ones, the ones who need help and attention which is so scarce in a large class. I hope that I inspire them as much as they inspire me to be kind and loving to people I never thought I would build a relationship with. I'm a work in progress but really I think I like who I'm becoming. This teaching practice is beginning to mean more to me than those 8 lessons per subject.

We are still hard at work on our spiritual dance for the Cultural Day which will be taking place on the 11th of September, and the ballet group seem to be very excited and I enjoy working with them. The school has announced that there will be two interim principals until the end of the year, when a new principal will be announced. This week has been a long one for me and I am so glad that I can go on to a brand new one. Keyword to remember for the week: Teabag.

8 - prac - FKGL 5,1

There is nothing that flies as fast as a week in a school. Here I am, in the end of my sixth week at a school and still surviving. One incident that stood out to me this week was rather eye-opening. While helping a few boys doing their work during the class I had my back turned towards the naughty boys who refuse to take out a single book. Like I have said before, I work with those who want to work. I felt these boys throwing me with pen caps. I was extremely annoyed but realized that all they really want from me is my attention - but not the positive type of attention. These boys are the type who take great pleasure out of seeing a teacher loose their cool. I knew this and was determined not to fall into their trap. It took everything I had not to turn around and do something to them. I calmed myself and continued working. AGAIN.

Another pen cap thrown against my back. Let us bear in mind that these are not accidental tosses. These are deliberate and with ill intent. I don't know what I have ever done to harm them or cause them to want to treat me with such disrespect. I have no idea. The sad thing is, These are the boys that I used to pay lots of attention to because I felt that they were misunderstood cases and I was determined to get through to them on a level that they are not familiar with. It really hurts that they did this to me. AGAIN.

Third time a pen cap hits me. I ignore.
FOURTH time they threw me with a big crumpled up ball of paper against my head. This set me the hell off. The teacher was teaching but at that moment I was so upset I stopped her mid sentence - which is something I never do - to notify her of the boys who have been throwing things at me. They denied it and actually blamed me and told me that I was targeting them and made ME feel bad for blaming them! I have never been exposed to such people! I have never been exposed to such a blatant show of disrespect and dishonor. I had no idea what to do so I told their teacher. The reason this kind of behaviour goes on is because nothing gets done to them and to this day they have not apologized and continue to disrupt the class like it's their job. I told my parents about this and they made sure I told the principal. I went to their grade head, told him with them standing there and still they denied it to my face as if I was stupid. He just gave them a talking to. Still, nothing happens to these boys. Action needs to be taken against them but the school lets things like this slide for some reason I am not even sure of. I don't know what to do but I pray to God that he sends me to a good school one day, with a sound

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discipline system. These things should not happen in a school environment.

On the up-side, I gave 3 very good lessons for Life Orientation this week which I thoroughly enjoy because of the fact that the grade 11s are so chilled. I really enjoy them. They are so responsive. I chose them for my English Crit lesson coming up this week Wednesday!

This week was the marking of the last 40 days that the matrics will ever be having at school again - they hope! I remember saying goodbye to school, thankful that I never have to spend another day at a school... The irony. The matrics came in their casual clothing and I found myself greeting them as "hello Ma'am" until I caught onto the fact that these were in fact school children and not parents who came to school to see the principal. I swear the kids look older and older every year! The cultural week seems to be in full swing as the ballet girls and I are hard at work on our dance for the evening.

Three More weeks to go - Let the count down begin!

9 - prac - FKGL 8,6

This has been my seventh week in [redacted], and like every other week, the time flies by! By now my body wakes me up at the crack of dawn on weekends, and I wish it would do the same during the week, although I must say that waking up at 6:30 isn't the blasted pain it once was. I've been having a good time with the children and I feel myself bonding with them - they're growing on me like weeds in a corn field!

When I think about the fact that I only have 2 more weeks left at the school it fills me with both excitement (I'm being real here) as well as an acute sense of dread for the fact that these faces I have grown to love are no longer going to be before me every single day anymore! I also have anxiety at the idea of my many hours in the day that will be left open like a gaping hole, devoid of much to do but my coursework! I spoke to my mother about this and she told me to calm down and take things as they come. I will get used to the free time in between classes again and learn to love it as I once did. I enjoy the attention I get from the little grade 8s who make me feel very pretty in the way they are always in awe of what I'm wearing each day. I need to remember that whatever I wear I need to consider very carefully because I am being watched like a hawk! They are very endearing, I love the little grade 8s who still have the glow of childhood on their skin. Everybody is so fascinated at me coming to school each day on my poegie and ask me for lifts every day!

I had my crit lesson this week on Wednesday and I must say, it has been a while since I was that nervous. I chose the grade 11s for my lesson and I chose them strategically because of how much easier they are to handle. they are also a small class which made the personally getting to know each child much easier than the lower grades where the classes are much bigger. One huge set-back for my crit lesson was the fact that the grade 11s were so busy practicing their dances that they were doing for life orientation that they did not hear the bell and as a result of this they came 15 minutes late! I almost lost my mind! This however, came in use when the lecturer had to give me a mark for diadatic contingencies! He said that I handled the pressure well. I just calmed myself and jumped into my work. I did a poem with them called "The wild doves at Louis Trichardt" which is a poem that I did in grade 11 too. I had a brilliant teacher who made the lesson very interesting for me and I was hoping to give them the same kind of interesting deliverance. I felt a little bit of pressure because I wanted them to like it as much as I did! They seemed to grasp the poem and many of them presented ideas to me that I was wowed about - these kids are actually so smart! I enjoyed the lesson and my lecturer said it was a very good lesson, too.

We had a feedback session afterwards where he commended me on my ability to use the kids' lifewords in my explanation of the poem. I made sure I used references that they would be familiar with in my execution of the poem and as a result of this, the poem seemed to come alive to them. Although I am doing my PGCE, I really want to teach primary school but my lecturer told me that I could very well do high school too, he thought I was good enough. Huge validation! I was so proud of the grade 11s who made the lesson enjoyable to teach too. I went to them the next morning and thanked them for

being such good sports! I had a good week and hope that the last few days will be wonderful (that's ten more school days, FYI - Yes I'm keeping tabs!!!)

10 - prac - FKGL 9,8

SO! Second last week, and what a week it was. We saw the grade 11 ball happening this week which was the highlight of my week. At the ball the learners were assessed for their life orientation marks for line dancing and I could see they all enjoyed this every much. They got dressed to the nines and brought food and had a jolly good time, even though their grade 11 ball was at 10 – in the morning! They all looked so stunning! This week was one of those weeks where I really felt so absolutely out of place in that school. The kids were scheduled to write their test week so there were absolutely no classes, and all they did was sit in class and study, which I found to be very odd. Also, as students, we were unable to use these days for teaching and getting in lessons because the learners were busy studying and writing tests, which set many of us back in terms of completing the amount of lessons we had to complete. They gave the children more than two hours every day to study and called it exactly that – as if those children need any more reason not to study at home and come prepared! A lot of the children ended up just leaving their studying at home to come study at school but the classes ended up so noisy because of how difficult it is to control a class where they are not being taught and they have to "study". Sometimes I feel like the people who run the school do not think and simply do it because it's what's easiest for them. Heaven knows these children don't need another week of doing nothing in class. I feel like I'm sounding very jaded at the moment – like an old aunty – and to a very real extent I am jaded by my experience at the school.

Don't get me wrong, I learnt a lot from being at the school, but 9 weeks is a long time. I feel like my time at the school is wearing thin and as though my space in class is getting smaller. As the days go on I feel like I'm getting more and more in the way of the teacher. They try to be very kind and nice to them but I understand that after a while you would like your own classroom back to it just being you. Where you can shout and "gaan te keere" without feeling like you are being judged! I feel like the more familiar the kids get with you, the nicer things get in class between you and a select few, but the harder things get with the kids who are disruptive – they don't care. To them you are not their teacher and you are old news. So, on we trudged in the mud every day (the place is really a mud bath when it rains like it did this week), and tried to make the most of a week that held nothing much in store for us but to sit in out library classroom and talk about our plans for the weekend or the color we would like to dye our hair next. I am having a little bit of a problem with my life orientation lessons because of the fact that there are very few actual lessons happening for life orientation at this school, and in terms of observations this has been a nightmare. Teaching life orientation has also proven to be a little difficult because the children simply do not want to work, and neither do they take the subject seriously. I must say, though, that they grade 11s are AWESOME to teach life orientation to because of how interactive they are. They also possess a level of maturity that many of the other grades do not, and I really thrive off this because we end up having meaningful discussions, and I am very proud of them. Unfortunately, since the timetable does not allow it I will not be able to use them for my crit lesson tomorrow!

We were allowed to leave when the children left for home but I stayed many days because I had to help the girls with their dance routine for the culture evening that was "planned" for Tuesday evening. Leaving school earlier was a huge shock to my system! All of a sudden I had no idea what to do with my time from 12-3 each afternoon where I would usually be in class helping with this or that. I was genuinely worried about how I will react to having a whole lot of time on my hands. I also anticipate long crocodile tears when I leave because even though I look at some children and I feel heat boiling in my temples and my ears burning from dislike, I know I will miss them all collectively and I know that I will think with fond memories about the few that really made my time there worth it. I know that previously in this post I sounded very begrudging, which was really just a result of feeling underappreciated and ill-treated by some, but now, thinking back on those who really make me smile

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with their kind words, letters and fixed eyes upon me I can't wait to go to school tomorrow!

This week will be my last week at school and I hope it ends on a beautiful note. I can't wait to see the girls perform the dance I taught them, and I hope that at the end of the week I check in with an update of the millions of chocolates I have received! Haha!

11 - prac - FKGL 8,8

I must say that this has been one of the harder weeks that I have experienced. Not because of anything that had to do with how the children behaved or anything strange that happened at school but because of the fact that it was my last week at this school and I have grown so attached to each and every one of my students. I have grown not only my students, but also my main mentor teacher, Ms [redacted], whom I sat with every single day of the past 2 months. I will miss her dearly. She has always been so helpful and accommodating towards me, and made me feel welcome in her classes (even on her sleepy days!).

With a heavy heart I feel that although I'm sad that I will be leaving I feel the time really has come for me to get back to campus. I miss being in classes and being a carefree youth(?). I miss having a choice whether or not I will attend a certain class (haha!) and I miss being able to walk to a coffee shop whenever I wanted to. I also miss my lecturers! I'm just in a state of deep introspection at the moment because of all the emotions that have been running high this week.

Like I said previously, I loved being at this school but I feel that my time here is through. This is not because of how the teachers treat us, but because of the conflict that has been erupting amongst us student teachers. I sense a certain aura of cabin fever that has descended upon us and this indicates that it's time to go. I built many beautiful relationships with quite a few of my fellow students and we had many things in common being at this school together and engaging in the daily struggles of a student teacher.

I've learnt a lot about myself in this past period of time too. This time has taught me to be able to address conflict and speak up when something is not okay. It has taught me to be able to get along with other people whom I work with and to be able to manage my time effectively. I have been taken out of my little bubble of a world and shaken and prodded violently by the reality of what goes on in schools. I have become a bit more of a harder, stronger person by seeing and experiencing things that I never thought was possible to experience within a school environment. I have even gangsterism and drugs, violence and sweet children who really are the best damn things I have ever seen. I have learnt how to engage with other people from other cultures and even learnt quite a bit of Xhosa!

This week in terms of work has been very relaxed because I have completed all my lessons and observations so the work that I had to complete was minimal; I only had to have a few things signed by teachers I worked under. I used this week as time to soak up the experience without having to worry about things that I had to do. I spent time with the children I enjoyed being around and got to make jokes with them because of the fact that I am not their official teacher anymore.

We had cultural day this week and aside from the slight organisational issues, I enjoyed it so much, and so did the learners I taught. They loved the dance and the hall was full of people who wanted to see their children take part. I find this community to be quite tough but also endlessly endearing and I will miss e\forming part of it. The girls I taught came and gave me a chocolate to say thank you for helping them out with the dancing, which I really appreciated. I am able to leave this school knowing well that I have made my mark, and it's a positive one!

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1 - Other - FKGL 1,2

Where do you come from? And where are you going...?
Do you know who you are? Do you know who or what you want to be?

Do you know your areas of gifting, your talents and abilities?
Do you know your weaknesses and values?
What makes you angry?
What makes you late?
What makes you laugh out loud and what makes you cry?
If you don't know who you are, how do you expect to even start getting to know me?

2 - other - FKGL 2,3

When you look in the mirror what do you see?
Do you dare to look at your reflection? Not just the outward appearance the physical "flaws". Are your eyes to close together or your nose too big? To see yourself you have to look past the make up and the hairdo. You have to dare to look at you and see. See all of you the good and the bad.
Dare to look - but remember to take off the glasses you have been wearing all your life. When you look in the mirror what do you see?

3 - other - FKGL 3,4

Do you see me? Where I clean the bathrooms or remove the rubbish. As I hand you your change from behind the cash register do you notice my polite smile. Or does your world only exist of you?
Ah don't think I'm accusing you. I sometimes do it too. Mindless paying no attention to the people around me.
Just think about it a little, how many "invisible" people are there in your world.   Doing things behind the scenes in order for you to enjoy the life you live. Take a minute and make a list.
Then say "Thank you"

4 - other - FKGL 4,1

A piece here a piece there.   Like a puzzle I hope that they all fit together.
Sometimes these pieces accentuate and enhance each other. Sometimes I just don't know where some pieces fit. BUT the hardest of all is when two pieces seem to shout against each other. No matter how much I try I cannot seem to understand how they can be part of one me. In pure desperation I try to make them fit. Hide them or chisel parts away.
Yes I do confess at times I HATE some of these pieces and we all know that hate is a very negative emotion and hating myself (even if its just a piece) is just simply destructive.
Do you love you? All of you?
Well, thing is, sometimes when I let a piece allone for a while I suddenly see its true colour. Then it falls into its place effortlessly. And sometimes I turn that piece over and see that it does not carry the stamp of authenticity- and I can toss it! To the bin- it never was a part of me.
Either way - peace and love restored!

5 - other - FKGL 3,4

Sometimes we need to take a few steps back before we can move forward. Get a little perspective on things. In other cases it's not just a few steps, but what may feel like a mile or more.
Coming back to university after a 20 year gap really feels like moving back in time. Some things just do not change...students are students...and the student cafeteria is a noisy place. (Am I moving back as person, falling behind in the plan?) In sharp contrast so much did change, in the environment and in me.
The future is all around me, and so is the past. I reach towards the future amidst flashbacks from the past. Will I shake the shackles off or will the flood of memories drown me and pull me back ... and back wards?

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NO! The future sparkles with newness, excitement and hope....
I guess I've made my choice.

6 - other - FKGL 2,5

All you know is what you see - until you start too ask questions.
But what will you ask?
How are you?
What's up dude?
Or even
What is your name?
(And if you are like me you forget that name faster than it was said!)
We are stuck to know only what we see, until we ask?
I would like to ask - "What makes you tick?", but generally people don't know how to respond to that.
So instead I'll ask " " and they say " " and so on untill hopefully I get to a bit of insight as to who this person really is or would like me to believe they are cause we all play a masking game of sorts.
So untill I ask the right question you only say what you think I want too hear or what you think I can handle.
Don't you?
I know I do.

7 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 11,5

Art, Education, Learning, Caring, Insight, Skills, Knowledge, Choice, Digital

8 - Other - FKGL 4,8

Looking at my homework and trying to decide what to start with, where to begin ...feelings flood over me. Emotions, no more specificly, fearful feelings, feelings I have not felt since my first year varsity in 19**.
Overwhelmed, a mountain of work... but I have to balance the old and the new.
FOCUS!!!!
But the pressure has pushed me into overrdrive and instead I procrasternate a little bit more and write.
(Continued ..."I recall"...)

9 - Other - FKGL 3,3

I recall my first semester exam in first year at US.
In total panick I phone mom (still using a ticky box) and well she reads between the lines and realise I was not doing well at all. My predicates were all 40, 40... and my mind was saying ..."on half the work you only scored 40, how are you going to get 60 on double the volume work..?!"
The more I procrasternate the worse it gets. So I eventually get to ABC (apply bottom to chair) and just as I get into a work flow... Mom shows up. She drove through from home 30 minutes to come and see me in my hostel.   "Let's go for ice cream" was her solution.
I passed that semester by the skin of my teeth. ("My basvelle het agter gebly.")
The following exams and years went better.   I even continued to do Honours.
I'll get through this too - Just wish Mom was here to .... love me.

10 - Learning project - FKGL 5,1

I want to learn how to conduct an interview with a public figure and write it as an article.
This is something I wanted to do for a while and this assignment is my opportunity to "get on with it".
Let me start with a strategy:

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Google, read and set up some questions.

Do some interviews to practice and gain some experience. I will need some guinea pigs. (Surely among my class I there will be some bribe-able candidates.)

Next I will also visit the journalistic department and see if I can glean from them.

Then, if I am brave enough, I will seek out a public figure or two to interview.

Sounds like a plan to me.

11 - Other - FKGL 4,2

Conceptual thinking : classical conditioning : behavioural modifications ....

Closed vs open ended questions.... or "Guess what is in my mind questions...."

Mmm

Reflection. ...

Not all days are "woop woop good", but that does not mean it was a bad day.

Stuggeling with a problem brings a greater reward when you succeed and often better recall.

And you will succeed.... cause it's not that hard.

Just breathe

Focuss

Work hard

Rest

And if you don't no - find out

12 - Learning project - FKGL 6,7

Polar bears should always be interviewed in person.

13 - Learning project - FKGL 6,5

I think I am ready for my first dry run.....

Testing my questions on classmates.

Watch this space for the results.

Nervous, not so much, just excited to see how it will go. I also enlisted the services of an classmate to help record the interviews and if I "graduate" to the next phase I will progress to video. (Taking baby steps here.)

The material on the internet that I worked through were very helpful and there are some great learning opportunities available. Some sites include support as well.

I did read a bit about the setting up of questions, (open ended, humoristic, content appropriate) and about doing interviews in person or over email or phone. I think I prefer to do in person interviews, especially because I would like to be able to get to know the people I interview a little better and a phone or email is just too impersonal. Sure there is some valid reasons for using other options.

About 12 questions - open and closed ended. Tounge in cheek and tell it as it is. The test will be in how they do with the actual interview, and of course how I put that into writing.

Will you find it interesting?

14 - Other - FKGL 7,6

Instructions to teachers in 1872

....This is just too good not to post.

These instructions include:

Teachers will fill lamps, clean chimneys and trim wicks each day.

Each teacher will bring a scuttle of coal and a bucket of water for the day's use.

Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs for the individual tastes of children.

Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes or two evenings a week

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if they go to church regularly.

After ten hours in school, the teacher should spend the remaining time reading the bible or other good books.

Women teachers who marry or engage in other unseemly conduct will be dismissed.

Every teacher should lay aside from his pay a goodly sum for his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.

Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents a pool or public hall, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason for suspecting his worth, intentions, integrity and honesty.

The teacher who performs his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of 25 cents a week in his pay providing the board of education approves.

15 - PGCE learning - FKGL 5,5

So I did my first Fish Bowl lesson. I think all of us that has done this can agree with me the set of mixed emotions is as varied as the fish in the sea. Everything from nerves, tears, sweat, fear, anticipation, excitement and exhilaration. For some it was a pure thrill and for others ... torture?

Where ever someone rated themselves on this emotional scale, one thing was noticible through out the building - adrenaline!

And in the moments or even days after (depending on your personal style of course) REFLECTION....

that is the name of the game.

What worked; what did not fly and why not; and on and on we evaluate ourselves and our peers.

Let's just keep our eye on the ball. Teaching is for learning; even though we are learning to teach.

16 - PGCE learning - FKGL 5,3

So this was UNPLANNED.... I learned how to create a website with Weebly. Yes it was part of an assignment. In this year a very few things are not.

In any case, I thought I could do this the normal way, PowerPoint or something that I already know how to use (use a blog - you have everything you need on there....) no, not this time.

So I set myself to the task and **"googled it"**. Well it was much easier than I thought and I had too much fun doing it. Too much, yes, too much, because I have 3 other, no make that 4 other assignments due next week and I am spending way to much time finding the right pictures and placing them just so....that everything looks A1. Don't look now but give us a few more days and then I will post a link to the site. NOT bad ek se, not bad at all.

Something else I did not plan on or anticipate was the fact that I had to write my personal vision as a teacher in an assignment (due of course next week). Well a personal vision is not something I have in my back pocket, and not something I develop in a week. Don't get me wrong, I am not without vision, but due to the nature of this year vision has been well, very much in a state of flux.

And vision was also very much replaced by a to do list. Keeping up with assignments and responsibilities.

I need at least a week in a cabin in the wilderness, the Fynbos around me, a lot of quiet, the sandstone rocks and sand under my feet, and the sea on the horizon to develop a good vision. Something that will keep me focused during my first years as a teacher. That will inspire not just myself, but also my students and colleagues. Something that, without having to state it, will show parents that I mean business when it comes to their children's education. That is what I expect of a vision. A statement that will keep expecting from me to produce my best; not to give up and to get up when I get knocked down. I few words that reminds me to keep an attitude of gratitude, a smile on my dial and a prayer in my heart.

To be the best version of me that I can possibly be. To care, to dare, to share.

To pray, play and pay my dues. To dance, take a chance and to advance. To be, to become and to believe.

17 - PGCE learning - FKGL 6,4

In class we were given a list of statements of hope starting with "My South Africa".
Well, my thoughts...

My South Africa as a little girl is wide open space, and grasslands, telephone lines along the long long road between Pretoria and Cape Town. A place of beauty and blue skies.

My South Africa is the Xhosa cleaning lady that cleans for free and leaves bread for the kids of the white divorcee not able to make ends meet - Eastern Cape long before 1994.

A place of care.

My South Africa is the black gardener that works faithfully and continue to show respect to the white women of the house, letting his actions speak as an example. A place of respect.

My South Africa is the place where a boy from Ghana works as a gardener, puts himself through Bible school and becomes a pastor to the people of the local township. His efforts rewarded with a wife and two beautiful babies and more. A place of opportunity.

As a child, that was my South Africa....I was blind to hardships beyond measure of life in a shack and not having food to eat. A place of hardships and discrimination. ...it only became that with education.

Let us not teach children how to discriminate, when they have no idea what that is, but let us not remain children, blind to the truth and pain of others.

18 - PGCE learning - FKGL 1,6

As promised the link to the website we did....
Understandingfracking.Weebly.Com
Please keep in mind it was done with grade 9/10's in mind and it is my first of this ever!

BAp71

1 - Learning project - FKGL 9,4 [Afrikaans]

'n Mens is elke dag so gefokus op die konkrete, die onmiddellike en die nou. Ek sien dit daagliks in my eie lewe. Of dit nou die gejaag na die volgende sperdatum of spertyd is, die onoplettende verbygaan van die ure in die dag of sommer net 'n mens se geneigdheid is om die "klein dingetjies" in die lewe mis te kyk.

Anders as om iets konkreet te leer, wil ek leer om die kleiner dinge in die lewe meer te waardeer. Vandaar die naam van die blog, "lewensreis", omdat dit iets is wat aangaande is en wat nie skielik gaan stop nie. Hierdie is 'n reis van die lewe as sulks en die proses waardeur ek gaan gaan om oor 'n geruime tyd te kan sê: "Ek het dit nou."

Die reis gaan die vorm aanneem van kleiner posts op hierdie blog en dit gaan gepaardgaan met veral foto's en ander vorme van multimedia soos die geleentheid hom voordoen. Jy is welkom om my te gaan volg op Instagram by @[redacted] om eerstehands te sien wat ek deur hierdie "lewensreis" gaan doen. Ek sal alles wat op Instagram gesit word, hier ook post, maar dit gaan heel moontlik nie korreleer met die spesifieke datum of tyd wanneer die oorspronklike foto opgelaai is nie.

Ek sien uit om hierdie lewensreis te begin.

2 - Learning project - FKGL 11,1 [Afrikaans]

Ek is innig dankbaar vir Food Lover's Market se Americano en verniet WiFi om hierdie besige week mee te begin.

3 - Learning project - FKGL 9,8 [Afrikaans]

Niks kon my vandag meer gelukkig maak as om tussendeur al die rondjaag gou my wasgoed by die huis te gaan optel nie.

4 - Learning project - FKGL 5,9 [Afrikaans]

Hoe bevoorreg is ons om op die mooiste kampus te swot?

5 - Learning project - FKGL 7,3 [Afrikaans]

Bevoorreg met hierdie ystervrou in my lewe. Dankie mamma vir alles!* Vierde damesdag

6 - Learning project - FKGL 0,6 [Afrikaans]

Rots van 'n man! Onsaglik lief vir jou [redacted]!

7 - Learning project - FKGL 8,4 [Afrikaans]

Vanoggend het ek en [redacted] 'n gesin van 6 ingelaai en in Ceres gaan aflaai. Hulle sou ongeveer 40km te voet moes aflê in die brandende Karoo-hitte of hulle sou moes hike. Net weereens besef hoe bevoorreg ons is en hoe 'n mens die klein dinge soos 'n werkende motor mis kyk.

8 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 14,0 [Afrikaans]

Atwell and Hughes (2010) argumenteer vir die gebruik van tegnologie in pedagogiese opsette dat die fokus vir onderrig verskuif het deur 'n beweging na leerdergesentreerde onderrig of 'n beweging van onderrig na leer.

Een van die benaderings wat digitale pedagogie steun is dié van konstruktivisme. Konstruktivisme verwys na die feit dat leerder hulle eie kennis en betekenis deur hulle leer as't ware konstrueer (Atwell & Hughes, 2010). Die essensie van konstruktivisme word deur die volgende aspekte uitgelig wat 'n kind se leerervaring ondersteun en wat nodig is vir kennisproduksie: ervaring, verwarring, refleksie en konstruksie (Atwell & Hughes, 2010). Kognitiewe-, sosiale- en radikale konstrutivisme is drie onderafdelings van konstrukvisme. Vir die fokus van hierdie bespreking gaan daar nie in veel besonderhede hieroor uitgebrei word nie.

Verskeie nuwe pedagogiese modelle word ook na vore gebring byvoorbeeld: "Learning 2.0", "Learning 2.0 counter-evidence", konnektivisme, gemeenskappe van ondersoek, teorie/praktyk praktiese navraag, akademiese vakleerlingskap, e-leer of e-padagogie (Atwell & Hughes, 2010).

'n Verdere benadering is dié van gemeenskappe van praktyk. Hierdie benadering is gesetel in die gesitueerde leerteorie wat die gesitueerde natuur van leer uitlig en beklemtoon (Atwell & Hughes, 2010). Kennis word aangeleer, gegenereer en dit word getransformeer in die sosiale interaksie waarin die kind hom of haarself bevind. So is dit duidelik dat lede van aanlyngemeenskappe, skakels maak met kennis en selfs nuwe kennis uitbrei deur hierdie leerteorie. So ontwikkel en verdedig hierdie lede opinies.

Nog 'n benadering is die aktiwiteitsteorie. Die aktiwiteitsteorie model kontekstualiseer die interaksie tussen mense en rekenaars met die aktiwiteitssisteem waarin dit plaasvind, terwyl dit die mediasie van instrumente en gereedskap, reëls en verdeling van arbeid beklemtoon (Atwell & Hughes, 2010). Menslike praktyke word as ontwikkelingsprosesse ondersoek. Hierdie benadering beklemtoon die belangrikheid van die interaksie met gereedskap as nuwe konsepte wat leer vorentoe dryf (Atwell & Hughes, 2010).

Sosiale konstruktivisme is nog 'n benadering wat digitale pedagogie ondersteun. Die teorie is gebasseer op die werk van Lev Vygotsky en beklemtoon die interaksie met die sosiale omgewing (Atwell & Hughes, 2010). Vygotsky se Zone van Proksimale Ontwikkeling vorm 'n integrale deel van sy teorie en dit beklemtoon dat leerders groei tot 'n mate tot die vlak van die inligting wat aan hulle voorgelê word (Atwell & Hughes, 2010). Hiermee ook die belangrikheid van steiering of 'scaffolding'.

Hieruit is dit duidelik dat 'n mens nie net digitale pedagogie in 'n spreekwoordelike boks moet sit nie, maar dat hierdie praktyk gebruik maak van talle ander benaderings wat dit versterk.

9 - Learning project - FKGL 6,7 [Afrikaans]

Kyk ek is stout vir 'n stukkie ontbyt en samesyn. Groot waardering vir hierdie bederf vanoggend

10 - Learning project - FKGL 5,8 [Afrikaans]

Eens in 'n leeftyd kry mens sulke lewensveranderende e-posse wat alles op sy kop keer en deure vir jou oop maak. So opgewonde. Watch this space

11 - Learning project - FKGL 6,2 [Afrikaans]

Soms moet jy net plat op jou gat gaan sit op die opvoedkunde gebou se stoep na 'n lang dag en besef, "hey, I gots this."

12 - Learning project - FKGL 4,7 [Afrikaans]

Party dae moet 'n mens in hierdie een vasloop om net vir 20min straight te lag.

13 - Learning project - FKGL 5,3 [Afrikaans]

Bevoorreg met een mal oulike HK. Julle maak alles makliker.

14 - Learning project - FKGL 3,7 [Afrikaans]

Jy is hier vir 'n rede. My oë maak elke dag skrefie vir skrefie oop vir elke seëning.

15 - Learning project - FKGL 5,5 [Afrikaans]

Dis hoe champions lyk! Minerva = Debat Champions 2015. So dankbaar vir koshuistrots en gesonde verstand. Well done julle

16 - Learning project - FKGL 2,3 [Afrikaans]

Ek het die tyd van my lewe saam met julle. Ek is so geseënd met julle as primgenote. So lief vir julle.

17 - Learning project - FKGL 0,6 [Afrikaans]

Niks so mooi soos my taal nie.

18 - Learning project - FKGL 3,9 [Afrikaans]

Soms kyk 'n mens 'n toneelstuk wat jou hier aan die hart kom ruk en net nie wil los nie. Rondomskrik = ongelooflik. Well done @[redacted] en die res van die span. As jy dit nog nie gesien het nie, mis jy uit!

Gaan kyk dit more om 11:00 in die HS Stellenbosch se ouditorium.

19 - Learning project - FKGL 4,2 [English quote]

"And I had the week that came from hell and I know that you can tell, but you're like the net under the ledge when I go flying off the edge you go flying off as well...last night I think I drank too much. Call it our temporary crutch. With broken words I try to say honey don't you be afraid, if we've got nothing we've got us."

20 - PGCE learning prompted - FKGL 14,1 [Afrikaans]

In die moderne samelewing waarin ons onsself bevind, is dit so maklik om oorweldig te voel deur die massas inligting tot ons beskikking. Dit is geen uitsondering met die proses van die opleiding

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van onderwysers, pedagoë en selfs kurrikulumtegnikuste nie.

Volgens die Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal (HAT) is 'n onderwyser 'n "persoon wat na ['n] afgelegde eksamen bevoeg verklaar is om les te gee aan 'n hoër of laer skool." Die HAT verklaar ook 'n pedagoog as 'n "persoon wat hom toelê op die studie van die pedagogie". 'n Kurrikulum word verklaar as die "studiekursus" of "leergang" wat 'n kurrikulumtegnikus as't ware dus ontwikkel.

Uit bogenoemde verklarings is dit duidelik dat al drie hierdie professies of rigtings 'n direkte uitwerking of effek op die kinders wie hierdie opvoeding van bogenoemde persone ontvang, sal hê. Dit maak dan net sin dat die onderwyser, pedagoog of kurrikulumtegnikus een doel voor oë moet hê: om hierdie leerders te inspireer om te leer.

'n Mens is so geneig om vas te val in 'n raamwerk van reëls en rigiede strukture met betrekking tot die opvoeding van Suid-Afrikaanse kinders, maar 'n mens se nommer een uitkykspunt in die onderwys moet wees om te inspireer - daarom my finale argument:

Dit is aanvaarbaar dat daar standaarde en beleide moet wees, maar elke onderwyser, pedagoog of kurrikulumtegnikus moet opgelei word om ander en daarom leerders te inspireer deur hul optrede, kennis en vaardighede. Is dit nie hoe ons 'n land gaan "vorentoe neem" as kinders die toekoms van more is nie?

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7.4.1.   Participation Rates

7.4.1.1.LMS activity (views and posts) Student

Period ending (Month)	Views	Posts
31 Januarie 2015	60	0
28 Februarie 2015	9748	772
31 Maart 2015	5558	932
30 April 2015	3343	364
31 Mei 2015	1652	3
30 Junie 2015	468	2
31 Julie 2015	239	1
31 Augustus 2015	735	0
30 September 2015	1588	23

2015-45810-774 – LMS activity (views and posts) Student
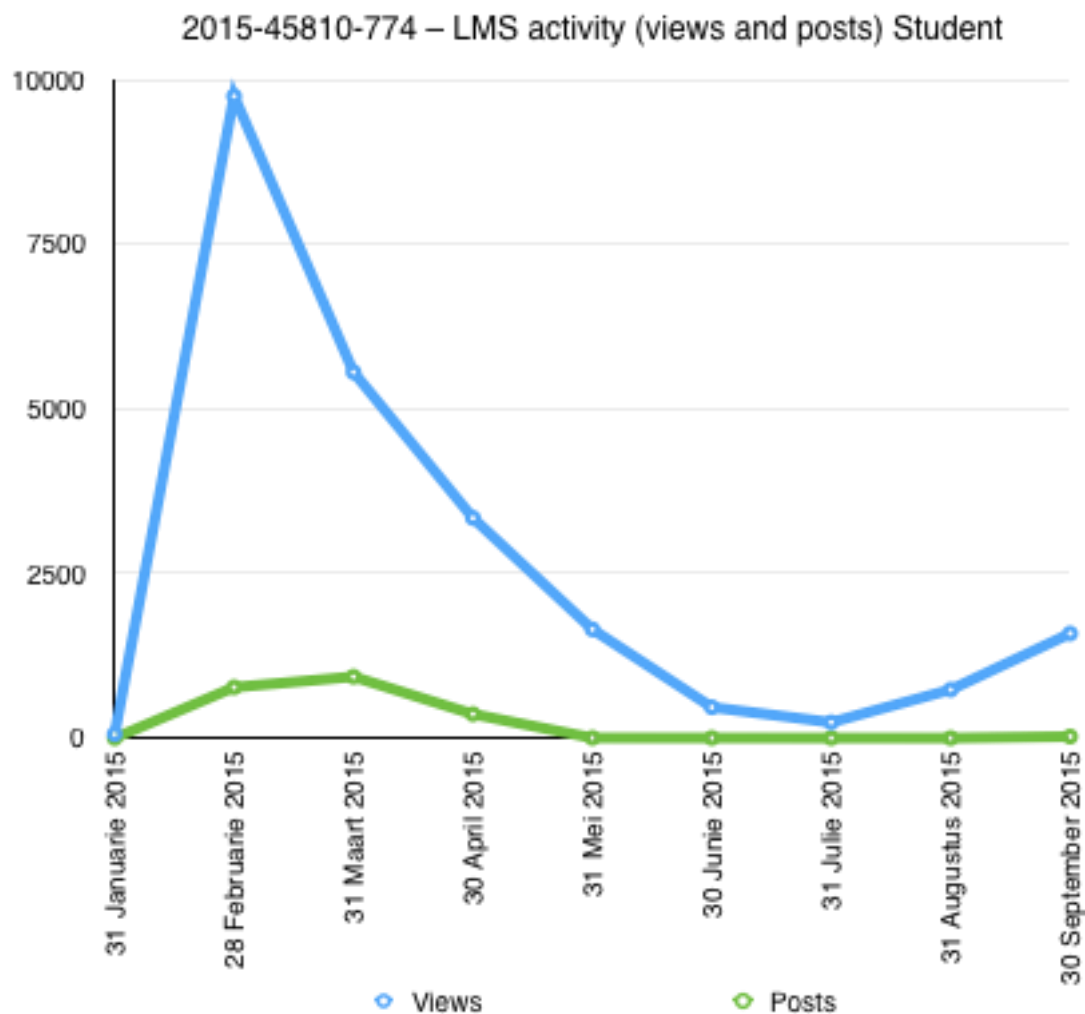
7.4.1.2. Class blog activity (posts and pageviews)

Researcher posts

Period ending (Month)	Researcher Posts	Pageviews
31 Januarie 2015	0	0
28 Februarie	4	881

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2015		
31 Maart 2015	6	421
30 April 2015	4	72
31 Mei 2015	4	19
30 Junie 2015	3	13
31 Julie 2015	3	10
31 Augustus 2015	1	23
30 September 2015	1	33

2015-45810-774 – Class blog activity (posts and pageviews) Researcher posts
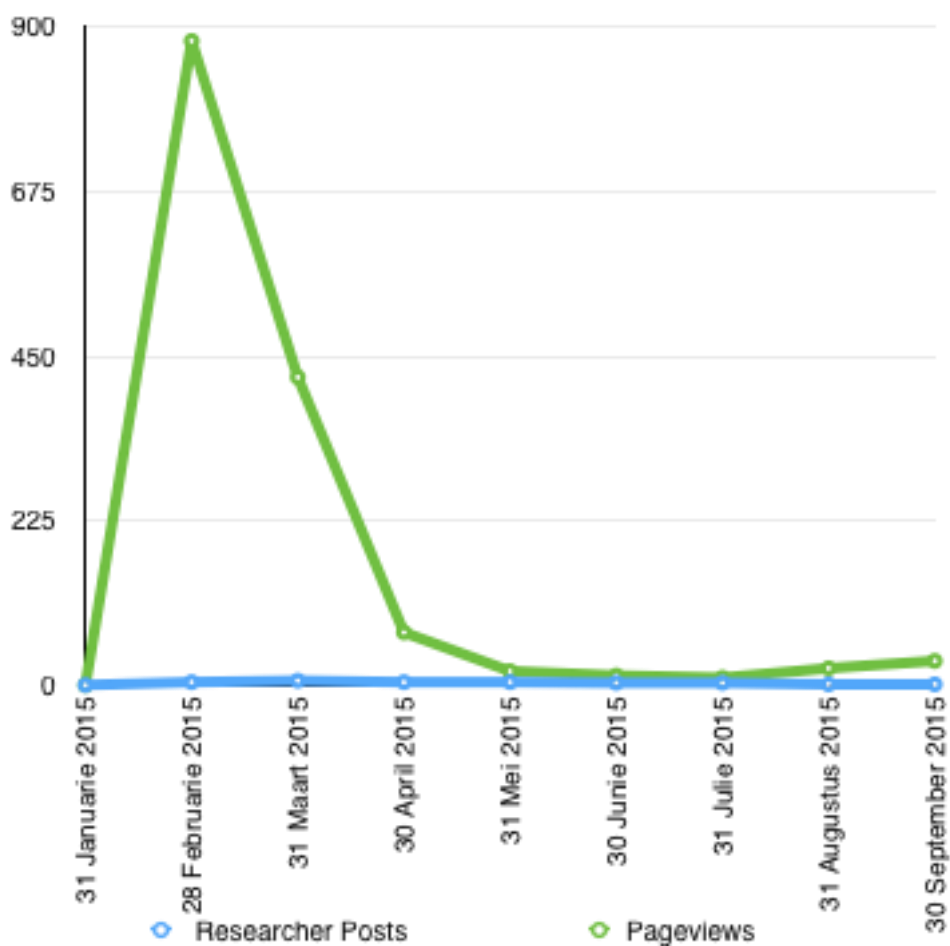
7.4.1.3. Comparison of engagement: Learning Management System – Class blog – Np blogs

Prompts	Views (LMS)	Views (Class Blog)	Total Views	Posts (Class Blog)	Posts (Own Blogs)	Total Posts
WQ1	253	194	447	53	16	69
WQ2	159	92	251	21	17	38
WQ3	73	32	105	1	7	8
*T3	82	70	152	8	0	8
WQ4	19	6	25	0	1	1
WQ5	15	11	26	0	0	0
WQ6	5	1	6	0	0	0

*T3 = Google Form (Poll) via Class Blog

Writing prompts (views and responses)

Writing Prompts: Views (LMS vs Class Blog)

Writing Prompts: Response (Class Blog vs Own Blogs)