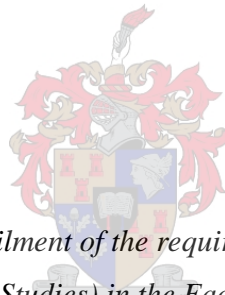# Reconstructing English Studies in South Africa through Blended Learning

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Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts (English Studies) in the Faculty of Arts and Social
Sciences at Stellenbosch University

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December 2016

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: December 2016

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Abstract

Facing declining student enrolment, budgetary constraints, questions regarding the discipline's relevance, and a student body inadequately prepared by secondary education, English Studies educators in South Africa require innovative pedagogical approaches to ensure that the discipline's potential outcomes are optimally achieved. Whilst a blended learning approach might assist in overcoming budgetary constraints, research on employing this approach in literary studies education is limited, with the sense of this approach's alignment with 'factual' knowledge often discourages its use in the so-called 'soft' sciences. Hoping to contribute to this field of research, this study examines the discipline's potential relevance, as well as the ways in which cognitivist learning theory's principles might assist English Studies educators, in order to determine the potential means of adopting a blended learning approach in the discipline.

As such, the study commences with an exploration of the discipline's potential for developing students' sense of social awareness, critical thinking skills and creativity. Given the subsequent sense of the relationship between critical thinking and literary criticism, identification of the latter as requiring complex procedural knowledge leads to considerations on cognitivism's perception on the relationship between factual, conceptual, procedural and meta-cognitive knowledge. Establishing the need for factual and conceptual knowledge in assisting procedural knowledge development, the ways in which information and communication technology (ICT) might be employed in English Studies education are then investigated.

The results suggest the need for strategic course design and text selection. In addition, since a move towards a blended learning approach stimulates reflection on the nature of physical instruction, the increased level of immediacy and flexibility afforded by such interaction leads to an interest in flipped classroom models as a means of increasing the degree of interactivity in these sessions. In this, the possible use of webpages to disseminate factual knowledge, wiki pages to assist in conceptual knowledge development and screencasts for modelling procedural knowledge is established, whilst the need to monitor and encourage students' participation in online activities is also determined. In addition, the possibility of using online 'communities of enquiry' in English Studies, suggest an additional potential benefit whereby developing online resources might serve to establish a body of authorised knowledge, thereby countering a lack of clarity regarding the nature of the discipline.

Keywords: Blended Learning, English Studies, Cognitivism

Opsomming

In die lig van dalende studentegetalle, beperkings op begrotings, vrae rondom die relevansie van die vakgebied en 'n studentekorps wat onvoldoende voorberei is tydens hulle sekondêre skoolfase, het *English Studies*-dosente in Suid-Afrika vernuwende pedagogiese benaderings nodig om te verseker dat die vakgebied se moontlike uitkomste optimaal bereik word. Terwyl 'n gemengde leerbenadering nuttig sou kon wees om begrotingsbeperkings te oorkom, is navorsing wat hierdie benadering in die onderrig van literatuurstudie toepas beperk, in die sin dat die skakeling van hierdie benadering met "feitekennis" dikwels die gebruik daarvan in die sogenaamde "sagte" wetenskappe ontmoedig. In die hoop om 'n bydrae te lewer tot hierdie navorsingsgebied, ondersoek hierdie studie die vakgebied se moontlike relevansie sowel as maniere waarop die beginsels van die kognitivistiese leerteorie dosente in *English Studies* sou kon help om die potensiële metodes vas te stel waarmee 'n gemengde leerbenadering in die vakgebied geïnkorporeer sou kon word.

In dié verband begin die studie met 'n verkenning van die moontlikhede in die vakgebied om studente se sin vir sosiale bewustheid, kritiese denkvaardighede en kreatiwiteit te ontwikkel. In die lig van die logiese uitvloeisel van die verhouding tussen kritiese denke en literêre kritiek lei die identifikasie van laasgenoemde, wat komplekse prosedurale kennis vereis, tot oorweging van die sienings in die kognitivisme aangaande die verhouding tussen feitelike, konseptuele, prosedurale en metakognitiewe kennis. Deur die noodsaaklikheid van feitelike en konseptuele kennis vas te stel as ondersteuning vir die ontwikkeling van prosedurale kennis, word die maniere waarop informasie- en kommunikasietegnologie (IKT) in die aanbieding van *English Studies* gebruik sou kon word, ondersoek.

Die resultate dui op die behoefte aan strategiese kursusontwerp en seleksie van tekste. Aangesien 'n skuif in die rigting van 'n gemengde leerbenadering nadenke oor die aard van werklike onderrig aanmoedig, lei die verhoogde vlak van onmiddellikheid en vloeibaarheid wat deur 'n dergelike interaksie gebied word boonop tot 'n belangstelling in omgekeerde ("flipped") klaskamermodelle as 'n metode, om die vlak van interaktiwiteit in hierdie sessies te verhoog. Hierdeur word die moontlike gebruik van webblaaie om feitelike kennis te versprei, wiki-blaaie om konseptuele kennis te help ontwikkel en skerm-sendings ("screencasts") om prosedurale kennis voor te hou, gevestig, terwyl die behoefte om die studente se deelname aan aanlyn-aktiwiteite te monitor en aan te moedig, ook vasgestel word. Verder doen die moontlikheid om aanlyn-ondersoekgemeenskappe in *English Studies* te gebruik 'n bykomende

potensiële voordeel aan die hand, waardeur die ontwikkeling van aanlyn-hulpbronne sou kon dien as 'n manier om 'n korps van goedgekeurde bronne saam te stel, wat die gebrek aan duidelikheid omtrent die aard van die vakgebied sou kon teëgaan.

Sleutelwoorde: Gemengde leer, English Studies, Kognitivisme

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To my educators: Thank you for being an inspiration to so many, and for the contributions that you make to the lives of all you encounter. And thank you for laying the foundations which inform this thesis – foundations which include the passion instilled in me by your enthusiasm, dedication and brilliance.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge Kerri-Leigh Wayne: For encouraging me to write on education when others left me hesitant, and for living with the same passion and wisdom that you encourage in others – thank you.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother; to whom I ascribe all that is good in me.

For reading to me as a child and populating your bookshelves with the works that led me here. For indulging my strangeness and fostering my creativity. For the music, the laughter and exposing me to the films you watched growing up. For your love, your heart and your personal sense of morality. For being an unreliable narrator – deciding that some aspects to life should be more interesting than accurate. For questioning everything and being able to answer more than most could. Without your wisdom, guidance, strength, charity, persistence and creativity, my life would be meaningless. Thank you for your inspiration and for supporting me in all that I do.

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Chapter 1
Introduction to and Nature of the Study

1.1)   Introduction

When Rita Felski refers to her book, *The Uses of Literature*, as "an odd manifesto, as far as manifestos go" (1), she demonstrates an awareness of the effect which a background in literary studies[1] might have when writing on education. When applying the kind of engagement[2] common to literary studies, the resultant manifestations often carry traces of this practice's conscious delineation of the guiding principles which, at times, cannot be detached from the individual engaging in theoretical deliberations surrounding a subject. As such, I consider it useful to identify this thesis as a 'manifesto'[3] since this concept encapsulates my understanding of how this thesis differs from some of the standards associated with traditional academic writing on education[4]. In framing my work as a manifesto, it becomes imperative to begin with a declaration of the beliefs and intentions informing this study.

In this, a belief in the value of knowledge[5] forms the foundation of all which follows. This belief is informed by the perception of awareness and understanding as a means to development. Although this belief might be considered problematic where the conception of knowledge is too restrictive, the current intellectual landscape does, unfortunately, attach particular value to certain forms of knowledge. In recognition of this, I believe that it is important to state my belief that knowledge formation should be perceived as an interactive process in which awareness of certain beliefs does not negate their rejection. As such, my belief in the value of knowledge functions on two levels in this thesis. On the one hand, I consider it important for students to be exposed to knowledge in more comprehensive forms. On the other

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[1] The term 'literary studies' is used throughout this work in referring to the study of literature. The practice remains central to many of the courses taught within the field of English Studies and a more concrete sense of my understanding thereof develops throughout the thesis.

[2] "The kind of engagement" mentioned here refers to the approaches of literary criticism: a practice which in its simplest form might be described as the construction of an argument (informed by a particular theoretical or ideological position) regarding the nature of a particular work.

[3] A concept referring, in its most basic form, to a public declaration of its author's beliefs and intentions. The genre is one in which also holds a particular relationship towards existing knowledge in that it accepts and employs this knowledge towards the construction of new ideas; presenting such ideas alongside prescriptions for change.

[4] In this, I refer to a tendency for a review of the literature to represent only the starting point for empirical research through application. Although I believe that the findings in this study present multiple opportunities for further research, the approach followed here is closer to that of those working in the 'Philosophy of Education' field, as it takes a more reflective stance towards the topics discussed.

[5] Knowledge, being used here, as opposed to information, since I believe that it is possible to encounter information without engaging with it in a constructive manner.

hand, it is hoped that my work will be of value in evoking responses in the reader, including cases where such engagements give rise to opposing views.

Given the belief in the value of knowledge, this thesis is also informed by a strong sense of importance of education[6] in providing societies with stimulation for development. My sense of structure's contribution to the meaning-making process[7], gives rise to the interest in the role of formal education. Given the multitude of issues plaguing the educational landscape in South Africa[8], my subscription to the principle of Academic Duty[9] leads to an interest in the concept of Critical Pedagogy[10] as it pertains to the optimisation of education in South Africa.

Finally, this thesis is also strongly grounded in a belief in the value of the Humanities, and in particular the discipline of English Studies, as a means of serving the particular educational needs found in South Africa[11]. Given my sense of the need for strategic pedagogical approaches for achieving desired outcomes, my work is motivated by a perception of haphazard approaches as being inadequate for realising the discipline's full potential in the current context. Having delineated these grounding beliefs, this chapter hopes to further insight into the issues motivating this thesis' interests, before stating its intentions.

1.2)   Definitions of Key Terms

Given the interdisciplinary and contextually specific nature of this study, several of the terms employed may be unfamiliar to its readership. Whilst a belief in the value of accessibility of information led to the significant use of footnotes, as well as in-text definitions, an understanding of the means in which three key concepts are employed should precede further engagement. In this, the concepts of English Studies, blended learning and cognitivism are examined here in an attempt to establish their meaning as they are used in this thesis.

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[6] A concept which can be defined here as the formal and structured facilitation of learning.

[7] The sense of this understanding is more fully developed through the discussions on 'Direct Instruction' in Section 3.4, and conceptual knowledge development in Section 3.6.

[8] These issues are discussed more thoroughly in Section 1.3 of this thesis.

[9] The standards of which are set out in Donald Kennedy's book, *Academic Duty*.

[10] The concept is one proposed by the Frankfurt School and the established in writings of Jürgen Habermas. A dominant interest in this approach, is ensuring a form of education which does not reproduce an external system of inequality, but which seeks to eradicate it. In adopting this perspective, educators are to identify "the insidious forces that subvert the success of particular students" (Kincheloe 7), to counter mechanisms enabling social and educational stratification disadvantaging marginalised students (15) and to promote the development and recognition of perspectives, texts and individual voices which previously went unrecognised (24).

[11] For a concrete sense of these needs, see Section 1.3.

1.2.1) English Studies

Clarification of the concept of English Studies is necessitated on the grounds of both geographical differences in its employ, as well as the current nature of the discipline. These aspects might be seen as being related in that the various course titles referring to the multitude of practices within the discipline might serve in obscuring its nature. In this regard, courses centred on the literatures of specific geographical locations, historical movements, theoretical interests, composition studies, and, to some extent, linguistics, may all be perceived as falling within the scope of English Studies. Given this thesis' interest in the South African context, and given the increasing expansion of English departments' repertoire to cater to the linguistic needs of students in this context, the need to specify the use of English Studies as referring to courses with an interest in literature arises. As such, the terms English Studies and literary studies are at times used interchangeably in this thesis.

1.2.2) Blended Learning

The second concept which is of particular interest in this study is that of blended learning. Broad definitions of this concept refer to the combined use of "face-to-face[12] and online learning modalities" in education (Halverson et al. 20). However, this thesis' particular interest in the learning process, leads to a delineation of blended learning as it pertains to a means of facilitating and optimising learning. Whilst definitions of learning in education tend to perceive learning as "how behaviour is changed through experience" (Seagoe 3), conceptualising this process as "guided by purpose" (Yoakam and Simpson 22), some tend towards an assumption of this process as an accepted result of teaching. Given my sense of the need to concretise our understanding of how the desired behavioural changes might best be assisted when incorporating the affordances which information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer educators, I therefore argue for the need to reconceptualise blended-learning as a student-centred pedagogical approach[13]. As such, whilst this thesis examines the role of educators throughout, the proposed conception of blended learning as student-centred, affords an

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[12] Face-to-face teaching refers to the traditional setup in which the educator and students are physically present in a classroom or lecture hall. Although this term, which is commonly employed by those working in blended learning, is normally abbreviated as f2f, I have opted not to use this abbreviation, since I believe that the sense of human connection is too easily lost by its use.

[13] Whilst teacher-centred learning theories focus on educators' actions in facilitating education, student-centred theories "focus on the way people learn, and the organization of classroom process to maximize active learning" (Showalter 27).

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opportunity to also stress the relationship between teaching and learning in other instances discussing approach.

1.2.3) Cognitivism

Cognitivism, as a concept in psychology, relates to an interest in the mental and intellectual aspects of human experience which, when informing learning theories, translates into a particular interest in the relationship between cognitive processing and learning. Since 'cognitivism', used here to relate to learning theories with this particular focus, does not represent a singular theory, a stronger sense of the manner in which the term is used in the context of this study might be gained from the interests set out in greater detail in the third chapter of this study. However, there is value in highlighting that the concept is employed throughout as referring to the particular model set out in Chapter 3. In this, a framework based on the kinds of knowledge identified in cognitivism (with these being factual, conceptual, procedural and meta-cognitive knowledge) is employed, whilst maintaining an interest in both the more practical approaches and aspects suggested by cognitivist theorists. The use of a framework, instead of a single theoretical lens, is motivated by the sense that cognitivism, whilst the dominant theory of interest here, is not without limitations. As such, insights from theorists working in other fields are included as a means of furthering an understanding of the specific conception of cognitivism informing this study.

1.3)   Introduction to the Problem

Despite initial claims to an anti-imperialist stance (Maharaj) and initial conformance to socialist ideals, the African National Congress'[14] policies reflect a shift towards rightist ideals stressing neoliberal growth, increased employment, and redistribution through "privatization, deregulation, and trade liberalization" (Peet 54), suggesting their alignment with the globalising world economy (Williams 73). This alignment brings with it the espousal of neoliberal ideals, leading to fundamental changes in perceptions of higher learning, and stressing economic viability in a context of globalisation (Olssen and Peters 313). With the South African government's recognition of the critical role of education and innovation in attaining national goals for economic growth and lowered unemployment rates (National

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[14] The current ruling government party in South Africa.

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Planning Commission (NPC) 296-297), contemporary universities are required to produce the kind of knowledge, relationships and graduates intended to "benefit globalised private capital" (Shear and Zontine 35).

Having experienced an increase in unemployment, economic structural deficiencies and a shortage of skilled human resources since 1994 (Marais in Alden and Le Pere 287) and given the "strong outcry" for universities to produce human resources suitably qualified to serving South Africa's economy (Botha 162), government is demanding an increase in student intake – from 950 000 in 2010, to 1,6 million by the year 2030 (NPC 69). The movement away from elitist provision and towards the massification of tertiary education[15], has brought significant changes in the relationship between state, society and tertiary institutions, as well as a greater influence of economic and market-related trends (Bundy 85). Whilst André Kraak considers globalization as one of the driving forces behind the democratisation of South African higher education[16] (in Bertram 71), the massification of tertiary education increases the need to reflect on means of ensuring that academic practices are conducted in a manner which accommodates students from disparate backgrounds.

Whilst the relationship between social injustice and the dialectics of exclusion makes reformation a political concern throughout Africa, South Africa's particular history means that the effects of past injustices are still present in the country's deep structural inequities (Mwaniki 214). Given perceptions on education as a means of reproducing the inequalities of the broader society in which it functions (Zeleza 43), expectations of a more just education landscape necessitate a continued and critical engagement with the actualities of tertiary education in South Africa, if quality and appropriateness are to be enhanced (Beets 186-187).

Appeals for transformation have led to increased reflection on the nature and efficiency of universities (Frick and Kapp 255), and with the increasing sense of "intellectualism for intellectualism's sake [as] a sign of petty-bourgeois self-indulgence or decadence" (Zeleza 46), recent developments propagate a shift towards educational approaches responding to the developmental needs of this country (Beets 188). In this, education is perceived as a means of not only developing human capital for economic development (Mpinganjira 168), but as being

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[15] This movement is based on a belief that access to institutions of higher learning can result in upwards mobility for students and leads to a shift in the perspective of such institutions as serving the elite, towards a view of their responsibility for accommodating wider access (Mok and Neubauer 1).

[16] Part of this process, which has become a global trend in education means that tertiary education institutions are being held accountable to the public, including the sense of their need to assist learners in their ability to contribute to policy development and implementation, as they represent a major stakeholder in such developments (Mncube 77).

capable of producing educated citizenry whose greater level of political assertion and might assist with national development (Gibson 787). If one subscribes to Matthew Lipman's belief that "the thinking individual is as important as the inquiring society" (35), then universities' potential for producing graduates that are not only adequately equipped for the job-market, but who might assist in achieving the social development (Frank and Meyer in Waghid 72) required for eradicating Apartheid's lasting legacy, needs to be embraced.

1.3.1)   Implications for English Studies in South Africa

Given students' desire to improve their socio-economic standing through the attainment of tertiary qualifications, perceptions of the Humanities as providing non-marketable skills, or a more 'general' education that requires further study in order to be considered adequately trained for the professional environment (Botha 162) led to a 20,31% drop in student enrolment in the Humanities in South Africa between 1999 and 2007[17] (Pillay and Yu 605), despite the fact that an education in these fields assists in the development of skills in "reading, writing, reflection, and interpretation that are highly prized in our economy and culture" (Roth 4). The influence of public perception is problematic as the Academy of Science of South Africa found that, in fact, "virtually all Humanities graduates are employed" after completing their studies (127). Whilst what Felski deems the Humanities' "legitimization crisis" (22) is affecting subjects like "philosophy, history and languages *other than English* [emphasis added]" (Botha 162), this exception is most likely due to perceptions of the English language as "a key aspect of linguistic or cultural capital[18] in South Africa" (Leibowitz 127), with its perceived value relating to language learning rather than literary studies. As such, unless the relevance of skills developed through this practice are demonstrated, a reputation of the disciplines as "the domain of the unemployable" (Cavanagh 132) will persist.

Whilst some English departments at South African universities have responded to socio-political pressures by including language courses intended to assist with academic literacy (Thurman 156-158), many feel that the teaching of literature should remain the core interest in

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[17] As the total number of enrolled undergraduates increased by 50,11 per cent from 1999 to 2007, the percentage of enrolment in Humanities in relation to the total number of undergraduate enrolment in 1999 was 10,13 per cent and 5,28 per cent in 2007.

[18] The concept of cultural capital is one which comes from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and refers to those social assets which, though not being of a financial nature, might serve is assisting a student's ability to advance within social systems such as the education system. Examples of such 'capital' include prior education, linguistic proficiency and familiarity with the dominant culture of an institution.

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English departments (165). Still, reduced budgets and questions regarding the 'practicality' and 'relevance' of English Studies place the discipline under review (Lickindorf 119). Although Sheila Cavanagh propagates "stressing the marketable skills that our discipline can foster" (132) as a means of combatting a sense of irrelevance, the potential of the Humanities for developing insights and abilities of value beyond the job-market, should also be promoted. As John Higgins notes, universities represent a space in which knowledge should be persued "not for direct commercial advantage or in the service of a political ideology", but rather in the recognition of our inability to predict what knowledge might be of use in the future (65). Given the Department of Higher Education's (DHET) concern that South Africa is "not producing the new corps of thinkers who can nurture socio-economic alternatives" (28), a sense arises for the need to develop the kinds of students would not simply reinforce the status quo, but who would be able to contribute to attempts at reformation.

As such, South African universities should strive to develop students possessing three key traits. Firstly, students require critical thinking skills, which will enable them to evaluate the current state of any phenomenon and to identify the various factors involved therein. Secondly, the need to foster creativity arises, as intellectual experimentation might assist in producing innovative approaches to existing phenomena. And lastly, it is important that a sense of civic responsibility is developed if it is hoped that students will apply their critical thinking and creative abilities to issues related to the South African context. As Killian McCurrie sees it, English departments "*can* and should reconstruct their work as socially significant [and] integral to democracy and community [emphasis added]" (44-45). However, since English departments will continue to be embattled with questions of relevance unless they amend the means of presenting and justifying their work publicly, and unless they strive to attend to the "intellectual and practical goals" of students and their societies (Cavanagh 140), it is important for a concrete sense of the means by which the study of literature might assist in developing critical thinkers with creative capabilities and a sense of social awareness[19], to be established.

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[19] The term 'social awareness' is used throughout this thesis to indicate a state of conscious awareness of the nature of societies, as well as emphatic capabilities relating to the individual subjective experiences of both the self and others.

1.3.2) Pedagogical Implications for Transformation

Despite policies attempting redress, the education sector in South Africa is characterized by poor academic performance (Scott 33). Given South Africa's "need for interdisciplinary knowledge, competences, experiences, insights and applications" (Botha 175) – aspects characterising what Michael Gibbons et al. have termed 'Mode 2' thinking[20] (3) – universities hoping to develop such thinking need to consider aspects that may hinder such development. Although the issues plaguing the educational landscape include socio-economic factors and linguistic barriers, particular attention needs to be paid to the influence which the current state of secondary education has on university students' academic performance, since schooling is believed to have an overwhelming influence on students' approaches to both learning and educational institutions (Mann 90).

Given what Anton van den Hoven deems "the failures of the South African schooling system" (88), many first time university students find themselves inadequately prepared for standards of tertiary education (Allardice 4). Due to the lack of pedagogical guidance it provided, the "low-quality mass system" put in place after 1994 (Simkins 112) caused many educators to fall back on methodologies known to them before the advent of educational reform (113). Given the "undoubtedly authoritarian" nature of Apartheid education (112) with its focus on content and the rote learning[21] (Pendlebury 337), the resultant approaches have proved inadequate for fostering quality learning (Scott 41-42). Consequently, many students entering university are therefore likely to function within what William G. Perry terms the 'dualist' stage of intellectual development[22], which is characterised by the assumption that "problems have right answers and that authorities know or can find them" since knowledge is conceptualised as being quantitative (in Plummer 68).

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[20] According to Gibbons et al., Mode 1 thinking is disciplinary, hierarchical and stable and the problems of interest here are governed by academic interests. By contrast, Mode 2 thinking is transdisciplinary, heterarchical and transient, focussing on application, social accountability and reflexivity (in Garraway 230).

[21] Rote learning refers to the memorisation of facts as a means of replicating the information learnt. In this sense it is considered to be a form of surface learning as it does not necessarily require an understanding of the information encountered.

[22] The idea of 'dualist' thinking comes from a model proposed by William G. Perry, in which he delineates the four stages of development in individuals' thinking as being dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment (Plummer 68). During the stage which follows this, **multiplistic** thinking, refers to the recognition of the fact that authoritative knowledge does not always exist and that one might accept diverse opinions on certain matters. In comparison, **relativists** recognise that not all "opinions, values, and judgments are equal [as some] make more sense than others and are therefore better" (68). As such, they recognise the value of 'reasonable' disagreement in cases where authoritative knowledge is absent. In the final stage of **commitment**, decisions are arrived at, based on one's judgment of various positions (68).

With this, many students entering tertiary education have been socialized into an approach to learning which is not "conducive to fostering [the] open-minded, creative and critical approach towards knowledge and learning" desired in higher education (Van Schalkwyk, Leibowitz and Van Der Merwe 3) – a landscape currently characterised by a movement away from pure, disciplinary knowledge and towards "applied, problem-solving, trans-disciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, question-driven, entrepreneurial [and] network-embedded knowledge" (van Louw and Beets 474-475). With many university programmes inadequately compensating for many students' lacking "vocabulary, references or values of knowledge" (Leibowitz 8), this lack of cultural capital means that many students "are confronted with academic knowledge fields derived from quite different histories" to their own (Garraway 230). As such, marginalised students, despite being granted access, remain marginalized (Bertram 78) and this concern has led to Blade Nzimande[23] reporting that the "real crisis point" in higher education is found to be at the first-year level[24] (Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) 1).

With the need for tertiary institutions to provide students with quality educational experiences (Morris 252) and given that "the design and implementation of the teaching-and-learning process is in itself a major variable influencing who succeeds" (Scott 35), particular attention needs to be paid to pedagogical approaches in ensuring a just and effective system. However, since overcoming the educational challenges faced requires an increased degree of assistance from educators, without a foreseeable increase in government funding to allow for the employment of the human resources which traditional methods of education would require as a means of addressing these issues, the need to explore alternative pedagogical approaches arises.

1.4)   Blended Learning – A Possible Solution

In a report on the Humanities and Social Sciences, these disciplines are labelled as being "in crisis, facing declining student enrolments, declining graduation rates and decreased funding" (CEPD 4). As such, the report's suggestion that universities need to develop "a new model for the way in which it 'goes about enhancing society's creative and productive powers'" (HSS Charter Report in CEPD 4) also applies to the discipline of English Studies. With the possibility

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[23] The current Minister of Higher Education and Training in South Africa.
[24] The recognition of the significance of this year of study for the problems addressed, has led to a particular focus on the first-year level throughout this thesis.

of increasing efficiency and decreasing costs through the use of ICTs (Mubarak, Rohde and Pakulski 161), one possible solution might be to implement a blended-learning model. It is believed that this approach is able to provide greater educational access and increase inclusivity (Bower et al. 2), which may be of use since the demand for universities to cater to a larger and more diverse student population (Garrison and Kanuka 96) coincides with inadequate funding adjustments (Holley and Oliver 693). Although developing online resources might result in increased costs initially (Garrison and Kanuka 101), when these resources are designed with longevity in mind, the shift can assist in overcoming some of the implications of budgetary constraints.

However, if one considers that the main reason for implementing a blended learning approach should be as a means of improving education (Spanjers et al. 60), then it becomes important to use these resources in a manner which optimises students' learning and assists in addressing institutional issues (Kaur 612). As such, Randy Garrison and Heather Kanuka believe that blended learning "represents a fundamental reconceptualization and reorganization of the teaching and learning dynamic, starting with various specific contextual needs and contingencies" (97). The resultant reconstruction of any discipline through blended learning necessitates an understanding of the implications of e-learning[25] components for course design – including their limitations and affordances[26]. Since many perceive online learning as incompatible with disciplines characterised by open-ended questions and assessment through essay writing, questions arise regarding the suitability of this approach in subject areas like English Studies. Moving beyond the perceived inapplicability therefore requires a greater understanding of the learning process and its implications for teaching methods.

1.5)   Purpose and Nature of the Study

Conceptualising this thesis as a manifesto of sorts, the opportunity to state its intentions arises. Like all good manifestos, my work is driven not only by beliefs, but also by intentions for social change. Therefore, motivated by a belief in the value of education, the influence of

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[25] E-learning, although a somewhat contested term, is used here to refer to the use of educational technologies for learning, and does not restrict their use to courses that do not include physical teaching. Instead, the phrase 'pure e-learning' is used in referring to cases where the sole reliance on educational technology is present.

[26] The term 'affordances' is employed in this thesis in the manner in which it has been adopted by blended learning scholars. In this, the conception thereof draws on Donald Norman's definition of affordances as "the perceived and actual properties of the thing, primarily those fundamental properties that determine just how the thing could possibly be used" (in Hammond 4).

teaching on learning and the need for intellectual experimentation to also manifest in educational practice, this thesis hopes to represent an initial investigation into the possibilities presented by technology for the discipline of English Studies. With the current lack of research[27] available on the options available to educators in this particular discipline, the work that follows hopes to stimulate thinking about both English Studies' potential in the South African landscape, as well as the means in pedagogical insight can assist in optimising course design and delivery, through reflection on the suitability of affordances commonly featured in learning management systems (LMSs). In this, I hope to not only address the current lack of research on blended learning in English Studies, but to do so in a manner which provides insight into the learning process and practical guidance to any educators hoping to adopt a blended learning approach.

1.5.1) Brief Chapter Overviews

As such, Chapter 2 commences with an exploration of the current state of English Studies in South Africa. Aspects to literature and disciplinary practices are examined with regards to their potential for developing the key traits required in the South African context. In this, the discipline's potential for developing social awareness, critical thinking and creativity is examined. In exploring those characteristics which are considered to be inherent in literary texts, the extent to which educators' involvement is required in assisting with the development of the desired traits is considered. The interest in 'literary' features also results in initial reflections on the role of text selection. In addition to exploring existing disciplinary practices, the concept of 'critical creative writing' is also introduced as a proposed means of expanding on the discipline's value in South Africa.

Following considerations on the discipline's nature and potential, the third chapter attempts at increasing an understanding of the learning process as it pertains to the development of complex procedural knowledge. In this, cognitivism's delineations of the different kinds of knowledge and their perceived relationship between these are explored in order to establish a means of optimising the teaching of English Studies in South Africa. Alongside some initial

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[27] In a 2007 article, Benjamin Colbert, Rosie Miles, Francis Wilson and Hilary Weeks noted that they were unable to find any evidence of existing research on online assessment strategies in literary studies (87). Although some research related to the use of technology in literary studies courses exists, such resources are limited and tend to focus on the use of a single affordance within a specific course. As such, to my knowledge, there is currently no available research pertaining to the general implications of ICT and blended learning for this discipline.

conceptions of what might constitute factual knowledge, and what practices might assist in countering the perceived lack of factual knowledge in the discipline, means of assisting conceptual knowledge development are explored. Whilst cognitivism holds that factual and conceptual knowledge provide a basis for the development of procedural knowledge, the practice of modelling is also explored, as well as the potential contribution which theories like Formalism and New Criticism[28] might make in assisting with procedural knowledge development. Based on the perception of practice's value in procedural knowledge development, questions of accessibility and text-length lead to further reflections on pedagogically strategic text-selection.

Chapter 4 then presents a brief introduction to some of the general aspects to ICTs that might require consideration in determining whether a particular ICT affordance might be suited to one's outcomes. Following this discussion, suggestions are made as to what a blended learning approach to English Studies education might look like. The process is one which initiates the process of delineating those aspects to the teaching of English Studies which are best suited to face-to-face teaching, those which might be presented digitally and the implications which ICT affordances might have in optimising face-to-face teaching. In this, the traditional approaches to English Studies teaching are examined alongside the potential ICT affordances which may assist in optimising the particular value of face-to-face encounters. The concepts of flipped classrooms and 'communities of enquiry' are introduced here as a means of reconceptualising what takes place in the physical classroom or lecture hall.

Finally, the concluding chapter discusses cognitivist learning theory's implications for the development of the three traits examined in Chapter 2, including the implications for course structuring and text selection. It also examines the relationship between the kinds of knowledge identified by cognitivism and the affordances discussed in Chapter 4. The chapter then reflects on the limitations of the current study and makes suggestions for further research, before ending with a summation of the conclusions drawn in the thesis.

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[28] See Section 3.5.2 for more on the principles informing these schools of thought.

Chapter 2
RECONSTRUCTING ENGLISH STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1)   Introduction

As an ever-expanding, yet conglomerated field of enquiry[29], the principles informing practices in English Studies, draw on a multitude of theoretical assumptions, technical approaches and philosophical groundings[30]. Largely considered to function within an inevitably perpetuated pre-paradigmatic state[31] (MacKenzie and House 8), current theoretical assumptions dominating the field of English Studies are indicative of what Thomas Kuhn would have deemed an intellectually peaceful period in paradigm development[32] (19). Although remnants of the more anti-humanist theoretical influences that dominated the field for more than four decades around the latter half of the twentieth century[33] (Showalter 23) remain, current teaching practices suggests a return to the field's humanist origins[34]. The resultant 'identity crisis' characterising the discipline of English Studies might be considered problematic in the current context, for, as Stanley Katz points out, expectations of external comprehension are irreconcilable with ambiguous self-perceptions (in Holberg and Taylor 154), and yet incongruent perceptions continue to impede reform (McCurrie 44).

Given Thomas Samson's opinion that 'muted conversations' regarding the nature of English Studies are indicative of a discipline "on the verge of abdicating its self-assigned responsibility" (468), it becomes imperative that the discipline "needs to be challenged, deconstructed and reconstituted from within" (Snee 165). If English Studies is to establish its

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[29] This statement is based on the fact that, over the years, various movements in academia have contributed to adapting our understanding of literary studies thereby expanding the discipline's interests into the consideration of social phenomenon as text (for example), without this negating the discipline's foundational beliefs in the method of scrutiny. As such, in its current state, English Studies often incorporates the beliefs and practices of various disciplines and philosophies in a manner whereby they co-exist – relating to one another in various manners within the practice of literary criticism.

[30] Examples of these include: theories regarding the nature of literature; approaches such as close-reading, extended close-reading, deconstruction and textual criticism; and philosophical groundings such as Marxism, Feminism and Ecocriticism, to name only a few. The delineation between theories, approaches and philosophical groundings is, however, not clear-cut, as these aspects tend to have a strong influence on one another.

[31] In this, the authors – referring to the Social Sciences in general here – are suggesting that there is an absence of a singular, accepted sets of beliefs and groundings which inform the disciplines, and that, as a result, the scope for acceptable knowledge is widened.

[32] Suggesting that, in its current state, the field of English Studies is not currently involved in an 'intellectual revolution' whereby the informing paradigm would be challenged throughout the discipline.

[33] This statement refers to the association of post-structuralism and deconstruction as anti-humanist fields due to such theories' "rejection of a group of values associated with a particular conception of agency and meaning" (Knight 41).

[34] As Widdowson points out, the teaching of literature was initially encouraged as a means of conveying what was considered the correct moral and spiritual values (45). In its current form, the return to humanism is related to an increased sense of the Humanities' role in preserving the sense of 'humanity' in society.

relevance in the light of the urgent need for studies in developing countries to "contribute to social and cultural advancement" (Palazzo 139), the process of reconstructing the discipline's identity should be informed by its purpose. As George Levine points out, justification for the discipline's existence becomes difficult in the absence of a belief in its importance (14) and, as Samson sees it, the resultant conception of the discipline should strive to be "a coherent body of thought that is driven by its belief in its power to transform society" (469).

In the South African context, the 'identity crisis' faced by a discipline which is already influenced by multiple and at times conflicting, philosophical interests, is further complicated by calls towards the Africanisation[35] of tertiary education. In this regards, the study of the English language is challenged by those who, like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, feel that embracing the language aligns with the ideology of what he terms the "African neo-colonial bourgeoisie", who stand in opposition to the "resistance movement" that seeks to abdicate the legacy of colonialism's cultural suppression (2-3). Whilst Ngũgĩ's rejection of English, based on his sense thereof as part of the "cultural bomb" which annihilates people's beliefs is justifiable, the current global reality means that learning the English language is not without value. As Lynda Palazzo reminds us, "the fact remains that [many] students are acquiring a second language, a second culture, and thus an *alternative* tradition of thought and expression", ending off with the assertion that mastering this tradition may be a useful asset to students (142). As such, this idea will be revisited in Section 2.5.1 of this thesis.

Whilst Peter Widdowson's concern that English Studies educators rarely make their discipline an 'object of scrutiny' (7), frames the process of scrutinising as reconstructive, untangling literary studies' value from the depths of assumption requires of educators to approach the idea of purpose in the light of social relevance. Consequently, this chapter expands on the idea of the three traits mentioned in the introductory chapter. Drawing on general conceptions of both the discipline and the 'literary', the potential for developing critical thinkers with creative capabilities and a sense of social responsibility, is examined. Before making the discipline an 'object of scrutiny', however, it is important that a sense of the nature of literature is gained, since this remains the central object of study in many English Studies courses.

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[35] Whilst there is no single sense of what the Africanisation of tertiary education entails, and whilst the concept itself might be problematic in generalising the various cultures that exist on the continent (Le Grange 1286), the concept is applied here on the perception thereof as an attempt at countering the current sense of African identities and experiences within higher education. In this, the sense is not a need to negate that which might be of value based on perceptions thereof as 'Western', but rather to encourage the inclusion of valuable contributions which may be made by those living on the African continent, in addition to any cultural or historical knowledge which might enhance the current structures.

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2.2)   The 'Literary' as an Object of Study

Although the task of determining a concrete and singular understanding of the 'nature of literature' might be considered a futile act (Showalter 22), to which no satisfactory answer currently exists (Bennett and Royle 1), previous attempts at exploring the concept are of value in expanding one's insight into the concept. As Raymond Williams points out, the meaning of 'literature' has undergone significant changes throughout history; from an understanding thereof as linked to literacy, towards current understandings of literary works as possessing specific qualities distinguishing them from non-literary texts (150-154). Due to the existence of broad definitions of literature that reduce the concept to one encapsulating only written texts (Bennett and Royle 9), as well as current debates among radical critics regarding "the validity of the category 'Literature'" (Widdowson 2), a more suitable understanding of the object at the centre of literary studies is perhaps that of 'the literary', rather than literature.

Justification for this distinction arises not only from the recognition of the value of alternative media which coincided with the incorporation of cultural studies from the 1960s onward (Robinson and Kissack 8), but also from the current study's interest in purpose. As such, it is believed that a movement away from traditional conceptions of literature is of value in the educational context as it allows for opportunities to engage with alternative media possessing traits suited to the discipline's purposes. As Terry Eagleton points out, features such as "depth of insight, truth-to-life, formal unity, universal appeal, moral complexity, verbal inventiveness, imaginative vision" have all, at some stage been proposed as "marks of literary greatness" (178). Therefore, in developing an understanding of the literary, as opposed to literature[36], the descriptive examination of the concept's characteristics becomes of importance. As such, the characteristics of the 'literary' are examined, and the concept expanded on, in the subsequent sections of this chapter – alongside their particular relevance to the development of the three traits identified.

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[36] It will be noted that the term 'literature' is used in the subsequent discussions. The use of this phrase is motivated, in part, by a sense of the need to maintain the original intentions of statements made by other authors. However, I would like to encourage reconciling the term with the concept of 'the literary' as a physical manifestation of the traits and potential indicated in the sections which follow.

2.3) Developing Social Awareness

With an increasing sense in South Africa's need to produce a student body empowered to serve the country's need for innovation and social change, the demand arises for students possessing a willingness to engage in matters pertaining to the social issues plaguing their country. As such the changes sought have strong ties to the social sciences' interests in humanity's relationship to social phenomenon and existing social structures. Yet the human subject, whilst a key element in all pedagogical encounters, is easily displaced in favour of the false sense of security brought by a sense of 'knowing' in fields working with 'factual' evidence and 'scientific' paradigms. As Paul Zeleza points out, the commercialisation of education typically increases universities' responses to economic needs, encouraging national competiveness, and promoting skills development, whilst undermining "some of the broader social purposes of higher education [like] social justice, public criticism, humanistic development, and democratic citizenship" (52). If educators are to engage with the complexities surrounding them meaningfully, recognition of human complexity and its influence on the matters plaguing this country is required. In this, it becomes necessary for educators to assist their students in recognising the value of acknowledging human subjectivity within their own thinking as a means of supporting meaningful social reformation.

2.3.1) The Literary and Social Awareness

Assisting students in a recognition of human subjectivity's position in society necessitates reflection on literary studies' engagement with both the human subject and social contexts. Before discussing the pedagogical implications, a sense of what aspects to literature might support the development of social awareness might therefore be of use. In this regard, the sense of literature as a force which engages its readership, instils a kind of wisdom, exposes societal and ideological influences and gives insight into the psyche and experiences of others becomes of interest here.

The sense of literature's ability to engage readers stems from what Hillis Miller perceives as its presentation of a 'virtual reality' or 'metaworld' thereby fulfilling a basic human need (18). If Miller's assumption is correct, then literature's value might lie, in part, in its ability to draw readers in to a greater extent than more factually or academically presented texts. As Simon Hay sees it, literature constitutes "history, but without all the hard facts to remember; […] anthropology, without the messy fieldwork; […] psychology, without the difficult terminology;

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[and] philosophy, without the awkwardness of arguments" (5-6). Similarly, Ernst Rothkopf believes that written texts represent "the collective experience treasury of any culture" (92), whilst Andrew Bennett and Nicolas Royle call it "a great treasure-house of culture, memory and wisdom" (13). As such, the engagement with literature allows educators to expose students to social aspects, such as history and psychology, in a way that does not reduce these aspects to concrete facts to be learnt, but instead engages the reader and presents information in a more subjective manner. As a human artefact, the literary presents a means for the preservation, interrogation, and interpretation of cultures (Poovey 12), allowing for "the investigation, archivezation, cultivation, and preservation of the humanity of humans in all its manifestations" (Olivier 6).

According to Elisabeth Linkindorf, literature's interest in human values, and its use in expressing aspects of "the human spirit", causes an engagement with the literary to result in raising one's 'consciousness' (126). Through literature's ability to reveal "the more permanent mysteries and multiplicities of our human nature and its social relations" (Boulton in Widdowson 5), it affords readers with opportunities to reflect not only on their conception of themselves and others, but also on societal influences. If Theodore L. Steinberg is correct in his belief that literary texts are able to "relate to us as human beings" regardless of the culture in which they were produced or the nature of their authors (16), then the inclusion of texts which examine other cultures and give a sense of the universality of certain experiences could also strengthen a sense of the wisdom which might arise during encounters with the literary. Louise Bethlehem and Reingard Nethersole expand on this belief in their assertion that the personal experience of literature could also become political, due to its being "inter-subjective, relational [and] witnessed" (162).

Since literature is able to convey "knowledge about culture, history, the human experience, politics, ethics, and/or marginalized groups and minorities" (Brown 544), it also creates a space in which individuals are afforded opportunities for reflection on matters pertaining to issues outside of but related to their immediate context. For Trevor Whittock, the reading of literature leads to increased awareness of "the lives and customs of other people" which entails an "imaginative experience and the ability to relate this to [the] actual lived experience" (86). In this, interest in subjective experience, common to literary texts, allows for the recognition of universal human interests and experiences. Literature's potential in overcoming the blunted

empathies characterising the process of social 'Othering'[37], might be of particular value in the South African context. With the country's particular history of racial segregation, the recognition of similarity could hold great value in developing students' social awareness.

Whilst Hay considers literary texts as increasing our awareness of things that are 'taken for granted' through their exposure of those instances where "our traditions and our expectations have become dogmatic or fundamentalist" (20), Robert Scholes states that there is value in educators having an increased sense of the awareness that "the interpretation of any single literary text, if pushed seriously, will lead us not to some uniquely precious exegetical act but to cultural history itself" which he consider to be a "major part of our educational responsibility as teachers of literature" (35). However, whilst their "powerful critical function [may] challenge hegemonic ideologies, [they may also serve in] reinforcing them" (Miller 123), increasing the need for educators to monitor students' interaction. As Michael Roth explains, there is a need to assist students in "open[ing] themselves to the emotional and cognitive power of history and literature that might initially rub them the wrong way, or just seem foreign" (5). However, as is suggested by these assertions, whilst literature possesses the potential to increase students' awareness of societal influence, and might in and of itself encourage them to reflect critically on some of the problematic aspects to dominate ideologies, educators' approaches to such texts can play a major role in determining the degree to which texts might succeed in stimulating such critical social awareness.

2.3.2)   Approaches and Implications for Social Awareness

In relating the discussion of considerations which might assist educators in optimising literary texts' ability to assist in the development of social awareness in students, it is of use to consider the effects of the emergence mentioned above, as well as considering possible topics or theoretical interests which may serve to highlight social aspects in a text. However, before examining such practical implications, it might be of use to consider how the discipline's history relates to approaches encouraging the use of literature as a means of developing social awareness.

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[37] As mentioned in Section 3.6.3, this concept is one which can be interpreted in many ways. However, as it is used in here, as it relates to the South African context, the conception of the Other, here, is more strongly related to the process of Othering which occurred during colonisation, leaving a legacy of resistance to cultural, racial and spiritual differences.

In the South African context, early editions of *English Studies in Africa* still expressed the hope that literature would "protect young minds by teaching them dependable values and 'mature emotions'", a function thereof which Alan Partridge and others believed would be accomplished "through immersion in their heritage" (Titlestad 1). Whilst it seems that the discipline's humanist origin was decentred during the turn towards theory from the 1960s onwards, there is value in returning to these interest, yet doing so in a manner which does not dismiss the unease surrounding perceived attempts at indoctrinating students with particular ideological beliefs. Whether one opts for the use of literature as a means of developing social awareness or not, Louise Rosenblatt's belief that the teaching any literary work inevitably involves discussions surrounding ethics and social philosophy (in Showalter 132) might imply the need for educators to engage with questions regarding the approach to such aspects in a text, regardless of their intentions.

As Louise Rosenblatt points out, "the teaching of literature inevitably involves the conscious or unconscious reinforcement of ethical attitudes" (in Showalter 132) and, when considered alongside Bert Olivier's belief that "no one can be naïve about the ineluctable complicity of the humanities with the discursive exercise of power in modern (or postmodern) society", the effect of this can be either repressive or productive (6), it becomes important that English departments do not enforce a teaching of literature which produces only the recognition of aesthetic values, and unthinking students. For it is through such actions that one is most compliant in justifying the "inequities in the allocation of resources in a global culture where inspiration, strong feeling, and belief without knowingness seem everywhere to lead to inequity, bigotry, hatred, and death" (Newman 502). As such, it is important that students are exposed to the kind of texts that will assist them in opening themselves up to constructive engagements with their reality. Whilst this idea supports the interest in innovation and creativity presented in Section 2.5, it is perhaps of value to consider some initial implications for critical thinking as it relates to the sense of literature's ability to immerse its readers in a kind of 'meta-world'.

As Parker Palmer reminds us, "teaching and learning are human enterprises and we must use human emotions in the learning process rather than letting them use us" (in Showalter 35). And certainly, this process of reciprocation, leading to some possessing what Simon During calls 'literary subjectivity', a state which causes readers to "see the world through the literature [they] read" (in Miller 20), must not go unrecognized in the teaching process. For, as Trevor Whittock points out, it is not impossible that students, becoming "enthralled with the works

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they study", could become "alienate[d] from their own culture and their own environment" (91). As Scholes points out, projecting "our own subjective modes of thought and desire upon the text" could lead to a reading thereof which is not "sufficiently *other* for us to interpret it and, especially, to criticize it" (39).

Such theorists consider this aspect to be a hurdle due to their concern that readers run the risk of becoming overly emerged on an emotional level and therefore struggle to distance themselves sufficiently to adopt a logical approach in analysis. Their concerns are not unwarranted as many students, particularly those under the age of 25, find themselves in a phase of brain development[38] where emotional responses override other cognitive functions (Casey, Jones and Hare 116). And certainly, most educators in the discipline have experienced the effect which projection has on the critical abilities of a student, in the resultant phenomenon where students, during their initial exposure in the field, "tend to talk about characters as if they were real, and to simplify and reduce plot to events" (Showalter 89).

In facilitating a meaningful engagement with literary texts, however, the need arises to fully grasp the effect which the affective dimensions may have within the reading process. This is of particular relevance in the South African context where the effects of past segregation has left a lasting legacy of 'Othering' based on racial differences. A study conducted by Carolyn McKinney found that upon being presented texts that positioned white people in the position of the enforcer of Apartheid injustices, white students tended to become estranged and asserted that they had been overexposed to such texts (71). Certainly, a similar resistance might be expected from black students if they are confronted with a representation of black people[39] as represented in the position of the 'victim'. As such, the affective responses triggered during the reading process need to be harnessed in a way that employs literature's ability to "teach us [a great deal] about what it means to be human and to live in this world" (1), yet to do so in a way that does not create a sense of 'blame' pertaining to the readership, and to have discussions surrounding problematic texts to assist students with understanding these texts' relevance in the current context.

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[38] Due to the thinning of grey matter, a process which could continue into early adulthood up until to the age of 25, affecting the prefrontal cortex (which manages the 'executive' functions of planning, reasoning and impulse control), which is the last section to undergo this process (Reyna, Farley et al. 63). As Leslie Sabbagh explains, "full maturation of executive function occurs only as a completely integrated, collaborative brain system emerges".

[39] Whilst upholding a simplified conception of 'race' might be seen as problematic, the recognition of a tendency towards thinking within such conceptions cannot be disregarded in cases where an individual's sense of identity remains informed by these constructs, despite current recognition thereof as problematic.

Such affective responses could lead to resistance on the level of content which might cause students to resist further exploration, reducing their response to surface elements like plot, and restricting the potential use of such texts for exploration of literary devices and genre implications. However, Jeffrey Berman asserts that the issues surrounding the teaching of potentially controversial texts should not result in their exclusion, but that such texts do introduce in the need for educators to consider how such teaching takes place (in Showalter 126). In Elaine Showalter's opinion, one means of negotiating the process is by informing students prior to their engagement with the text of the fact that it might be considered offensive to some readers and ensuring that the topic is contextualised by providing them with "some sociological or historical background" and resisting any urge to limit discussions (126).

Approaches that encourage an exploration of context connect to the history of the discipline in South Africa. As with the critical momentum stimulated within the literary community in South Africa in the 1960s through the recognition of "the reciprocal influence between texts and contexts" (Robinson and Kissack 10), increased awareness amongst students of this relationship can assist in engaging students in questions surrounding the current order of things. Many educators in the South African context often engage with such questions through an exploration of some of the countries 'older' (Apartheid) texts – a process which unfortunately does not always present a consideration of these texts' inherent value (Barker and de Kock 22) – but which might assist in highlighting "the entanglement of the old in the new" (Bethlehem and Nethersole 161). Yet, whilst an exploration of what texts might reveal about the societies in which they were created may be useful in moving towards an exploration of the current context, it is of great use to draw students' attention to literary texts' potential to change readers. If one subscribes to an understanding of literature, as Michael Vaughan does, as "a force in social struggle […] by means of which social parties conceptualise themselves and their relation to the other social parties that make up the social totality, [and] a force by means of which conceptual programmes are established and developed by such social parties, as stratagems in the struggle for social power" (41), then an engagement with literature demonstrates not only the reciprocal influence between texts and contexts, but also the potential they may grant those who employ the medium strategically.

As Samson sees it, "literary criticism is a civilizing force that liberates people from the immediacy of life and initiates them into a path of self-exploration which is at once an exploration of their society" (471) and which leads to lines of questioning that allow reflection on both individuality and society's influence. By "facilitating the promotion of a

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comprehensive understanding of the momentum of social and political life" literary scholarship holds the potential to explore "the acceptability of existing social and political orders" (Robinson and Kissack 11) – a practice that can be of great use for developing civic responsibility amongst students. As such, David Robinson and Mike Kissack hold that shifting our focus towards texts "that may contribute towards the formation of a post-apartheid South African identity" could assist in contributing "towards the reaffirmation of a sense of dignity for those whose history and experience has been eclipsed by the reality of conquest and the imposition of an alien culture by white settlers", whilst also appealing to the notion of 'relevance' (13).

Whilst providing students with the background to a text might assist us in allowing students to engage effectively with literature's ability to present contextual factors in a critical way, one of the most powerful aspects to the way in which the literary might represent settings and contexts is through their investigation of individuals' experiences within there. Two means of doing so are through the use of literature's ability to assist students in encountering a sense of the 'Other' in a way which assists in generating a sense of connection, and by introducing students to those literary theories which increase students' awareness of social issues.

In Ursula Le Guin's view, being reconciled with our own humanity requires of us to first undergo a "voyage of alienation" (in Scholes 128). To some extent, this process can be facilitated through a recognition of the influence which our perception of the 'Other' plays within our own construction of identity. As Scholes sees it, the educational landscape presents a space in which the exploration of the unknown, which includes a confrontation with and the scrutinising of 'Otherness', is of major concern (59). And with Paul Lauter's assertion that multiculturalism brings with it a focus on integration and legitimization (109), the need arises to move away from the traditional approach to African literature, towards one which encourages both a reconciliation with our own sense of humanity, as well as that of others.

According to Salah Hassan, maintaining the position of African texts as works presented for the exploration of postcolonialism upholds "the disciplinary structures of formal, historical, and cultural differentiation" (303). Such framing also serves to maintain a limited perspective on the voices represented in these texts. Susan Gallagher, writing from an American perspective, opposes the facilitations of readings of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* which moved between upholding perspectives on African identity as "exotically other" whilst at the same time enforcing an "equally simplistic overuniversalizing tendency" to equate the

characters' experiences as being aligned with that of the American reader (in Hassan 302). For students to fully appreciate the fact that "the marginalized have values that can meaningfully challenge our own and needs that could be plausibly satisfied within our society" (Gary Gutting in Olivier 18), it is important to facilitate an exposure to the Other which does not rely on oversimplifications.

As mentioned, in addition to utilising literature's affective potential for bridging humanity's tendency to 'Other', social awareness can also be increased on a cognitive level through the use of theories related to the social dynamics presented in texts. These include theories grounded in Feminism[40], Marxism[41] and Ecocriticism[42], as well as the work of social[43], psychoanalytical[44] and postcolonial[45] theorists. As Mark Hanson sees it, theory offers students "tools to think more deeply about their own lives and situations, beyond literary arcane problems" (in Showalter 108). However, when it comes to the teaching of theory, the risk exists of teaching these thoughts in a manner which oversimplifies the different fields and as such, it is important that English Studies educators opting to employ such theories do so based on strategic inclusion and meaningful delivery. Whilst the theories mentioned all pertain to social dynamics, the teaching thereof does lead into questions of developing critical thinking, as these theories might be seen as representing novel ideologies, which should not be presented to students as universal truths, but which should allow students to hold the various schools of thought up to scrutiny. As such, and as it generally pertains to attempts at increasing a more

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[40] This statement is based on my belief that Feminism's interest in promoting the conception of women as being "not a 'nonsignificant Other'" and its encouragement of the inclusion of women's voices to "the arenas of politics, society, education and the art" (Bressler 103) could assist in increasing students' awareness of issues pertaining to women in particular, as well as assisting them in recognising instances where gender stereotypes have become the norm.

[41] With the core principles informing Marxist theory arguing that "reality itself can be defined and understood; that social and economic conditions directly influence how and what we believe and value", as well as its goals of "changing the world from a place of bigotry, hatred, and conflict resulting from class struggle" (Bressler 103), this theoretical interest provides opportunities to not only reflect on the problematic aspects of society, but to also assist students in recognising that the motivation behind Othering often stems from economic interests, with subsequent stereotyping presenting a façade for self-interest.

[42] As a global and very current concern, it is possible that assisting students in recognising the need to consider environmental impact might hold long-term global benefits for society.

[43] In this the work of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, for example, might be examined in determining the potential value of their insight for students.

[44] Though early psychoanalytic theory might have limited potential in the current context, many of the theorists drawing on these principles might assist in expanding students' understanding of identity formation, whilst reflecting, on the means in which the principles underlying this theory came to be applied to marketing by individuals like Edward Bernays for example, might assist in exposing the manipulative aspects present in the field of advertising.

[45] Situating both South African and other African texts in the context of postcolonialism might hold value in assisting students to understand the motivation behind calls for a movement towards Africanisation, as well as expanding their understanding of historical contexts.

critical sense of social awareness, English Studies' potential for developing critical thinking needs to be considered.

2.4)   Critical Thinking and English Studies

Since critical thinking is as a concept has permeated discussions on learning over the last 30 years (Moore 261), its use has become so naturalised that it necessitates reconsidering what exactly is meant by this concept. A broad definition thereof is as "a higher-order reasoning skill associated with the ability to think rationally, to evaluate actions and beliefs according to certain criteria, and to correct actions or beliefs based on such evaluation" (Sharma and Hannafin 20). However, the generalisation of this definition obscures its meaning. In attempting to simplify the understanding of critical thinking, Tim Moore reports that the general tenet amongst the understanding thereof relayed by practising academics was as "the making of judgements" (265). Yet again, this attempt at pinpointing the concept's meaning falls short in its focus on its goal. As such, another aspect of possible use in understanding this concept is Nancy Gallavan and Ellen Kottler's assertion that critical thinking is simultaneously convergent and divergent[46] (166). Such an understanding is reflected in Melissa Goodwin and Catherine Sommervold's statement that the practice is one which involves the questioning of answers (67), suggesting a perpetual state of reflection, construction and scrutiny.

Another means of understanding the concept of critical thinking is as the suspension of belief in the absence of reason and a striving towards deeper understanding. Such understanding is gained through the process of evaluation, which assists in making judgements regarding the phenomenon in question. As Goodwin and Sommervold see it, the ability to think critically is of value beyond the academic context, being a "highly marketable job skill and an essential life skill" (68). Such a perception is likely based on the sense that such thinking provides students with the flexibility and versatility required for achieving in an increasingly complex world (Moore 273). It is also based on the Goodwin and Sommervold's belief in its transferability since they hold that "[h]oning one's ability to ask good question and analyze problems […]

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[46] Convergent thinking "refers to the processes of arriving at one single answer, solution, or conclusion usually by following a time-honored, established, and accepted approach" (Gallavan and Kottler 166). Divergent thinking, a term coined by J.P. Guilford, refers to "the processes of breaking apart or deconstructing a topic into parts and then generating as many creative, original, and varied productions as possible in as short a time as possible" (Gallavan and Kottler 165). As such, it entails "imagination, curiosity, flexibility, complexity, and intellectual risk-taking" (165) and is generally related to the idea of creative thinking and problem-solving.

will easily transfer to other subject matter and areas of life (68-69). Although this transferability has been questioned, Moore believes that the implementation of 'metacritique' during its thinking – thereby allowing students to question the reasoning behind a particular critical mode as it functions within various disciplines – might serve to increase critical thinking's transferability (273).

In English Studies, the 'critical mode' of literary criticism might be regarded as a central method employed in the development of critical thinking, with many considering the development of critical thinking to be one of the discipline's most relevant outcomes. As Hay sees it, literary studies "matters because it teaches students to read and to think more critically" (6). The focus on 'reading' critically is of interest here, as it pertains to 'critical literacy' in English Studies. The use of this term is most likely the result of the discipline's awareness of the relationship between texts' construction and their meaning, with the concept suggesting the need for comprehension "at deeper levels [in order] to critically analyze the author's message" (DeVoogd and McLaughlin). In this, it is thought that educated readers are "better prepared to analyze and interpret the signifying practices that make up the texture of human lives" (Crosby 494).

As such, McCurrie reported that many English Studies academics consider the field's ability to promote critical literacy as "essential to a democracy" (44), with Higgins considering 'critical literacy' as one of the "core skills of humanist education" (5). Edward Said has also expressed his belief that "critical reading provides students with an awakened understanding" (17) which can "ennoble and emancipate human beings" (10) in a context of previous injustices, such as those that were present in South Africa during Apartheid. Therefore, critical thinking is of value, not only as a marketable skill, but also as one adhering to tertiary education's commitment to social development. Problematically, the development of this skill is often assumed rather than explicitly developed. As such, if English Studies educators hope to base some sense of the discipline's relevance on their belief in the subject's ability to develop critical thinking, the need arises to demonstrate this potential. Consequently, the sections which follow will examine both those aspects to the 'literary' which might make it a suitable object of study in the development of critical thinking, as well as an explication of the process of literary criticism as this relates to the development of this cognitive ability.

2.4.1)   Literary Aspects that Stimulate Critical Thinking

In conceiving of critical thinking as a divergent process that involves questioning the given, alongside the concept of critical literacy as it related to the analysis and interpretation of signifying practices, certain statements regarding literary aspects confirm the medium's suitability for developing critical thinking. Since the "weight and gravitas" (Blum) of literary texts often stems from omissions (Hemingway 3) or the displacement of intention (Scholes 8), thereby triggering humanity's active search for, and of, meaning (Brooks 18), it is possible to consider the literary to be of value in that it "insists emphatically that we read and interpret, that there are no easy answers, never only one meaning or perspective", insisting on "interpretation, on point of view [and] on polysemy" (Newman 501). As Bennett and Royle remind us, these texts are of value in their ability to develop "the *art of questioning*" (6), and as Peter Shillingsburg sees is, it is exactly this "element of uncertainty" which distinguishes 'serious' works of fiction from those that he perceives as being "didactic, escapist [or] entertaining" (13). As such, some literary texts are able to stimulate a suspension of belief thereby catalysing the process of critical thinking.

In addition, such texts are able to stimulate divergent thinking, due to the expansive nature of connotative power. As Eagleton sees it, "literary works may best be seen not as texts in a fixed sense, but as matrices capable of generating a whole range of possible meanings", thus being able to produce meaning, rather than simply containing it (144). Similarly, René Wellek and Austin Warren believe that the literary, as an art form "is not exhausted by, or even equivalent to, its intention" (34), whilst Jean-Paul Sartre describes the reading process as "the synthesis of perception and creation" (30). As Felski explains, literary works are "bristling with meaning, layered with resonance, [being] multi-layered symbols of beliefs and values [that] stand for something larger than themselves" (32). In this, the literary not only generates the sort of divergent thinking which forms part of the critical thinking process, but it does so through the use of the specific, concrete medium of language and literary devices.

The specific and purposeful use of such devices represents another central tenet which distinguishes the literary from other communicative acts. Since "the resources of language are exploited much more deliberately and systematically" in literature (Wellek and Warren 13-14), it becomes possible to speak clearly of the effect that strategic language use has on meaning and communication. As Eagleton sees it, narratives are a kind of strategy which "mobilises certain resources and deploys certain techniques to achieve specific goals" (105). As such, the

literary text provides "both the tools and object of analysis to its reader" (Samson 471), allowing educators to develop "an early recognition of the workings of language" (Hutchings 69) in their students. Such recognition can be of great value in what Scholes calls the "age of manipulation", due to his perspective on the media as something which 'assaults' those lacking the critical strength to resist its manipulation (15).

Consequently, the suitability of the literary as an object of study is suggested through such texts' tendency to elude a simple understanding in that they stimulate a process of questioning. In addition, since the degree of connotative diction is greater than that found in more supposedly 'scientific' texts, the literary allows for multiple interpretations and divergent patterns of thinking. Finally, since they provide a concrete sense of their construction, interpretation, as an analytical process in which it becomes possible to study both the 'parts' and their relationship to the greater 'whole', is encouraged – thereby assisting with a more systematic approach of enquiry. However, although the description of such aspects are suggested as being inherent to texts that are considered literary, the potential to engage with such texts without the development of critical thinking capacities does remain. As such, it becomes important to consider the means through which literary studies educators can assist students to benefit from this potential.

2.4.2)   Literary Criticism and Critical Thinking

Although the term 'literary criticism' rarely appears in English Studies course descriptions at South African universities, the word 'critical' is commonly employed[47], with this ability generally being demonstrated in the writing of essays following the principles of literary criticism. Whilst John Peck and Martin Coyle define literary criticism as "the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literary works", explaining that the manifestation thereof in education is as an "academic activity express[ing] the reader's sense of what is happening in a text" (165), a more concrete sense of this process' relationship to critical thinking skills may arise from reflections on the various steps involved in constructing literary criticism. As such, the recognition of certain aspects' relationship to a greater whole – as practiced through analysis – as well as the opportunities it affords for convergent critical reflection, are strategically approached when methods such as close reading or overall-extended close

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[47] In an overview I conducted in 2015, of the course descriptions presented by seven universities in South Africa, the word 'critical' appeared as an outcome for all literature-based courses.

readings are employed, might be considered of use in the development of critical thinking skills. In addition, the features of literary criticism essays further serve in concretising this practice through their focus on the need to support and elaborate on any arguments[48] made.

In the past 50 years, literary scholars have moved away from an initial interest in what constitutes 'good' literature, towards an interest in "the ways in which 'meanings' and understandings of particular issues are constructed" (Snee 167). As such, literary criticism essays often expect of students to demonstrate an understanding of both the issues examined on the level of content, as well as the purposeful implementation of literary techniques and devices as demonstrated within the text. Though academics in the discipline often publish articles based on more complex engagements with texts, the engagement expected of undergraduate students often centres on an interest in the relationship between form and content; expression and meaning. By encouraging such engagements with literature, students are made aware of the means in which language serves as a "mediating and objectifying agent" (Bleich 115), partially through the recognition of the relationship between revelations and concealment (Iser 33-34).

It is believed that, through an understanding of how meaning is created, one is able to perceive "which events and texts reinforce the *status quo*, [and] which subvert it; what different discourses were available; what the competing ideologies were at any given time; to whom they 'belonged'; [and] how they manifested themselves" (Snee 167). In addition to this, Eagleton states that "bowing to the narrator's authority […] is not much of a risk, since we are not signing on for very much" (80) and that, "when it comes to literature, not a lot is at stake" (144). As such, literature allows students to question contextual aspects (as they relate to both the context in which a text was constructed, as well as the author's portrayal thereof), without the fear of conflict arising from their primary source. In this, literary studies affords enough affective distance for it to be "a space for intellectual freedom, open to imagination, experimentation and exploration" (Bennett and Royle 7).

Optimising this practice, however, relies on educators' ability to stimulate the kinds of discussions that allow for reflection on content, and doing so in a manner which allows for such engagements to take place within a framework delineating the importance of thinking

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[48] The concept of an argument in literary criticism differs somewhat from its employment in everyday language in that it does not constitute a disagreement, but rather pertains to constructing statements related to a particular area of interest, requiring substantiation for each claim made in supporting the reasoning behind the overall 'argument'. As such, the concept represents one of the key disciplinary terms with which students need to be familiarised in order to construct literary criticism essays.

critically about such content. Jerome McGann confers, extending on this thought's implications for the educational landscape when he states that engagements driven by the pleasurable aspects to the reading "proved a serious obstacle to students' ability to think critically about the works and their own thinking" and that, since this draws readers away from a recognition of the medium, it becomes essential to produce trained readers, since students will only then be able to "negotiate, back and forth, the relation between the textualities of fiction and its sublime imaginary constructs" (in Showalter 89). Producing 'trained' readers thus represents the first step in teaching literary criticism, since educators need to achieve a shift within students from the position of what Miller calls 'innocent' readers to 'slow' readers (in Robinson and Kissack 15).

According to Miller, innocent readers are those who 'abandon' themselves to a narrative, with this form of engagement being characterised by their 'suspension of disbelief', leading to "the absence of any kind of analytical perspective" (in Robinson and Kissack 15). In contrast to this, the term 'slow readers' refers to those who pay close attention to the "the complex linguistic or rhetorical devices [that] create the credible appeal of the narrative itself" and the accompanying aspect of "the hermeneutics of reading, which focuses on what the narrative means, including an interpretation of the beliefs generated about, inter alia, gender, class and race relationships in society" (15). However, in recognising reading as an active process requiring comprehension, the increased need for students to be "taught strategies to read more efficiently" arises (William Gabe in Rao 106).

Facilitation of the shift from 'innocent' to 'slow' readers is often approached through the teaching of close reading or overall-extended close reading practices. Close reading remains one of the 'fundamental' critical techniques expected of literature students (Showalter 55), and although the technique "had long been discredited as a conservative and limited critical practice", its use in the discipline "is showing increasingly notable signs of return" (Shen 150). The process is one which requires multiple skills, including identifying significant textual details, the employment of disciplinary terminology and an understanding of genre conventions as means for developing original arguments regarding a text's meaning and methods (Tinkle, Atias, McAdams and Zukerman 507). Still, John Schlib's considers close reading to be "a hazy concept" which "functions largely as a catachresis, a placeholder, substituting for a more exact description of interpretive strategies" ("Preparing" 512-513). The author's statement might relate to the increasing expansion of close reading practices to function according to those of 'overall-extended close reading'; which "while firmly grounded in close examination of local

details, [also] takes an 'overall' consideration of the interaction among different textual details and an 'extended' consideration of extratextual and intertextual relations" (Shen 151).

Although complex, it is believed that mastering this process holds great value for students beyond the academic context since it "invite[s] students to learn transferable skills: the critical analysis of texts, the presentation of evidence, the correct use of disciplinary terms, and the ability to frame questions for research and analysis" (Tinkle, Atias, McAdams and Zukerman 527). A similar sense of English Studies practices' value might be gained when one considers how such processes manifest in the composition of literary criticism essays. In this, relevant requirements include the formulation of an argument, delineation of their theoretical grounding, including substantiating support for claims made and composing essays in a manner that demonstrates reflection on the role of structure. In addition to this, the expectation for students to employ academic language in their writing introduces an additional potential learning experience. The exploration of these aspects to the literary criticism essay begins with a consideration of the implications of constructing an argument.

As Scholes explains, in moving from interpretation to criticism, students are not simply negating or rejecting, but are differentiating their own subjectivity from that of the author and constructing "an assertion of *another* textual power against that of the primary text" (40) – a process that is "about inventing new ways of thinking about things that *are* in the text, in relation to things *beyond the text*" (Bennett and Royle 17). However, in constructing arguments, students become increasingly aware of the need to substantiate their claims. Where an argument draws on aspects not directly presented in the text, educators might highlight to students the need for delineating the theoretical framework informing their perceptions.

As such, the writing process introduces students to a practice mimicking Felski's sense of theory, which she defines as "the process of reflecting on the underlying frameworks, principles, and assumptions that shape our individual acts of interpretation" (2). Similarly, Robinson and Kissack refer to literary theory as "literary criticism's keen and intensified awareness of the criteria that regulate its evaluations of literary merit [which has] defined and directed different reading strategies, [and] which are the very substance of a reader's critical engagement with literature" (5). Even in cases where theory is not explicitly drawn on, demonstrating the importance of such reflection to students during their construction of arguments is of use. However, the conscious introduction of basic theory might indeed be of use in assisting students.

In this, theory can be seen as not only providing a framework that can assist students in focusing their writing, but also as a means of demonstrating the possibility of multiple interpretations of a single work or phenomena. As such, Linkindorf's suggestion that there is value in presenting "a sufficient range of material and argument […] for systematic comparison and contrast" since this would allow the educator to guide students in "analys[ing] and assess[ing] the validity of any one viewpoint against others" (127) might be considered. Similarly, Gerald Graff expresses his belief that introducing students to the "hermeneutical challenge of interpreting contesting perspectives" represents a "fundamental educational imperative" (in Robinson and Kissack 15-16), with the theorist applying his belief to the presentation of various theoretical lenses. For educators, the meaningful incorporation of multiple views requires of them to navigate students' engagements in a manner which allows them to reconcile and recognise the value of such opposing perspectives. As Robinson and Kissack see it, such facilitation serves to promote "a dialogue that examines the nature and consequences of these theoretical differences" (16).

Such a 'dialogue' might also serve in providing an increased sense of the need for explanation and substantiation. The recognition of this need can be considered to be of value in a context where people are often exposed to statements which, due to a lack of substantiation, might require a certain degree of sensitivity, if their validity is to not be questioned. Drawing on the work of Jürgen Habermas, Olivier asserts that "strategic attempts to wield power over others by the disingenuous pretence of communicating with them, will never cease, and hence, neither will (or should) attempts to persuade humans to acknowledge, as far as possible, the validity claims underpinning their communicative action" (7). In Shillingsburg's view, "thinking persons come to the realization […] that every position statement begins with assumptions and cannot escape the biases inherent in one's own limited point of view" (23). As such, critical thinking should inevitably lead, not only to reflections on one's perceptions of reality, but also to the rationale behind statements made regarding external phenomenon. In this, recognising both the need to delineate the thoughts informing one's own statements, as well as an increased awareness of the value of evidence, might assist students in not only constructing their own arguments, but also in evaluating the legitimacy of others.

As mentioned, expectations of students to employ academic language during the writing of literary criticism essays might introduce an additional educational opportunity. When one considers that "by extrapolation, history, science, and the myriad other disciplines that project themselves as fields characterized by the logical organization of facts are also discourses that have hidden their rhetoricity" (Samson 469), assisting students in recognising the means by

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which such discourses employ language to present factuality and deter questioning, requires of educators to also examine their own discourses more explicitly. In bridging this process of moving from the object studied to the approaches dominating this form of study, the literary presents an effective tool. Where "the ideal scientific language is purely 'denotative'", literary language "abounds in ambiguities", drawing more strongly on the connotative aspects of language (Wellek and Warren 12). However, once students have been made aware of the strategic use of language in literature, the type of language employed, "enables us to see how far the meaning of a situation, relationship or text is unstated, implicit, doing its work in silence" (Bennett and Royle 11) in other text types. For this possibility to be embraced, however, it might be considered of value to assist students in reflecting on the reasoning behind the kind of language used in academia, as well as the logic behind the structural layout encouraged in their writing.

With the sense, here, of the approach to Africanising tertiary education as one which, in the current context, would be most meaningfully achieved if done in a manner that enhances the current methods through the addition of the valuable contributions which local and continental communities might make in introducing their insights to various fields, transforming academic conventions requires an understanding of the reasoning behind current practices. In this, assisting students in reflecting on the reasoning behind current academic writing conventions might assist them in identifying ways to contribute to disciplines like English Studies in a manner which is not too alien for their intended readership to accept. Since the insight that comes from reflecting on the reasoning behind writing conventions includes considerations of the nature of one's audience, this process might also assist students in moving towards the innovative potential of literary criticism, as well as creative writing.

2.5)   Stimulating Creativity and Innovation

As mentioned, one of the current demands arising in the South African educational landscape is for the need to produce students who are equipped with creative and innovative capacities in the hope that they will be able to apply these abilities in the development of innovative means of overcoming some of the issues faced in this country. Opening up one's understanding of creativity as a process beyond the artistic and as one which incorporates the potential that such thinking holds for 'creating' new perspectives on seemingly 'known' phenomenon, renders this ability to one that enables the human subject to contribute to the development of greater

insights and to confront any issues with new potential solutions. As such, there is value in Sarah Nuttall's assertion that the movement towards true democratisation within the Humanities requires of us to embrace "the generative and genuinely innovative potential of the 'now'" (in Bethlehem and Nethersole 161). However, if English Studies educators are to fully embrace the subject's potential to stimulate creativity and innovation, then our practices might need to move beyond the assumption that such abilities are inherent in the construction of literary criticism essays.

Admittedly, the assumption that innovation is inherent in literary criticism is not invalid. Certainly, the construction of one's own argument does not involve the processes of rote learning, and instead, relies on students' ability to engage with a text in a way that does not negate their personal interpretation thereof. As Scholes perceives it, "reading [should be seen] not simply as consumption but as a productive activity, the making of meaning, in which one is guided by the text one reads, of course, but not simply manipulated by it" (8). However, when the reading process is guided solely by the goal of constructing criticism, students are only "learning how to produce a specific kind of discourse, controlled by a specific scientific paradigm" (132). In this, if educators truly believe in the value of literature beyond the educational landscape, then the need arises for them to assist their students in constructing their thoughts in a means which will be more accessible to the outside world. As such, whilst recognising that there is some inherent aspect of creativity involved in the process of literary criticism, I would argue that there is also a need for English Studies educators to consider the potential that might arise through the teaching of what I term 'critical creative writing'.

2.5.1)   Critical Creative Writing

The concept of critical creative writing is one which is based on my belief that, in combining the faculties developed through the teaching of English Studies, with the sense of the literary's potential, as presented in this chapter, the opportunity arises for educators to assist students in populating the 'literary' with their own voices. The concept is inspired by McKinney's assertion (drawing on the concepts of 'Critique' and 'Design'[49] as presented by Gunther Kress) that presenting students with "the opportunity to design and produce their own alternative

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[49] In this, the concept of 'Critique' relates to "the deconstruction of texts" (McKinney 71) as it pertains to an involvement which is centred on identifying elements which serve the text's intentions, whereas 'Design' focuses on "the production of new texts" (71).

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fictional texts, which represent South Africa now, as well as their visions for this, in addition to more traditional analytical writing within the critique mode" might assist them in engaging more successfully with texts constructed during the Apartheid era (71). Since a sense of the value which the past holds in understanding current issues arises, the need for such bridging is introduced. However, in addition to this, the practice of critical creative writing might also be perceived as a means of consolidating students' increasing social awareness with the critical thinking skills developed, in a way that allows for a greater degree of creativity.

As Scholes points out, a tendency exists in English departments to "privilege consumption over production" (5) – a trend which Mark Edmondson sees as reflecting the broader culture "devoted to consumption and entertainment, to the using and using up of goods and images" (in Hay 7). Still, there are those who remain determined in their belief that the aspect of writing proficiency developed within literature courses should be considered one of the field's primary goals. As Whittock sees it, improving students' expressive abilities by teaching them how to "write lucidly and forcefully" should be one of English Studies professionals' key outcomes (81). Scholes shares this opinion, considering it one of our greatest responsibilities to "devise ways for our students to perform […] productive activities as fruitfully as possible: to produce oral and written texts themselves" (24). In the South African context, Robinson and Kissack highlight the fact that, when Geoffrey Durrant established the tutorial system at the University of Natal, it was largely aimed at encouraging "students to develop confidence in the articulation of their own thoughts under the guidance of a teacher" (10).

In acquiring communicative capabilities, students obtain an ability which could assist them in interpreting and communicating on a level beyond literary analysis. With the awareness of the possibility of using language strategically that arises during literary analysis, educators are afforded an opportunity to also draw students' attention to the means through which they themselves might use literature as a means of expression. Although Howell Chickering believes that the exploration of literary texts "virtually guarantee[s] that [students] will learn about artistic uses of language" (264-265), there is greater value in being explicit about those aspects which might come to render a text to be of literary value. And if one subscribes to the belief that literary texts, as opposed to some other textual formats, are able to draw in their readership on both an affective level and in a way that stimulates critical thinking, then assisting students in constructing texts possessing such 'literary' features might be of particular value. In this, creative writing might be taught based on an awareness of literary features, rather than presenting a space where creativity is applied for text construction without being informed by

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critical faculties. In addition to fostering a growing awareness of the features serving to optimise texts' engagement with a readership, there is also value in encouraging the content of students' texts to be based on their sense of social awareness.

Considering Whittock's belief that, in teaching writing, characteristics such as "sensitivity, tact, judgement, and imaginative insight" (84) are also developed, students of literature are likely to be particularly good candidates for representing their generation or culture. As Scholes sees it, both literary criticism and poetry "require the individual subject to understand his or her place in the world and to speak *for others*, in a collective voice" (62), and if the author's belief might be extended to include other literary media, then this sense of representing a collective could assist us in producing a corps of students who can facilitate increased understanding of 'Others'. In this, Sartre's idea of 'virtual publics' could be seen as relevant in postcolonial settings. This concept is defined by Vaughan as being "constituted by a rising class, which cannot literally be addressed by the writer as a reading public, but whose historic demands act as the central, implicit reference of the writer's ideological position and commitment" (62). As such, students should be empowered in a way which will allow for them to construct narratives that oppose South Africa's history of segregation, allowing for the insight into the universal sense of humanities to expand into an understanding of others that is not based on texts which seem removed from their current realities.

Developing the creative capacity of our students could also be considered as a means of promoting the Africanisation of various institutions. For, with increased productive capabilities, students will be able to produce texts that could serve as a means of demonstrating some of the country's unique features. In addition, by instilling a sense of their productive powers in students, the possibility of assisting them in applying these capabilities to existing schools of thought in a discipline like English Studies arises. As Scholes points out, "the existence of specific discursive codes seems […] beyond argument, and their constraining effect on the actual practice of writing is a necessary corollary of their existence; but it would be unwarranted to assume from this that such constraints are absolute or fixed" (144). As such, by familiarizing students with the current systems' conventions, it is possible to encourage students to expand on these systems, challenging their nature in a constructive manner and bringing innovation to set practices in a manner which would be able to reach a relevant public. As such, recognising the value of composition in English Studies courses, and a movement towards including creative writing and thinking into questions of discourse structure, could heighten the discipline's value and relevance.

In addition, returning to Palazzo's suggestion that the acquisition of the English language might serve as a potentially useful tool for students (142), one might again reflect on the implications for calls towards Africanising tertiary education. As mentioned, there are those who, like Whittock, might be concerned that the study of literature is potentially such an immersive process that it could result in alienating students from their own culture (91), and in this, the teaching of critical creative writing might serve as a means of countering this potential problematic outcome. As the African author Gabriel Okara noted, the process of translating African ideas, philosophy, folklore and imagery into European languages in a manner which attempts at capturing their meaning fully is one which has the potential to be a "fascinating exercise" (in Ngũgĩ 8). Through the conscious reflection on potential means of capturing such meaning, the process of translating becomes a critical and creative one, which might serve to deepen an individual's understanding of their traditions and ideologies. As such, encouraging this process might also serve to increase the discipline's potential for contributing to calls for Africanisation in the current context.

2.6)   Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, there are aspects to both the literary, and the practices that characterise the discipline of English Studies, that might assist in developing those traits which are considered desirable in the current context. Through its ability to draw readers in, the literary presents an engaging way in which to expose students to social aspects such as history and psychology. Through their representation of cultures and context, such texts might serve in expanding readers' awareness of 'Others', or might assist in stimulating a questioning of the norms which uphold problematic conduct or social systems. In addition to the potential for reflection presented through their content, the strategic use of language presented in literary texts creates a space for readers to develop an increasing awareness of the ways in which language might be employed to different ends. And whilst the process of literary criticism might assist in enhancing students' awareness of all of these aspects, the process is also one which presents students with further insights, honing their own communicative abilities.

In addition, developing students' creative abilities in a manner which draws on a critical understanding of both academic and literary writing conventions holds the potential for English Studies to contribute towards the Africanisation of tertiary institutions. Through an understanding of the power of language and the strategies which might engage a readership,

encouraging innovation in students' writing allows for African philosophies, ideas and imagery to permeate the current landscape in a manner which does not alienate their readership. In addition, as mentioned, the process of translating such ideas might also serve to counter the potentially problematic outcome of emerging students too deeply in a tradition which is foreign to their own, by encouraging reflection on the potential contributions which our students might make to both landscapes.

Whilst some initial considerations arising within the teaching process were mentioned here, it is important to note that the current relationship to knowledge, which is being developed in students during secondary education, in addition to some other complicating factors, means that this potential does not necessarily result in the development of the abilities and perspectives examined. In particular, the complexity of the procedural knowledge required for literary criticism essays, means that educators need to be strategic in considering their approaches to teaching. As such, the chapter that follows pays particular attention to the implications that learning theory holds for disciplines relying on the successful development of procedural knowledge.

Chapter 3

Teaching for Learning in English Studies

3.1)   Introduction

Though the preceding chapter made mention of some aspects to educators' approaches that could serve in assisting learning, these statements pertain to general concerns – taking into account the influence of affective response and potentially useful disciplinary conventions. However, facilitating the shift from 'dualist' thinking and superficial analyses to the kind of thinking required for constructing literary criticism presents educators with a challenging task. Where English Studies educators often employ experiential approaches in their teaching, an increased awareness of the implications of learning theories might assist in optimising teaching practices. As such, the chapter that follows examines how insights gained from learning theories, and in particular cognitivist learning theory, relate to the interests and practices found within English Studies, in order to increase awareness of their implications for course development and dissemination within the discipline.

The interest in cognitivist learning theory here is motivated by the interest in complex procedural knowledge. In this, behaviourism's perceptions of 'correct' responses and their belief that educators should minimise 'errors' (Svinicki 6) is perceived as being misaligned with those of English Studies. Given the discipline's status as a 'soft' science, and Higgins' assertion that no society can truly determine what knowledge may be of use in the future (65), as well as a sense of the potential value which could stem from directing students to substantiate problematic responses, behaviourist approaches were perceived as being ill-suited to the interests of this thesis. It will be noted however, that, although the dominant learning theory adopted here is cognitivism, the discussion does tend towards the acceptance of some constructivist principles. The motivation for a stronger reliance on the principles of cognitivism, however, is based on David Jonassen's assertion that constructivist approaches are best suited to 'advanced' knowledge acquisition, whilst 'introductory' knowledge is best developed through behavioural or cognitivist approaches (in Ertmer and Newby 57). Given the particular interest in initial exposure to the discipline of English Studies, the use of cognitivist learning theory is therefore employed in a manner which assumes that constructivist principles might best serve the discipline when they are employed once students possess a stronger sense of the discipline.

3.2)   Pedagogical Knowledge in English Studies

Unfortunately, Scott Stevens' perception on pedagogy as "the forgotten subject in higher education" (373) holds true for English Studies, where education is not always perceived as a 'serious' subject in research (Levine 8) and where traditions of "dump[ing] young graduate students into classrooms, departmental syllabi in hand" (8) lead to the reliance on a combination of subject knowledge and experiential learning as the dominant influences to their approaches to teaching. However, as Schlib points out, affording students with the opportunity to teach literature does not necessarily mean that they will reflect on this process ("Preparing" 507), and with mounting pressures for academic publication, young academics rarely pursue the "potentially more valuable form of preprofessionalism" afforded through pedagogical enquiries (507). Since the resultant teaching is often guided by instinct, Marshall Gregory fears that many educators have neither "the intellectual or professional grasp of teaching that they have of the curriculum" (69), resulting in many undergraduate students being taught by faculty who possess less exposure, not only to the subject's content, but also to pedagogical training (J. Harris 51).

Although Jeffery Skoblow holds that "the degree of uncertainty inherent in teaching" means that many entering the field would prefer receiving pedagogical guidance (402), developing faculty training initiatives represents a time-consuming task. Given the abundance of resources, many of which are not specific to the discipline of English Studies[50], and the difficulty presented in identifying those texts that would be of value in designing "generative and effective experiences" (Blalock 555), few departments can afford to extend their faculty training programmes. In addition, much of the current writing on the teaching of literature employs an anecdotal style, with conclusions that are often more "experiential and instinctive" than "analytical" (Papp, Byrnes, and Lonoff in Salvatori 297). Although experiential learning is value for developing one's sense of the teaching process, especially in spaces where open conversations might draw out unpredictable responses, Showalter believes that many are unwilling to consider their practices through a critical lens of self-reflexivity ("Teaching in Public" 541). As a result, educators who rely strongly on their own experiences of teaching might fail in considering learners' experiences thereof, possibly ascribing a failure to learn as students' failure, instead of their own.

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[50] One clear exception to this is Elaine Showalter's *Teaching Literature,* although this text is at times too general, and might overwhelm early educators. The fact that the book was published 14 years ago also means that some of the disciplinary interests have shifted since.

In Cavanagh's view, increasing educators' access to contemporary information on cognition and learning should form a regular part of pedagogical support – a change which would make the development of "revised, cognitively appropriate pedagogies" more feasible (140). In addition, Kamalakar Bhat states that increasing access to material on teaching, and re-equipping educators with the skills required to impart learning would also increase the degree of teaching and learning activities' relevance by aligning them with contemporary interests (52). As McCurrie sees it, for English departments to have a 'viable' future, faculty need to disassemble current hierarchies in order to stimulate engagements with pedagogical concerns (44). However, McCurrie's perspective neglects recognition of the need to consider the learning process specifically.

As Schlib points out, "training in literature pedagogy cannot occur unless everyone involved aims to identify what aspects of literary studies can be taught in the first place" ("Preparing" 512-513). Levine concurs when he refers to the lack of pedagogical research at a time when "the very nature of the discipline is being called into question [and] when what is to be taught and how it should be taught are in dispute" as an 'anomaly' (10). Although these authors' statements still frame their concerns with a focus on teaching, the discussion which follows will demonstrate the importance of identifying the 'teachable' aspects to English Studies when moving towards a learner-centred approach. As such, Cavanagh's call for the inclusion of more research on learning and cognition in faculty training (140), holds particular value in this context.

Considering Glenn Blalock's assertion that "we must shift our focus to learning and how we can more intentionally and effectively teach for learning" (555-556) and Cavanagh's statement that "the incorporation of a broader base of learning strategies is key to the health of the humanities" (132), this chapter functions largely as a response to some of the suggestions made by Cavanagh in her article "Bringing Our Brains to the Humanities". In it, Cavanagh maintains that the growing fields of educational psychology and cognitive science offer valuable new information regarding the learning process and means to "encourage the kind of education we ostensibly support" (131), asserting the need to "seriously study our pedagogical practices [in order] to determine how they can best align with current knowledge about cognition and learning" (132).

Cavanagh's suggestion is of value when one considers that "learning is greatly enhanced when students are taught using research-based learning strategies" (Connell 31). Informed by

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Christopher Winch's assertion that what is needed in modern learning theory is not a greater number of theories, but a greater level of application to specific forms of learning (17), the lack of research in cognitivist learning theories addressing the specific needs of those teaching in the so-called 'soft' sciences, and in particular English Studies, might be considered problematic. As such, this chapter attempts some initial reflection on the possible implications of this theory and some related aspects in the discipline.

3.3)   Learning in the 'Soft' Sciences

One of the issues constricting educators' ability to apply theories on teaching and learning to the field of English Studies is the discipline's alignment with what is often referred to as the 'soft' sciences. Those teaching in subjects with concrete understandings of knowledge and clearly delineated paradigms are often presented with fairly basic approaches to teaching. In contrast to these so-called 'hard' sciences, the 'soft', or social sciences "deal with the qualitative, which is not easily measured" (Arnold and Wall 2). The implications of this include a less concrete sense of what constitutes the relevant information to be disseminated, and techniques suitable to the teaching of such, more abstract knowledge. As Kennith D. Mackenzie and Robert House point out, "[i]n the absence of a paradigm, all facts are more or less relevant and this gives the appearance of randomness to those gathering the facts" (8). With many 'soft' sciences functioning within a pre-paradigmatic or developmental stage, the need arises for practitioners to consider paradigm development strategies (MacKenzie and House 8), if these fields are to transcend beyond this state.

However, Tony Davies believes that, despite the comparatively informal nature of literary studies education, its reluctance to "impose judgements or dictate pre-given conclusions, itself constitutes a determinate discursive regime" (37). Max Horkheimer believes that positivist thinking limits the critical potential of our conceptions of knowledge and 'science' (in Giroux 33). The resultant conception of English Studies is as a discipline in which little concrete knowledge is transmitted, and characterised by relaying analytical techniques. In distinguishing between the 'hard' sciences as those directed at the teaching of "facts, principles and concepts" and 'soft' sciences as focused on "effective thinking skills such as critical thinking" (Neumann 138), perspectives of English Studies as falling solely into the latter category fail to recognise that "interpretation is not a pure skill but a discipline deeply dependent upon knowledge" (Scholes 33) and that the discipline has "a describable register in terms of its field, mode and

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tenor" (Leibowitz 48). As such, a problematic relationship often develops when students, incapable of discerning the nature of the subject, are nevertheless presented with a form of teaching which holds a set, yet tacit, belief regarding what can be considered 'acceptable' practice.

An additional characteristic of interest here is the interdisciplinary nature of English Studies in its current state, which serves to connect it to many of the other subjects of interest in the social sciences. This position is powerful in the academic context, where departmentalising knowledge and research restrains the desired 'open marketplace of ideas' model (Gershon in Arnold and Wall 3). In addition, pluridisciplinarity can benefit students through its emphasis on the connections between various means of understanding (Callanan 392). However, an acceptance of this inter- or pluridisciplinary position, brings about a greater need for thinking deliberately "about what has been learned, how it relates to other knowledge, and what can be done with this knowledge" (Goodwin and Sommervold 72). To a large extent, this points towards the need for subjects like English Studies to develop intellectual skills, which can be considered a form of procedural knowledge (Gagné 33). Although procedural knowledge constitutes only a part of the spheres of interest in cognitivist learning theory, consideration of its guiding principles might still be considered to be of use, especially in a landscape characterised by complex perceptions of knowledge.

3.4)   Cognitivism and Procedural Knowledge

The choice of cognitivism as the dominant theoretical interest in this study might be considered problematic within a discipline currently characterised by calls towards the return to humanist philosophy. However, the decision is based on the particular interest in critical thinking skills development and a belief in the possibility of its coexistence with a sense of social awareness and creativity. Beyond the assumption of these aspects as not being mutually exclusive, critical thinking is also perceived as a manner in which these capabilities might be directed meaningfully. Although there is value in some of the principles guiding other learning theories (such as behaviourism's recognition of the importance of positive reinforcement and constructivism's perspectives on the influence of individual perception), the belief in the need for strategic intervention to ensure the learning of complex procedures informs the particular

interest in cognitivism[51]. In considering how the principles informing this theory of human learning relates to the teaching of procedural knowledge, current perspectives on the 'types' of knowledge found in learning and cognitive processing will be examined.

In revising Bloom's taxonomy[52], Anderson et al. identify four different types of knowledge; with these being factual, conceptual, procedural, and meta-cognitive knowledge (in Blumberg 94). Although this classification suggests these forms of knowledge to be independent of one another, this is not the case. While factual knowledge represents "surface level knowledge", it is considered to be "the foundation upon which all other types of knowledge are built", and, as such, Anderson et al. stressed the importance of its use in the constructions or enhancement of students' conceptual and procedural knowledge (in Blumberg 94). In considering Jerome Bruner's belief that it is easier to apply more basic knowledge to new problems and that fundamental principles need to be understood for learning to be adequate transferred (in Cooperstein and Kovecar-Weidinger 144), factual knowledge's role in supporting more complex cognitive processes, increases the need to delineate such information within the so-called 'soft' sciences.

In this, one might also consider perspectives on learning presented by human cognitive architecture learning theorists. This theory, which concerns itself with "the manner in which structures and functions required for human cognitive processes are organised" (Sweller 370), employs the key concepts of 'long-term memory', 'working memory' and 'cognitive load'. Whilst 'long term memory' represents knowledge and understanding that is established and easily accessible, 'working memory' refers to the stage of information processing preceding the transference to 'long term memory' (370). Because information is not as readily accessible during this stage or learning, the efficiency of applying such understanding to novel information is considered less than in cases where long term memory is being drawn on, since this theory suggests that problem-solving abilities are enhanced when 'long-term memory' is engaged (Kirschner, Sweller and Clark 76).

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[51] Because of cognitivism's emphasis on mental structures, these learning theories are generally considered to be appropriate to more complex forms of learning, such as reasoning, problem-solving and information-processing, than those theories based on behavioural perspectives (Schunk in Ertmer and Newby 52).

[52] Benjamin Bloom, along with his colleagues proposed a Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, examining the cognitive, affective and sensory domains in education. Their perspective on the Cognitive Domain (published in 1956) suggested lower and higher order thinking skills. Lower order skills include the "acquisition of facts, knowledge, and information" whereas higher order skills include analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Amirault and Visser 75).

Whilst such a conception of knowledge formation corresponds with the perceived relationship between factual and procedural knowledge in other cognitivist learning theories, the additional consideration of 'cognitive load', which refers to the brain's capacity for processing information through the use of both working and long term memory, gives insight into the dangers of overtaxing students' mental capacity. When considering this implication alongside Bruner's (constructivist) belief in the influence that the manner in which content is organised and structured has in determining learning (Snelbecker 149), the need for strategic delineation of relevant content becomes apparent.

When considering the pedagogical approaches currently characterising teaching practices in English Studies, the emerging profile indicates a complex interaction between various approaches and techniques, including observational learning, concept learning, active learning, collaborative learning, enquiry-based learning and project-based learning. The use of such 'problem-solving' approaches in teaching the cognitive processes involved in critical analysis and application (Fox and MacKeogh 123) means that the majority of these teaching methods fall under the umbrella concept of 'minimal guidance' instruction (Kirschner, Sweller and Clark 76) – the adoption of which is perhaps indicative of our field's acceptance of constructivist[53] beliefs. However, when one considers the heavy demands of problem-based learning on 'working memory' (77), the suitability of such exercises for those entering a particular (and highly conceptual) field, might be brought to question. One method suggested for combatting these effects is that of Direct Instruction. This approach is "based on the philosophy that instruction which is clear and free of misinterpretations can greatly improve and hasten learning (Botts, Losardo, Tillery and Werts 121). The resultant method is one which "emphasizes the importance of small learning increments, explicit step-by-step teaching, mastery of learning, error correction, fading of teacher-directed activities, adequate practice, and cumulative review" (121).

In consideration of the principles informing cognitivist learning theory, and drawing on some other suggestions made with regards to optimising teaching for learning, the discussion which follows is based on the following beliefs: First off, the development of complex procedural knowledge relies on an understanding of factual and conceptual knowledge. Secondly, basic ideas are more easily grasped and therefore, conceptual development should be based on

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[53]Constructivism assumes learning constitutes an "active process of constructing a conceptual framework" (Cobern 105). Whether explicit definitions are provided or terms are simply employed repeatedly it assumes that individual understandings of what particular terms mean will be developed.

simplified understanding. Thirdly, that course development should incorporate a strategic approach in facilitating the shift from dualist to more complex conceptions of knowledge. And lastly, that the potential value to be gained from learning theories requires a consideration of their principles as they apply to specific disciplines. Informed by these beliefs, a more detailed examination of these principles will be conducted alongside a sense of their implications for English Studies.

3.5)   Factual Knowledge in English Studies

Given the position of English Studies as a 'soft' science, the discipline is one in which a sense of 'factuality' might be considered problematic. With its propensity for critical thinking, experts on the field are often aware of the need for clear delineations when presenting statements in a factual manner, and in the absence of an awareness of this need for specificity, a sense of the 'facts' related to the discipline is limited. Textual aspects such as content, publication details, biographical details on authors and statements regarding existing theories, tend to represent the most discernable 'hard' facts within literary studies. Within this framework, the value of conceptual knowledge becomes of key interest in bridging students' conception of knowledge as factual with the kind of procedural knowledge involved in critical thinking. In recognition of the relationship between factual knowledge and concept formation, particular attention needs to be paid to the means by which conceptual learning might be optimally facilitated.

However, perceptions on factual knowledge as contributing towards the development of conceptual and procedural knowledge in English Studies also draw attention to the need for reflection on additional resources provided. Such material can serve several purposes, in addition to building "a body of *authorized* knowledge" without which Derek Barker and Leon de Kock consider course construction inconceivable or impractical (21). These functions include "building a knowledge base" and helping students to acquire "discipline-specific learning methodologies" (Blumberg and Pontiggia 201), as well as providing background knowledge on contexts. However, it is likely that, faced with the increasing sense of the degree to which concepts, rather than facts, function within the discipline, the production of resources moving beyond the factual, and towards the understanding of concepts that might assist students in conducting literary criticism, an increased awareness of how conceptual knowledge is developed might be of use.

3.5.1) Explicit Instruction

Preceding further investigation into what learning theory offers with regards to assisting in concept formation, there remains some value to reflections on the extent to which 'factual' knowledge might be created within the discipline through explicit guidance. As William Goodwin puts it, "we have the obligation to make it clear to our students what is required in order to produce compelling and relevant criticism" (373). Research findings suggest that, when students are provided with "very explicit descriptions of learning goals", a significant increase is found in students' ability to recall relevant material (Rothkopf 117). In addition, by providing students with a sense of the relevance and purpose of what they are learning, the connections drawn can lead to a more constructive form of learning which may also stimulate students in a manner that gets them "asking more questions, sparking debates, and wondering what other people's perspectives are on a specific topic or idea" (Goodwin and Sommervold 69). As such, there is value in an approach which does not only outline explicit content, but also gives a sense of the intended outcomes and how these outcomes are perceived as relevant to contexts beyond that of the academic environment.

Without explicit goals, and strategic means of achieving these, courses tend to function according to what is referred to as a 'hidden curriculum'. This term refers to "subtle, tacit understandings about how the curriculum is structured and delivered" (Day 535). Such approaches are not uncommon within our field as experts, tending to forget their own training, often find it difficult to be explicit regarding "disciplinary conventions that have come to feel natural and universal" (Wilder and Wolfe 195). Considering the nature of literary interpretations as often being fairly "subtle, contingent, and multifaceted", discerning common conventions and values often presents a difficult task (Wolfe 401). Despite this, what is often most valued in the discipline remains those essays which present the reader with a "complex thesis, the elaboration of ideas through explicit textual references, and movement between textual details and a context outside the immediate text (402). Considering the value attached to such complexity, there is a strong need for introductory courses to provide students with the relevant 'tools' required for constructing such analyses (402).

Joanne Wolfe states that simply clarifying that complexity is valued in literary criticism might come as "a major revelation" to students (405). The author's suggestion is indicative of a common failure amongst educators in the field to be explicit regarding this valued outcome – a failure which could result in students' uncertainty regarding our expectations of them. In the

South African context, Karen Lazar suggests that a lack of "early and direct methodological input" often leaves students "at a loss for a critical grammar as late as October and November of their first year, and hence much of what has been taught may be partially lost on them" (135). The suggestion is particularly problematic when one considers the fact that a "failure to be explicit often means that our courses work for students who have already assimilated these conventions (usually subconsciously) but leave those with less academic preparation on the outside" (Wolfe 422). As such, scholars arguing that educators should be more aware disciplinary conventions seeking to increase the clarity of these conventions, often do so out of a concern for social justice (Wilder and Wolfe 171).

In addition to making learning goals more explicit, a renewed interest in the potential attached to the incorporation of certain theories into English Studies curricula might be of use. As Schlib sees it, educators who exclude theory from their courses are likely to neglect the recognition that their own analyses as embedded in theory, thereby "tacitly endorsing certain works and methods" ("Text" 59), instead of making their assumptions explicit. As such, a move towards explicit delineation of theoretical interests might serve to "bring to light the ideological assumptions underpinning the practice, to expose the educational program […] and to try to conduct an ideological critique of the way the humanities and the arts presented themselves as parts of disinterested knowledge" (Hall 15). In Ronald Strickland's opinion, the problematic nature of such endorsement lies in the fact that "any 'knowledge' which is not self-conscious about its enabling assumptions and conceptual frames can only reproduce itself" (119). In a world which begs for development, such stagnation, however, does not appear as justifiable.

3.5.2)   Potential Theoretical Interests: Formalism and New Criticism

When considering a reintroduction of explicit theory teaching in undergraduate courses, it becomes important to reflect on how certain theories might impact the learning process. Although many disagree with what is often considered the outdated theories and methods of the New Critics[54] movement, many students entering university will have encountered the terminology developed during this movement – especially within discussions on poetry. As James Cahalan and David Downing see it, there is value in what New Criticism demonstrated

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[54] The New Critics movement is associated with T.S. Eliot's suggestions for "a new spirit of objectivity in criticism" as well as I.A. Richards' "attempt to provide a scientific terminology for describing poetic effect" (Childs and Fowler 155-156).

on a pedagogical level. According to these authors the need exists for educators to devote themselves to pedagogical method in the way these theorists did (7). If one is to regard familiarity as a good starting point for expanding knowledge, then Douglas Lanier's belief that the assumptions and methods employed in Formalist[55] theory seem to students to be the natural process of analyses upon entry into the tertiary classroom (204), renders such approaches a good starting point for many students. In Lanier's view, students initially share New Critics' perception of the literary as a "self-explanatory, self-contained artefact composed of formal devices, tropes and themes" (204). Although most contemporary scholars view such a perception as allowing only for superficial readings of a text, assisting students in adopting a critical stance towards such interpretive methods could constitute the first step in moving towards more reflective thinking regarding the nature of the discipline and its procedures.

As such, Formalism and New Criticism's greatest pedagogical contribution is their move away from an appreciative perspective on literature and towards literature as an object of study. These theorists' promotion of literary studies as a 'science' in which discernable rules could be established and applied, provides educators with a concrete set of rules and an established terminology which can equip students with a means of analysis. In this, these theorists laid a foundation which displays an awareness of the pedagogical process. The movement away from abstract understandings and towards a sound basis of understanding, is of value in an educational landscape where students seek clarity. Due to the dualist conception of knowledge common to students upon entry into the tertiary landscape, an approach which begins with the familiar, before moving on to question previous conceptions, supports the understanding of learning as a developmental process.

Interestingly, Scholes has objected to the theories underlying deconstruction, for example, due to his perception thereof as an "attempt to deny absolutely both perception and reference on the grounds of their imperfection" (111), believing that their "hermetic view of textuality inhibits any attempt to criticize either a text or the world" (110). Certainly, the perspectives proposed by these theorists might be better suited to those who have moved through the process of developing thought on the nature of knowledge, without a constant denial of its validity.

Similarly, in regarding the advent of Cultural Studies in the discipline, Nick Visser believes that "the faltering of practical criticism must be seen as part of the general crisis of confidence

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[55] Formalism is credited with setting "about the objective and 'scientific' examination of literary *style*, defining it in terms of its departure from established norms by means of identifiable and analysable devices" (Childs and Fowler 93).

in liberal thinking dating from the late sixties and early seventies" (in Barker and de Kock 38). As such, although the incorporation of cultural studies could serve to clarify to students the implications which the analytical process developed through literary studies could hold within an everyday context, such an expansion of their understanding of the field might be better suited to later engagements in the discipline.

3.6)   Conceptual Knowledge Development in English Studies

Whilst a basic definition of concepts might be as "mental representation[s] of a class of objects or events that share one or more common properties" (Ormrod 728), the distinction between concrete and abstract concepts might be considered to be of particular value in considering how these relate to English Studies. Whilst concrete concepts represent those characterised by "easily detectable physical features", abstract concepts tend to elude simplistic definitions (728). The fact that concrete concepts are generally learned with greater ease than abstract one (728) is likely to be the result of this difference. Since humanities scholars tend to work with abstract rather than concrete concepts, the implications of the increased challenge presented in teaching abstract concepts are relevant to English Studies educators. Although Mieke Bal holds that "the humanities should seek its heuristic and methodological basis in concepts rather than in methods" (13), the implications of such a shift need to be taken into account.

Since "[c]oncepts are mental representations of knowledge [which] need language" (Lakshmi 73), a key part to developing conceptual knowledge takes place within the practice of vocabulary development. Since the development of necessary vocabularies is critical to students' success (Alexander-Shea 102), and the need to examine means of teaching terminology and concepts effectively arises. Even though the development of a meaningful vocabulary represents a powerful educational foundation, Aimee Alexander-Shea explains that "vocabulary activities are often inadequate, leaving students with [a] cursory knowledge of terms" (95), and that a shift in perspective, towards vocabulary development as a means of "encourag[ing] a comprehensive understanding of the topics encountered" will assist students in their "overall comprehension of the discipline" (102).

As Hashem Fardanesh sees it, a "body of knowledge is meaningful and understandable when it is structured and organized" (95), and the delineation of concepts and their relationships provides one means of adding structure to a course (DeWinstanley and Bjork 25). In David Pritchard's view, "[a] competent teacher who is also an expert in the discipline can see and

communicate this structure and these connections" (613). On the one hand, the need exists for educators to provide students with meaningful guidance during the process of vocabulary development. As Pritchard reminds us: "It is not reasonable to expect any student to reconstruct this substantial intellectual inheritance unaided" (613). As a basis for reflections on the means through which one might assist students in acquiring a vocabulary abounding in abstract concepts, Karl Maton's concepts of 'semantic gravity' and 'semantic density' might be considered of use.

3.6.1)   Semantic Gravity

Semantic gravity, as proposed by Maton, "refers to the degree to which meaning relates to its context" (11). In using a continuum model, Maton draws attention to the varying degrees in which meaning might be context-dependent, and proposes the possibility of moving between meanings that are highly context-dependent and those that are not. The implications of Maton's conception of semantic gravity in education is that it highlights the possibility of "moving from the concrete particulars of a specific case towards generalizations and abstractions whose meanings are less dependent on that context" (which he refers to as 'weakening' the semantic gravity) and conversely, the possibility to 'strengthen' semantic gravity by moving from "abstract or generalized ideas towards concrete and delimited cases" (11). Applying these processes in practice requires a particular level of expertise. Since "moving from the level of the abstract to the concrete naturally forces one to narrow down, to specialize" (Dogan 430) this ability can be seen as "an indication that we have a very clear idea of that object or subject" (Lakshmi 77). This process is further complicated when one considers the degree of semantic density which characterises many of the concepts used in English Studies.

3.6.2)   Semantic Density

Semantic density refers to "the degree of condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices", whereby concepts with a 'strong' semantic density are characterised by a greater number of meanings being attached to them within practices (Maton 11). Whilst this feature can be strengthened through the expansion of a concept to implicate a wider range of meanings, the tendency to weaken semantic density is perhaps of greater familiarity in academics, as this relates to the practice of 'unpacking' technical terminology (12). Contributing to the problematic process of communicating key concepts, subjects that fall within the social

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sciences tend to use many of the same terms, but with different nuances affecting the exact meanings (Dogan 440). As such, the semantic density present in English Studies, is often complicated further by the use of these terms in related subjects. And since modes of representation serve to concretise our understanding of disciplinary discourses (Linder 43), considerations of the impact which semantic density and semantic gravity might have on students' development of conceptual knowledge need to be made if the process of complex vocabulary development is to take place.

3.6.3)   Practical Implications

In order to demonstrate not only what is meant by Maton's concepts, but also how these might impact concept development practices, it might be of use to consider how semantic gravity and density would relate to a concept found in English Studies. As such, one might consider the concept of the 'Other', for example. This concept can be seen as having both a low level of semantic gravity and high semantic density when functioning as a broad concept, as a variety of understandings thereof exist. When considered outside of its theoretical interpretations, the word 'other' can be demonstrated concretely by looking at two objects. A sense of its more complex meaning might be increased if the objects used are dissimilar. In moving closer to its intended meaning hereafter, context becomes of increasing importance. For example, as it is used in the second chapter of this thesis, the context of subjective delineation in identity formation and the recognition of such delineation as arbitrary through the recognition of the universality of some aspects to human existence are of key interest in the use of the term. As this relates to the South African context, the conception of the Other here is more strongly related to the process of Othering which occurred during colonisation, which left a legacy of resistance to cultural, racial and spiritual differences.

The fostering of such a comprehensive understanding might be greatly assisted through the presentation of "key concepts from more than one standpoint and demonstrating the relevance of key ideas in multiple contexts", which "can enhance long-term retention" (DeWinstanley and Bjork 24). Repetition also plays an important role in conceptual development. As Alexander-Shea points out, "[s]tudents need to be exposed to critical vocabulary as much as possible throughout […] courses" (96), an approach which would support Patricia DeWinstanley and Robert Bjork's believe that "in principle, the combination of spacing and variation in the presentation of key concepts should enhance not only students' long-term

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retention of those concepts but also their ability to see the broader relevance of the concepts" (24).

It is also important in the construction of content knowledge to consider the fact that "[b]reaking the concept into chunks makes no meaning" and instead, educators should attempt at fostering a holistic understanding of concepts amongst their students (Lakshmi 78). Constructing definitions and explanations in a manner accessible to students also relies on the incorporation of and expansion on prior knowledge. As Suvarna Lakshmi explains, "[m]oving from familiar to unfamiliar concepts […] eases the process of concept expansion." (83). As such, neglecting the links between known and unknown concepts could result in students learning "new information as 'isolated' bodies of knowledge and [they] may therefore face difficulties in applying and transferring the new knowledge in novel situations (Gülpinar and Yeğen 590).

The implications of all of these perspectives on assisting conceptual knowledge development in a field like English Studies mean that educators will have to move between known concrete understandings and abstractions of the chosen concepts in a manner which serves to develop students' understanding gradually, whilst also taking into account the value of repetition and variation. As such, the development of conceptual knowledge presents a complicated and time-consuming task. However, considering the relationship between conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge, the consequences of not engaging with the process of vocabulary development can lead to an inability for students to produce the literary criticism essays which often represent the dominant form of assessment in the discipline. As such, the construction of 'factual' knowledge in the sense of statements which build towards the understanding of concepts might be seen as representing key foundational structures in developing procedural knowledge. Considering the various factors which determine the success of students' concept development, the affordances presented by ICTs will be considered in the fourth chapter, as the task might be considered to be of such complexity that traditional teaching approaches might be insufficient for this learning process.

3.7) Procedural Knowledge in English Studies

Procedural learning is characterised by "a methodical step by step testing of what is being taught, as well as practice and repetition to improve skills and competence" (De Boer, Steyn and Du Toit 187). Just like an understanding of relevant concepts might assist in the execution of certain processes, Susan Cooperstein and Elizabeth Kocevar-Weidinger hold that "[a]bstract concepts become meaningful, transferable, and retained [when] they are attached to [the] performance of an activity" (145). In addition, DeWinstanley and Bjork state that application carries the added benefit of making students explicitly aware of any gaps in their understanding when they find themselves unable to answer questions (23). In facilitating the development of procedural knowledge, it is important that educators move "from basic skills to more sophisticated techniques" and "include opportunities to practice [an understanding of concepts] through repetition and to apply [this] to increasingly complex situations" (Cooperstein and Kocevar-Weidinger 144). However, Sherry Linkon believes that whilst students may "succeed on the level of explication, […] they encounter difficulty when asked to position texts in their cultural or critical context, to apply theory or use critical sources to deepen or complicate their own readings, or to generate their own inquiries" (248). As such, it is important to recognise that "critical thinking strategies work best if they are given names, and those names must be explicitly outlined for students" (Goodwin and Sommervold 70).

However, Laura Wilder and Joanna Wolfe assert that "tacit approaches to teaching literary analysis appear to dominate the curriculum" (173). Such approaches conflict with Leigh DeNeef's insistence on "the pedagogical necessity of maintaining the integrity of critical methodologies" (93), an insistence, which, although asserted in 1975, still holds true in a context where students tend to "construct meaning within the boundaries of their culture and the culture of the text […] as they struggle to make sense of new material" (Linkon 249). As such, when students are not provided with explicit guidance during the analytical process, a reliance on insufficient familiarity can lead to surface readings, instead of critical analyses. In addition to the need for providing guidance, it is also important to provide students with a definite sense of the nature and purpose of analysis. As Widdowson asserts, the resultant criticism "must offer both a sharply conscious explanation of *what* is being criticised, [and] *why*" (7) – an insight which could greatly benefit novices in the field. As DeNeef sees it, the purpose of analysis "is always the same: to describe, as precisely as it can, the ways in which all literary and non-literary (if there are such things) elements of a given work function together to yield a certain meaning" (91). As such, educators need to understand what guides their sense

of acceptable judgement within criticism, if they are to equip students with the sense of purpose which should inform their analyses. Since Wilder and Wolfe found that the "explicit foregrounding of the conventions of literary analysis appears to have helped clarify what makes this type of writing about literature different from other viable types of writing about literature" which helped student to write "more effective essays" (192), the value in being explicit becomes apparent.

However, since the nature of literary interpretation is fairly "subtle, contingent, and multifaceted", discerning common conventions and values often presents a difficult task (Wolfe 401). Despite this, what is often most valued in our field remains those essays which present the reader with a "complex thesis, the elaboration of ideas through explicit textual references, and movement between textual details and a context outside the immediate text" (402). Considering the value attached to such complexity, there is a strong need for introductory courses to provide students with the relevant 'tools' for constructing such analyses (402). Wolfe found, however, that instead of providing "students with methods for inventing valid and complex arguments, […] discussions of student writing tended to focus on coherence and mechanics" (413). Such approaches might be regarded as insufficient, given the sense that "students need explicit instruction and more guidance from the professor early in the writing process" (Herrington in Wolfe 401).

3.7.1)   Modelling

Most often, procedural knowledge is taught through demonstration, where educators "model the process of critical cultural reading [by] weaving together inquiry, evidence, and theory" (Linkon 247). The kinds of reasoning informing processes are not "readily learnt independently, and the relation between them is often best grasped by illustration as well as practice" (Pritchard 616). As such, Pritchard[56] holds that "without some model to follow, many students rapidly become lost when they try for the first time to apply a […] technique or concept for themselves" (616). The process of modelling does, however present a certain danger when educators are not aware of the requirements for this teaching method to be successful. However, when educators "hope that methodology is passed on to students osmotically, by example and by constant re-enactment" (Lazar 135), it is possible for the reasoning behind

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[56] Although Pritchard's work focussed on the subject of Mathematics, many of the statements made by the author remain relevant to the subject of literary analysis, given its reliance on procedural knowledge.

their processes to be unclear to students. As such, effective modelling requires of the educator to "narrate strategies and to acknowledge heuristic approaches" (Pritchard 619). Although the process of modelling is one in which "we bring our professional expertise to bear on the material" and so doing demonstrate the behaviour of experts in our field (616), the practice "can leave students with the impression that the process of analyzing […] texts is natural and instinctual" when educators unintentionally "hide the effort involved, [thereby] making textual analysis seem simple and straightforward" (Linkon 248). As such, being effective in this process requires of experts to be "intellectually confident enough to expose the heuristic aspects of their reasoning" (Pritchard 617).

In addition, modelling carries the danger of causing students to perceive the outcomes of the analytical process as "templates for exam questions" or to draw only the specific meaning from the process, rather than getting a sense of the general process (Pritchard 616). One means of overcoming this and assisting students to think for themselves is "to put up a problem or question and then model a few ways to arrive at an answer" (Goodwin and Sommervold 74). By demonstrating that multiple 'answers' could be found through analysis, students' sense of analysis as a process might be strengthened. It is also important that educators design their classes in a manner which provides students with the opportunity to practice the process and for educators to "offer helpful responses as they work" (Linkon 257). When providing students with the opportunity to practice their own procedural knowledge alongside our modelling thereof, it is perhaps valuable to use texts other than those modelled by the educator as a means of overcoming tendencies to reproduce educators' arguments. Barry Alford explains that it is important for students to develop a "sense of ownership before they can use the kind of prodding, criticism, and direction [we] have to offer" (Alford 116).

Despite the "importance of the teacher as a model of good thinking" there is little evidence "that this alone is sufficient to bring about significant improvement in the way students think" (Lipman 74). As such, the provision of opportunities for students to practice their understanding of the process demonstrated is invaluable. Additionally, repeated practice is important, as "working from surface to deep structure requires repetitive practice, modeling, and context familiarity" (Goodwin and Sommervold 69). As such, "the strategies should be called on and *used often* so students *recognize* them and employ them across a variety of subject matter" (Goodwin and Sommervold 70). As mentioned throughout, there is great value in being explicit regarding aspect related to one's subject. However, when it comes to procedural knowledge, the complexity of the process of literary analysis is such that a degree of bridging

might be required if students are to transcend from Mode 1 to Mode 2 thinking. Such bridging entails the incorporation of analytical processes which are strongly framed by content knowledge. Since the provision of all relevant knowledge which informs expert's analyses presents a nearly insurmountable challenge, this section intends to give some insight into one option for approaching such bridging. This comes in the form of guided textual analysis within the framework of approaches that contain particular 'models'. The conventions under discussion here are narratology and approaches informed by genre conventions, although others which might be applicable certainly exist.

3.7.2) Incorporating Models: Narratology and Genre Studies

The belief that models might play a role in moving students from a concrete to a more critical stance regarding constructed knowledge stems from an understanding of models as being dual-facetted. On the one hand, models "can help arrange in a sensible order what we know" (Bonheim 14), which can assist in providing students with the confidence which Hester Lockyear considers as fundamental to academic motivation (58). In addition, they are not only able to assist in what has been called 'instrumental criticism', whereby "the principles on which these texts had originally been composed" are examined (Bonheim 12), but can also be used as "a tool for questioning the validity of the theories they try to represent" (32).

The sense of confidence which knowledge on a subject provides, might most easily be elicited when working with genres, since De Geest and Van Gorp claim that "most (experienced) readers are able to identify particular texts quite easily as specific instances of one genre or another" (33). This is especially true in cases where the genres used are popular outside of the academic context. Considering the fact that genre-labels reflect an array of "inherent textual qualities [such as] distinctive structural matrices which can be incorporated into one comprehensive generic system" (34), the development of students' understanding of their previously assumed knowledge, allows for genre teaching to assist in the expansion of concept knowledge. Literary scholars are, however, faced with considerable difficulties when attempting to construct conclusive definitions of genres (34).

However, as De Geest and Van Gorp see it, this "far-reaching discrepancy between basic intuitive competence and the problematic theoretical elucidation of genres" requires a complex awareness of the position of texts within the greater generic context (34) – knowledge that can assist educators is guiding students through a similar movement towards complex

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consideration. Thus, although some scholars employ the teaching of genre solely as a means of helping "students enter disciplinary discourse communities" (Wilder and Wolfe 171), postmodern influences have encouraged the questioning of those models that differ from the generalised standard. However, in support of incorporating theories of models into courses, De Geest and Van Gorp argue that "it must be stressed that the so-called 'prototype' need not exist in reality, since it is generally assumed to be a kind of hypothetical cognitive construction, a theoretical 'fiction'" (De Geest and Van Gorp 41). Instead discrepancies allow one to consider how context and purpose might come to influence an author's decision to break away from the norm. As such, it is important to note Bonheim's assertion that "[o]ur models, then, are merely tools, more or less suited to the uses to which we put them" (30).

Another approach which might be suited to the expansion of conceptual understanding towards the insight of authorial purpose during procedural analysis is that of narratology. Manfred Jahn claims that "narratology has always prided itself on being a transparent and teachable discipline" (106), and certainly, many of the basic terms and considerations are not unfamiliar to students entering tertiary education. In contrast to genres, Bal considers narrative a 'mode', believing that it "is alive and active as a cultural force, not just as a kind of literature" (16). Although a lack of linguistic competence required in this practice might hinder students' ability to engage with the practices of narratology (Green 141), overcoming this obstacle is not insurmountable and the resultant understanding of narrative techniques could greatly assist students in producing their own narratives beyond the academic context.

The mention of these examples serve, not as an insistence on the need for them to be employed during initial learning stages, but rather as a reminder of the degree to which theoretical approaches might be connected to students' prior knowledge, or may represent very concrete guidelines for approaching the text. As mentioned, many theories with social interest might be incorporated as a means of enhancing students' social awareness. However, when situating practice within a particular literary theory, the possibility for incorporating an additional theoretical angle to assist in the analytical process. Whilst close reading and overall-extended close reading practices might be of use for literary criticism in general, it is important for educators to note that these practices represent complex and multifaceted processes which will require concrete delineation if they are to be used early on in English Studies courses. In addition, with regards to teaching practices like close-reading, an additional concern related to the need for repetitive practice, cognitive load and time-constraints, comes the need to consider the implications which text types might have on the successful development of procedural

knowledge. Before reflecting on these implications, however, there is value in addressing some additional considerations which might be of value when implementing some of the strategies mentioned.

3.8) Meta-Cognitive Knowledge in English Studies

As Peter McLaren sees it, "[t]he overall purpose of the critical educator is to reveal to students the forces behind their own interpretations, to call into question the ideological nature of their experiences, and to help students discover the interconnections between the community, culture, and the larger societal context" (in R. Harris 405). As such, the incorporation of meta-cognitive knowledge is not only in keeping with the principles of cognitivism, but also with those of critical pedagogy. In this, meta-cognitivism, or reflective thinking, refers to "thinking that is aware of its own assumptions and implications as well as being conscious of the reasons and evidence that support this or that conclusion" (Lipman 26), and which "takes into account its own methodology, its own procedures, its own perspective and point of view" (26).

Whilst Goodwin and Sommervold regard the process, which they consider to be "an important component in constructing learning", as being rarely practiced in education (72), many educators have recently incorporated 'reflections' into their courses. Some, like Blumberg, note that, when students are asked to "reflect on their own learning processes and to assess their learning progress, thus using meta-cognitive knowledge, students will learn the content of the course better" (103). And, as Cooperstein and Kocervar-Weidinger see it, reflection capitalises on the principles of constructivist learning since it allows for information to move into students' long term memory (145). As such, meta-cognitive knowledge might represent a consolidating practice in both constructivism and cognitivism.

Consequently, the learning process should strive to contain multiple forms of reflection (Dewing 23), of which, one might be 'elaborative interrogation'. Such interrogation would not only open up the tacit assumption underlying practice (Davies 38), but represents a form of interrogation which "goes beyond simple questions and answers requiring students to explain the underlying reasons behind their answers" thereby producing deep processing, instead of relying on surface learning (DeWinstanley and Bjork 28). Jan Dewing believes that personal reflection should take place at both the beginning and the end of a course for active learning to take place (24). However, given the complexity involved in constructing literary criticism, the process of both personal reflection, alongside elaborative interrogation into both content and

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procedures, might be of particular value in moving towards the final synthesis represented in the construction of criticism.

In addition, for those students to whom English represents a second language, the process of translation involved in the teaching of critical creative writing might be seen as representing a meta-cognitive process. In attempting to express cultural philosophies or ideas in a language other than their own, the process of reflection might serve to bring deeper insight into the exact nature of these beliefs or ideas. However, this is not to say that those writing in their native language does not engage in meta-cognitive processes during more creative text construction. When taught through the approach of critical creative writing, the reflection required for selecting strategic means of communication might serve to enhance all students' insight into literary devices and authorial intention. As such, meta-cognition represents a key aspect in both literary criticism and creative writing, and might be seen as a valuable process for developing critical thinking skills.

3.9)   Cognitivism: Limitations and Further Considerations

Whilst cognitivism might be of value for gaining insight into the cognitive dimensions of the learning process, its lack of interest in affective responses and contextual influences has been criticised. Whilst the scope of this study limits an examination of the possible implications which these dimensions might have, the brief discussion on affective responses in Chapter 2 was largely focused on the means through which educators might avoid having affective responses counter the productivity of their sessions. However, it is possible that this focus might result in a perspective on affect as being undesirable in the educational context. Whilst this is not the case, reflections on the relationship between cognitive processes and affective response leads to an interest in what Martin Covington terms 'motivated cognitions'. In addition, the focus on the kinds of knowledge proposed by cognitivism and informing the structure of this chapter, could easily lead to neglect of the recognition of the need for active learning. Before moving on to discuss aspects particular to the blended learning environment, alongside possible implementations in English Studies, it might therefore be of use to consider the influence of motivation, as well as giving a brief overview of the concept of active learning, before concluding this chapter with the potential implications that these factors might have regarding text-selection within a cognitivist approach.

3.9.1) Motivated Cognitions

Although Covington's work was conducted within the domain of attribution theory, there is value in considering the implications which his deductions might hold in the context of English Studies. According to Covington, in considering the reasons behind individuals' successes, the four primary explanations are "those relating to the individual's self-perceived ability level, effort (study) expenditure, task difficulty, and luck" (140-1). In perceiving the concept of motivation as one which "lends a sense of purposefulness and direction to human activity" (141), the value of constructing courses which provide students with clarity regarding expectations, as well as a sense of the purpose and direction of course activities, might assist in motivating their actions by increasing the sense of the relationship between effort and achievement, rather than having students perceive their successes as being based on luck. In addition, within a framework of social justice, educators should strive to minimise instances where students may perceive failures as being indicative of personal inability, in cases where effort might not have served to ensure achievement.

3.9.2) Active Learning

As a learning principle, the concept of active learning has come under the influence of limited perceptions, which equate the goal with a limited understanding of the mechanism supporting it. Contrary to the perception that active learning is achieved mainly through encouraging actions such as talking, writing or reading within the classroom, the core requirement in achieving active learning is "active *thinking"* (McKeachie in Showalter 52). Whilst it is true that "students are more attentive, active, and thoughtful" during discussions than during lectures (Blight in Showalter 49), the means of engaging students in that which is being taught are more varied than relying solely on discussions or group work, seeking intellectual engagement with all forms of knowledge transmission.

Many of the practices encouraged by active learning, such as the need for students to read for understanding, to draw connections between what is known and what is unknown and to question the information provided to them (Nist-Olejnik and Holschuh 31), are in adherence with English Studies' desire to develop critical reading and thinking skill. As such, many theorists in the field consider the manifestation of active learning in this field as related to the knowledge "developed in the student by questioning the text" as opposed to "something transmitted from the text to the student" (Scholes 14). The authoritative shift required of

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students in order for this relationship to be established warrants a move away from "the traditional exposure to 'great works', with the teacher presenting background information and modelling a literary analysis that students will learn to emulate, [and towards] an active, collaborative learning that takes place as the student confronts the text directly'" (Miller in Showalter 35).

The desired change in students' relationship to knowledge is one which requires meaningful input. For example, whilst Roland Christensen considers questions which are "open-ended, diagnostic, information-seeking, challenging, action-seeking", or based on "predictions, hypotheticals, and generalizations", as the most productive ones to adopt in discussion classes (in Showalter 53), such questions can frustrate students entering the learning environment with a background of dualist thinking. Assumptions of a binary between teaching and learning therefore often detract from the value of mechanisms intended to foster active learning.

3.9.3)   Constructivism and English Studies

As mentioned, the choice of cognitivist learning theory as the dominant interest here is motivated by a sense of its suitability for teaching complex procedural knowledge. However, whilst this understanding motivates the belief that many of the current approaches characterising English Studies are problematic due to their alignment with 'minimal guidance' instruction (Kirschner, Sweller and Clark 76), believed to be better suited to those already possessing the abilities required for conducting procedural knowledge, the resultant selection of cognitivism, rather than constructivism, might be problematic when reflections on the potential contribution of constructivist theory are neglected. Since the current study does relate to the South African context specifically, and since constructivism's interest in contextual influences also serves to support the discipline's initial humanist interests, and with Gareth Cornwell's belief that "solution" to the sense of English Studies' problematic identity in South Africa requires a return to humanism (118, 122), Sections 4.9 and 5.3 will include some reflections on the relationship between constructivism and blended learning, in order to demonstrate the means of countering the potential loss of contextual recognition which might stem from the sole prescription to cognitivist beliefs.

3.10)   Implications for Text Selection

One key issue of particular concern to those in the field of literary studies which characterises the modern educational landscape is the significant change in reading patterns which have developed over the last two or three decades – partially promoted through the increased popularity of other forms of media, as well as the increasing influence of Internet culture. The influence which this aspect to modern life has on reading patterns appears to be significant, especially in the demographic which lacks exposure to traditional forms of written media. With a readership which is more familiar with texts that are either broken up into smaller, more accessible sections, or which allow for faster navigation through the use of search functions (James and de Kock 14). This brings up questions of accessibility with regards to the cognitive load presented to students, as influenced by the length of text.

Generally, the popularity of these alternative media stem from their accessibility. Many of these texts might be considered 'hot media', as Marshall McLuhan and W. Terrence Gordon would put it (25), in that their extra-sensory nature leads to minimal demands being placed on the viewer or reader. In the face of the sense of urgency which dominates popular media forms, and in a context where students are not accustomed to deeper engagements during reading, the need to consider the impact which patterns of reading have on the level of engagement which might be sought from students becomes important. It is undeniable that there are considerable differences in the length of poems, short stories, plays and novels, for example and in a context where students, like the public in general, are increasingly turning towards internet pages, where text length is kept to a minimum or broken up into smaller sections, the benefits to developing students' ability to deal with larger texts in a meaningful manner are clear.

Questions of accessibility also draw attention to the dangers of including texts where the vocabulary employed falls too far beyond the comprehension of most students. Although it is easy to consider language learning the work of courses other than those primarily concerned with literary studies, there does remain some extent of responsibility in ensuring that our students are able to engage with a text without the constant interruption of consulting a dictionary (or, most likely, skimming over unknown terms in the belief that a general sense of meaning is sufficient). Here, where other factors justify the inclusion of any particular text, educators are again presented with an opportunity for increasing the learning potential in their discipline. By providing students with the necessary vocabulary, or encouraging them to

compile their own list of previously unknown words, one aspect of language learning afforded by the study of literature is addressed.

Within this landscape, and given the external pressures of limited time available for course dissemination, it is important to consider the question posed by Bethlehem and Nethersole, when they ask: "[w]hat kind of knowledge is produced by what kind of literature, and what skills are required to access it?" (161). In an educational landscape where attempting comprehensive coverage no longer presents a viable approach due to the dangers of cognitive overload (Schlib "Preparing" 514), the need arises to consider more strongly "what students need to read in order to establish a basis for further learning" (Showalter 13). As mentioned, an expansion of our conception of the literary, through the consideration of those aspects which are thought to raise texts to this status, alongside the educational value of such features, might be of value in the current context. With this suggestion in mind, the following section attempts an evaluation of the potential and limitations of the various text types currently included in literary studies, alongside those which some consider to have the potential to contribute to the subject's intended outcomes in novel ways.

3.10.1) Novels

Currently, many educators in the field of literary studies are "likely to be teaching the novel" (Showalter 88), due to this medium's popularity gaining strength with the turn towards a sociological approach following the Second World War (Carnochan in Showalter 88). One feature which gives credence to the decision to teach this literary genre is that the extent to which it allows for depth of insight into the psychology of focalised characters (Wellek and Warren 23) to a far greater extent than shorter works. It also presents a suitable medium for teaching students about "plot, character, structure, literary history and tradition" (Showalter 90) in an in-depth manner. In addition to this, the form is one which is popular amongst many great authors and when desiring the exposure of young minds to these works, their exclusion from a syllabus is not without implications for those wishing to enhance students' sense of and exposure to the literary.

However, in choosing this medium as a focus within a literary studies course, the negatives of this form needs to be weighed against the positives. The main obstacle presented in opting to teach novels stems from their length (Showalter 90). This feature often leads to students

struggling to complete a reading, or attempt a second reading[57]. In cases where students were unable to complete their reading, or where they rely solely on a superficial reading centred on plot, the implications of this within the classroom could introduce a problematic position for the student. When a consequence of their inability to complete or fully comprehend these texts results in students' reliance on the information provided by educators, and in cases where this is possible, potentially making use of summaries of texts as presented online, it encourages students to adopt a passive role within the classroom and a reliance on others' interpretations, not fully grasp in the absence of a substantial engagement with the primary source. In addition, questions have been raised as to the suitability of medium for teaching such aspects to literary criticism as close reading (90). Similarly, a sense that texts need to be studied as a whole and that "the experience of a great work in its organic unity cannot be attained through snippets or selected passages from it" exists (Whittock 90). And, as Showalter sees it, "everyone who teaches the novel has to reach some compromise between breadth and depth, history and intensity" (93).

3.10.2)   Short Stories

One possible solution to the problems arising from the length of novels comes in the form of short stories. Although these texts might give less insight into the complexities of human psychology than novels, they allow for the teaching of several of the aspects for which the novel serves as a suitable vehicle. Since they also contain the "concept of 'story'", something which Scholes deems "the quintessential element in the generic code of fiction" (26), they are generally able to appeal to and engage readers in the manner afforded by 'literary' texts. In addition, they have the potential to allow practicing close reading without losing a sense of the text as a unified whole. In Showalter's opinion, such texts also allow for great adaptability and due to their manageable length, the author considers them a valuable tool for drawing students' attention to "the history of literary influence" (92). And, in addition to insight to the relationship between texts and context, as well as the development of close reading abilities, the shorter length of these texts means that a greater variety might be included to suit various course outcomes.

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[57] As many educators in the discipline know, the single reading of a text might prove insufficient for the development of complex arguments and an in-depth understanding of literary texts.

In addition, Michael Chapman holds that the short story format holds additional value in the South African context. As he sees it, "[l]ife at the edges of the world is insufficiently stable, [and] insufficiently educated to invest long durations of time in the extended fictional work" (50). As such, he believes that, in addition to spoken-word poetry, the textual genre which is most likely to be read in this context is the short story (50). As Ngũgĩ's account of his own encounters with the tradition of fiction in Africa reveals, the continent's oral tradition includes the telling of 'stories' (10), thereby including a tradition of narrative. Since many of the traits associated with the 'literary' draw on the power of fictional narratives, the inclusion of short stories as a medium of study serves to preserve the value of narrative, whilst also exposing students to a medium which might be seen as more accessible to the general public.

3.10.3)   Poetry and Spoken-Word Poetry

Recent trends in literary studies have been characterised by a move away from poetry, in favour of fiction, cultural studies, theory and drama due to the fact that "students find it difficult and intimidating" (Showalter 62). Yet, although the popularity in teaching the poetic form has decreased since its centrality during New Criticism, the form is one which carries unique potential in the pedagogical landscape. Not only does the terminology developed by New Critics provide students with some bridging towards the form of literary studies common in secondary education in South Africa, but these concepts also provide educators with an opportunity to develop depth of insight into something which seems familiar as they offer the possibility to allow for reflections on the use of language.

As Eagleton sees it, "language in poetry is a reality in itself, not simply a vehicle for something distinct from it" (137), and yet the means in which language is used in poetry remains a valuable tool in reflecting on other forms of communication, as well as the power of connotation. However, text selection when teaching poetry tends to have a significant impact on students' experiences thereof, with Scholes considering "the familiar and emotionally relevant" to be of value as a starting point before moving towards "more complex forms and historically-distant works" (64). In addition, the complexity of these works result in the need to recognise that students might require a greater amount of "subject-centered training before they can even think about prosody or metaphor" (67).

In addition to poems appearing in the written format, the option of including spoken-word poetry exists. Current trends of excluding this format, might stem from the complexity of the

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medium. Because the "normative text is individual in origin, fixed in content, and distributed through the market" whereas oral texts are "communal and participatory in origin, open to improvisation in content, and disseminated by means of immediate presence" (Vaughan 43), it presents the literary scholar with a set of challenges not faced in the teaching of written media. However, in the South African context, oral traditions have a particular history and particular potential. Because of its immediacy and the way in which it communicates with its audience, it is able to communicate on a level which is accessible to many who may not otherwise be inclined to literary texts. As a result, there could be great value in further considerations regarding the pedagogical implications arising from its incorporation in the classroom, as well as considerations regarding the construction of concrete measures through which to analyse spoken-word poetry.

3.10.4)   New Media

A more recent addition to literary syllabi, is the study of alternative forms of media in literary scholarship is gaining popularity due to its accessibility and a sense of relevance. As Whittock points out "one does not have to acclaim Marshall McLuhan a prophet in order to recognize that the new media are a powerful new force, and are capable of extensive modifications to human sensibility" (92). And, like younger faculty members, who Miller states "have a deep, laudable interest in film or popular culture, partly because it has done so much to form them as what they are" (10), this medium is one which also seems particularly connected to students. In Widdowson's opinion "modes and categories inherited from the past no longer seem to fit the reality experienced by a new generation" (vii) and certainly mass media today differs greatly from the texts traditionally placed at the centre of literary studies. Scholes believes that in drawing strong distinctions "between what is 'real' and what is 'academic'" we do so "to our own disadvantage" (5). However, so-called 'new' media offers more than just a sense of relevance. As such, their potential if included in literary studies courses needs to be considered, especially since a stronger sense of what they offer might assist in overcoming the risk for students to initially approach such texts without critical consideration (Whittock 94).

As Showalter points out, one affordance made by studying film and video clips alongside other literary forms, is that it offers "students opportunities to compare the ways that narrators and narrative techniques may be represented in another medium" (96). In addition, such texts allow for a consideration of visual literacy. In this, it is important for educators to understand that

'the world told' often differs from 'the world shown' (Kress 1) and that "the forms through which knowledge and understanding are constructed, remembered, and expressed [are] wider than verbal or written language" (Vasquez, Harste and Albers). Visual forms of communication are a significant part of our current surroundings, as it constitutes a significant mode of communication in media like advertising, newspapers, magazines and digital landscapes. By adopting a stance which successfully defamiliarises students with such material, it becomes a powerful tool for learning (Kendall, Portela and White 1), which can assist students in recognising the effects of such texts' purpose. However, the need exists for a greater number of resources assisting with the teaching of such mediums as films, for, as James Monaco points out, "the recording arts comprise an entirely new mode of discourse" (20).

3.10.5) Visual Literacy

With regards to concerns surrounding accessibility, a significant benefit of including visual texts in the educational context stems from the fact that, unlike most other texts, "pictures can be taken in at a glance" (Kendall, Portela and White 3). This high level of accessibility allows for a more direct approach to application, since discussions or questions based on the text do not operate on the same level of theoretical distance as is the case with longer written works. When texts with a high density, and, if possible, similar interpretational value as literary works, are presented, the potential for demonstrating or stimulating analysis is strong. By approaching such texts in a reflexive manner, allowing students to consider both the context in which it was created and the degree to which they influence society (6), and as such textual analysis can encourage critical literacy and an increased sense of "situated meanings, discourses, intertextuality, and structural features" (Vasquez, Harste and Albers).

In one version of the visual text, another potential source of enquiry in the literary studies classroom is the graphic novel or comic book. As the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably (Yildirim 119), despite some key differences in length and interest, the definition of graphic novels applied here will refer also to 'comic books' since the dominant interest in the medium here lies in the effect of having images, sequenced as a narrative, employed as a communicative tool by way of creating an aesthetic effect – features which are also mentioned as a means of defining the graphic novel (118). A benefit of incorporating such texts into one's curriculum is that they can be used to engage readers who might initially be sceptical about the level of enjoyment presented by literature since they potentially appeal to

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both student interests and their level of proficiency (125). When one considers the fact that many of these texts have been adapted into films in recent years, there is a chance that some of these texts might be familiar to students (119).

The medium has a long history, with its current form being similar to the shape of the American comic book which originated in the 1930s (120), but has since evolved into a respected genre of literature (122). However, when one considers that the medium is one which is often strongly shaped by current issues or societal changes (Downey 183), its features allow on to not only illustrate social and cultural themes and topics (181), but to also assist students is tracing the development of current, and sometimes, normative perspectives on certain issues. By looking at the changes in style, interest and representation which has occurred within the same series (some of which have run for more than 50 years), it is possible to concretise students' understanding of contextual influence.

In addition, graphic novels and comic are a means of increasing students' media literacy due to the fact that the medium allows for strong consideration of the medium itself (Schwarz in Downey 182), with the strategic use of structural features being made tangible. An engagement with this medium also entails reading on two levels (Yildirim 125), both the visual and textual and as such, in reference to research done by others, Robin Moeller asserts that the medium can be considered "a more rigorous cognitive activity" than reading text-based works (476). Similarly, research has been done which indicates the development of metacognitive strategies through the teaching of graphic novels (Yildirim 126) and educational theorists believe that the medium is ideal for increasing "literacy, comprehension, knowledge, and creative thinking" (Downey 186) and on another level, can give insight into aspects regarding text creation (Moeller 482), which students can use in their own composition of texts.

3.11)   Conclusion

In moving towards a discussion on how a blended learning approach to teaching English Studies might be optimised, it is of use to consider some of the main conclusions drawn from examining the implications of learning theory for this discipline. Given the strong reliance on procedural knowledge – particularly in how this relates to the subject's potential to enhance critical thinking skills – found in English Studies, the need to consider means of assisting in the development of this kind of knowledge is important. Through the recognition of the value of factual knowledge in assisting this process, the need to clearly delineate teachable content

is stressed. This process might also lead to a clearer sense of the nature of the discipline. And, in addition, the lack of a sense of factual knowledge's effect on students' degree of uncertainty also reveals the importance of concretising students' sense of the intended outcomes and our expectations of them.

Whilst factual knowledge is more strongly presented in certain literary theories, there is a general propensity of abstract concepts in characterising the discipline. With both factual and conceptual knowledge, the influence of previous knowledge remains a strong influence, but since conceptual knowledge development presents a greater challenge for educators, particular value exists in considering theories that might assist one in successfully enhancing students' understanding of concepts. With the implications of what Maton terms 'semantic gravity' and 'semantic density', the level of complexity involved in teaching concepts becomes apparent. Although certain approaches to literature might be of use due to their provision of specific vocabularies and their potential familiarity to students, educators need not be limited to these approaches. Regardless of the approach followed, however, there is great value in developing resources to assist students in their understanding of concepts – something which can be seen as of importance given the connection between conceptual and procedural knowledge.

Where procedural knowledge might be considered as a process of testing one's understanding, the value of repetition – although presenting an important consideration in the development of other kinds of knowledge as well – is particularly important in ensuring students' success here. Whilst the modelling of literary criticism's processes might be of value, a move towards active learning (alongside the dangers of those functioning within a dualist perception of knowledge perceiving the resultant conclusions as factual knowledge) necessitates the creation of multiple opportunities for students to practice their abilities. Since literary criticism can be regarded as a particularly complex process, there might be some value in adopting theories which provide more concrete guidelines for application. In addition, with the degree of cognitive load involved in application, considering textual features related to accessibility, alongside other aspects of potential value in the educational context, becomes of use.

Chapter 4
BLENDED LEARNING AND ENGLISH STUDIES

4.1)   Introduction to Blended Learning

Although some conceive of blended learning approaches as referring to the adoption of multiple instructional forms of any sort, or as the combination of different media as a means of promoting and motivating learning (Okaz 601), the term is used here to refer to the incorporation of technological affordances into existing physical instruction courses. In reflecting on the implications of a blended learning approach, one might consider how this approach differs from pure e-learning. Where pure e-learning tends to rely on "self-regulated learning through web-based e-learning content provided by a learning management system" (Park et al. 420), blended learning approaches allow for a greater level of educators' involvement in monitoring and enhancing students' engagement with learning technologies. As Janet MacDonald points out, the adoption of blended learning approaches is largely driven by a sense of the inadequacy of pure e-learning for providing students with optimal support, alongside the general sense that blended learning approaches led to more satisfactory results, since it is able to draw on the strengths of both e-learning and face-to-face instruction methods (3).

In this sense, the switch to a fully 'blended' approach suggests the incorporation of technology for module delivery in a way where the digital aspect does not serve "just as an add-on tool" (Ng 17). Whilst some blended learning courses only enhance the efficacy of existing courses, others might serve to completely transform a course (Nazarenko "Information" 54). In this, blended learning might be seen as challenging the status quo (Moskal, Dziuban and Hartman 15) and in a context where the current conditions might not serve to ensure for a socially just educational landscape, the approach adopted during the development of such courses should be one which attempts the shift towards active student engagement and suitable learning experiences. As such, Rachael Jesika Singh, writing on the subject in the South African context, asserts that "the first crucial step is to understand how learning occurs in general and for adult learners in particular" (60). Whilst some attempt at understanding this process was made in the previous chapter, the implications for English Studies therefore need to be kept in mind when reflecting on some of the aspects particular to blended learning models.

As Peggy Steinbronn and Eunice Merideth point out, e-learning shifts the focus to a consideration of technology in terms of media delivery and a means of communication (266).

Although blended learning does not rely on technology as the sole means of communication, conceptualising of ICT affordances in a manner which recognises these properties remain of value when constructing blended learning courses. As Robin Mason points out, those working within constructivist or social practice learning theories often focus on the communicative nature of particular affordances, whereas cognitivists and behaviourists tend towards an interest in their use for disseminating content (28). Although the current thesis adopts a cognitivist approach in attempting to reflect on possible means of improving the teaching of English Studies, there is value in considering communicative properties alongside their implications for content delivery.

Whilst learning technologies have been incorporated into courses with the hope that such integration would improve students' learning since the 1960s, Stephen Ehrmann states that many educators have not experienced the desired effects for several reasons, including a failure to account for the larger scale changes required for such improvements, as well as a tendency to abandon projects as new technologies become available (11). In recognition of aspects that counter the value of blended learning approaches, as well as the need to reflect on the communicative properties of various mediums available in the online[58] environment, this chapter will begin with a general reflection on the nature of learning technologies in the current environment, their implications for educators on a departmental level, as well as some of the aspects that might assist in selecting appropriate affordances in a particular context. Although blended learning impacts higher education "at virtually every level", including policy development (Moskal, Dziuban and Hartman 15), the interest here centres on the learning process and the means through which individual departments might engage with the options presented. As such, the discussion which follows does not go into depth on the institutional changes required to accommodate blended learning.

4.1.1)   LMS and ICT Affordances

One of the key developments assisting educators in their move towards blended learning models is the increasing availability of learning management systems. These platforms provide educators with "an environment to place their online course materials [in] and for students to receive that education while interacting with other students [or] teachers" (Dias,

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[58] Since this term has become increasingly associated with internet use, it should be noted that it is employed here as referring to processes mediated by computer networks, and therefore includes access to systems hosted by internal servers.

Hadjileontiadou, Hadjileontiadis and Diniz 7399). Since many universities have incorporated the use of LMSs on an institutional level, the particular opportunities afforded by these systems are more readily available to educators, and, since the accompanying data is most often hosted locally, LMSs provide students with access to learning materials without the implications of data costs or transfer speed, when accessed on-campus. Although the particular affordances available to universities might vary, those commonly found in LMSs include: document sharing, submission portals, discussion boards (and chat rooms), online quizzing, Shareable Content Object Reference Manager (SCORM) packages or video streaming, wikis, glossaries, 'clickers', survey and questionnaire submissions, and blogging. Although additional web-based tools are available for use by educators, the ones listed will be of particular interest here since open-source LMSs like Moodle[59] allow for their use without additional financial implications.

The nature of LMSs is such that they create possibilities not always available in the face-to-face learning environment. Aspects such as their ability to track users' activity, score quizzes and process responses automatically, mean that these systems could generate insight into students' level of involvement and understanding in a manner which would be exceptionally time consuming if done by other means. Before assessing the potential value of the ICT affordances listed here, some consideration to the general implications of blended learning will be discussed. In this regard, aspects such as the required involvement from educators, the level of interactivity afforded, the flexibility of resources and the implications of synchronicity, multimedia formats and accessibility will be examined.

### 4.1.2)	Educator Involvement

As Steinbronn and Merideth point out, although incorporating technological components into the learning environment does not replace educators, it does require some change in their roles (266). In perceiving online learning as increasing the level of activity and responsibility on students' part, they consider the role of the educator to become that of "facilitator, strategist, and coordinator for the learning activities" – implying that a greater level of attention needs to be paid to "instructional methods and strategies that will enhance [students'] engagement" (266). Since developing blended learning courses requires human resources (Garrison and

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[59] Although other LMSs are currently in use at many of the tertiary institutions in South Africa, the scope of this study led to the decision to focus on this platform due to its open-source nature and its continuing expansion.

Kanuka 101) possessing "content knowledge and [an] understanding of the interactivity, technological requirements, and possibilities in the asynchronous environment" (Xu and Morris 35), course development becomes more complex. Consequently, Ehrmann suggests that "coalitions" capable of advancing such programmes should be formed (12) Since many might possess the necessary subject-knowledge, yet lack insight into learning theory or technological affordances, successful communication regarding intended outcomes and teaching approaches becomes important.

In addition, the varying degrees to which resources require continuous input from staff needs to be considered. Since budgetary constraints often impact the availability of human resources, those affordances which require less long-term involvement might be of greater value in the current context. Where resources such as self-marking quizzes and online tutorial packages require significant input initially, they are able to serve in the learning process without an extensive level of educator involvement after their release. In contrast, resources such as discussion forums and chat rooms require constant monitoring and engagement from educators, thereby increasing workload and failing to serve as a means of overcoming budgetary constraints. As such, the assessment of resources' potential should account for the relationship between the required input and their value in enhancing student learning. Similarly, learning outcomes with long-term value need to inform the construction of these resources (Ehrmann 12).

4.1.3)   Student Activity

The investment of "additional time and effort" for course design in blended learning "might trigger a shift toward a more active and learner-centered approach" (Spanjers et al. 60). As many educators know, providing students with material and having them engage with such material are not always the same thing. Whilst face-to-face instruction provides educators with opportunities to ensure students' awareness of core content, instances where key materials are presented online will require some means of monitoring students' involvement. Consequently, features that assist in stimulating students' involvement without requiring significant effort on the part of educators are of particular value.

Although student involvement in affordances like discussion boards, for example, is particularly high since students play an active role in constructing content, stimulating conversations and monitoring student submissions present a strenuous task. In contrast, many

perceive uploaded content as entailing less student involvement since students become receptors, instead of creators, of information. Whilst some LMSs might track students' access history, the possibility of accessing material without actively engaging with it, remains. As such, resources like interactive SCORM packages or online quizzes might be of particular value given their ability to engage students during content dissemination. Where traditional written material might include questions or reflection prompts, monitoring students' engagement with these might be impractical in traditional classroom setups. In contrast, some ICT affordances present content alongside prompts in a manner which requires students' responses before continuing with the lesson, thereby increasing the level of students' involvement. Again, the learning process remains an important consideration in constructing such resources, however, since the time and effort required for their development is greater than that involved in composing materials that do not elicit student responses. Consequently, it becomes important to identify which material requires the greatest level of student engagement to ensure learning in the discipline.

An understanding of the principles behind gamification in education might also be of value when integrating online learning activities into courses. Whilst affordances that allow for automatic assessment might counter a lack of student engagement with online materials, the possibility of moving towards a system designed in a manner that motivates and engages students beyond their interest in marks could serve to ensure that students' attitudes towards online components become positive. In the education landscape, gamification draws on a perspective of students as becoming increasingly accustomed to "consuming media rapidly, and being entertained" and that designing learning programmes in a way which draws on these attitudes can lead to a greater level of engagement, "foster[ing] a higher level of processing of the material" (Chandrasoma and Chu 45). As such, the principles behind gamification encourage educators to provide students with a clear goal, to structure activities as a means of achieving this goal and to incorporate rewards systems which motivate students at the various stages of goal-attainment. In this, gamification might be perceived as drawing on some of the principles behind behaviourist psychology.

4.1.4)   Flexibility

When considering the suitability of various affordances available to educators, two aspects regarding the flexibility of these resources need to be taken into account. First off, the

reusability of resources is important. The extent to which a resource might serve educators in subsequent years might be seen as increasing their value, and as such, it is necessary to reflect on means of ensuring reusability. In cases where some change to the material is required, the "demand for changes to be made as easily and as quickly as possible" arises (Henrich and Sieber 125). This concern might be seen as being particularly relevant in cases where the content presented is of a 'more unsettled' nature (125) – and as such might be seen as being of particular relevance to a discipline like English Studies, where course content often changes.

Secondly, certain resources are considered to be fairly 'static'. Unlike face-to-face environments where educators can sense students' responses and adapt their teaching in a suitable manner, ICT affordances (and in particular those aiming at content dissemination) do not afford the same level of flexibility. In this, Mason has pointed towards the need for balancing linearity and hyperlinking in course development (29). The concept of linearity in blended learning points towards the 'path' which resources follow. Where static texts or quizzes possess a clear starting point with a clear sense of direction moving towards their conclusion, the online learning environment provides educators with the possibility of infusing texts with hyperlinks, or for designing non-linear learning activities.

Hyperlinks, which allow navigation to other content, or provide additional information (which would otherwise remain hidden) to be made available through pop-up content, alongside non-linear activities, where students' navigation is either self-driven, or based on particular responses, increase resources' flexibility as well as their ability to cater to individual student needs. However, designing such activities is particularly complex and time-consuming. In addition, overreliance on such affordances might lead to students feeling lost (Dewald 28). As such, it again becomes essential to consider their use in relation to the level of student activity and flexibility required in achieving particular learning outcomes, if the effort required for their development is to be considered worthwhile.

### 4.1.5)	Synchronicity

Since traditional approaches to course development focus strongly on the effect of face-to-face teaching (Xu and Morris 36), the flexibility which blended learning brings to course dissemination (Garrison and Kanuka 101) requires consideration of the advantages and disadvantages involved with synchronous and asynchronous teaching environments (Kaur 614). Synchronous online teaching involves interaction between students and educators

through digital media. In this mode, educators and students have to login to the online classroom at a determined time, with the educator presenting the lesson using online methods, like screencasting[60], whilst students interact and ask questions online (Singh 62). As such, the use of synchronous learning activities presents some of the advantages of traditional face-to-face teaching, but allows for students who are geographically isolated from their peers to be involved. In addition, it is believed that text-based synchronous activities, like chat rooms, might allow students who would otherwise not have engaged, to do so (Eastman and Swift 33). However, significant increases in student involvement could make such activities difficult to monitor.

With asynchronous education, learners are provided "with the opportunity to complete a module in their own time and schedule, without real time interaction with the facilitator or tutor" (Broere, Geyser and Kruger 6). Where traditional education focussed strongly on synchronous modes of instruction, the affordances made by ICT increase opportunities for engaging students outside of the classroom – motivating Ryan Imbriale's perspective on blended learning as representing a "fundamental redesign of the time outside of the classroom" (31). Asynchronous modes vary greatly; from uploaded lectures, assignments and examination questions to more complex forms of engagement. Though asynchronous resources might allow for flexibility in allowing students to revisit materials they might not have understood initially, the lack of immediacy involved in this format could have significant implications for course structuring. Whilst some perceive the use of asynchronous learning activities as providing students with greater control over their own learning and the flexibility to complete tasks at a time which suits them, students are generally still required "to adhere to certain schedules so as to complete specific tasks or assignments by a certain date" (Broere, Geyser and Kruger 7). As such, ensuring student participation becomes an issue when such time-constraints exist.

4.1.6)   Multimedia Formats

In addition to their synchronicity, implications regarding the aspects characterising media available in LMSs require some consideration. In this regard, course design should attempt at integrating the media formats available to them in a manner which utilises their full potential in achieving desired outcomes (Broere, Geyser and Kruger 9). As such, the sensory aspects,

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[60] This concept is explored in greater depth in Section 4.4.2.

the level of interactivity and stimulation, as well as the limitations of each mode of delivery should be considered. Since many suggest that learning styles vary, the modalities involved in digital learning affordances might enhance learning for those who do not engage optimally with traditional course formats. However, since incorporating various multimedia formats might complicate course construction and restrict accessibility (requiring specific devices, and potentially increasing data costs or storage space requirements), it becomes important for educators to consider how specific outcomes and content might relate to auditory or visual learning, so as to identify whether the conversion to a particular media format is justified.

4.1.7) Accessibility

An important final consideration with regards to the general implications which a move towards blended learning might hold for educators is the question of accessibility. This aspect relates not only to the equipment and knowledge which students might need in order to succeed in the online learning environment, but also to the effects of user-interface design. As such, where institutional efforts at providing students with the necessary equipment required for engaging with multimedia formats, for example, are lacking, it might be necessary for educators to restrict their choice of ICT affordances to those which will be accessible to all students. In addition, in the absence of institutional training related to the use of LMSs, departments will need to provide such training in order to ensure that the move towards blended learning is able to achieve its promises of improving student learning.

In addition, it is important for educators to have a sense of how the user-interface relates to behaviour. Ian Benest expresses his belief that most lecturers struggle to recognise when user-interfaces are poorly designed (324), and since few educators come from a background of web design, it is quite possible for educators to neglect considerations of the effect which poor user-interface design might have on students' behaviour. In this, it is important to consider the structure and volume of content presented online, and to ensure that the links between online resources and face-to-face sessions are clear. When students are confronted with a chaotic LMS layout, the chances of them failing to adequately engage with the necessary materials becomes more likely. As such, labels distinguishing between compulsory work and additional resources through the use of hyperlinks (Henrich and Sieber's 128) might assist. Similarly, questions related to the grouping of online resources, whether it is done according to their type, topic or function, need to be approached in a manner which considers how students will engage with

the LMS. In this, the use of indexing might assist in creating an integrated design and to avoid requiring significant effort on the part of students in locating resources (Benest 326).

Another aspect which might assist with considerations regarding design and course structure, is the role of instructions and guidelines for online activities. As Firouz Anaraki points out, many LMSs are characterised by an inadequate amount of instructions for students (58). Such instructions might assist in lessening the degree of uncertainty on the part of students and might also assist in strengthening the sense of the relationship between online and face-to-face activities. In addition to instructions, there is a sense that listing the educational objectives alongside activities serves to improve their value (Somoza-Fernández and Abadal 130). As such, the framing of individual activities might assist in increasing the overall sense of coherence in course design.

4.2) Blended Learning and English Studies

Even though the 'Digital Humanities' represents an expanding movement, there remains uncertainty regarding what exactly the field constitutes (Liu 7). As such, whilst ICTs are employed in various ways within these disciplines, their use is not always related to the specific outcomes of a course, but might serve only as a means of increasing the efficiency of communication, or accessibility to research. As Jerome McGann notes, humanities and English scholars demonstrate some hesitance towards the potential of these media, requiring some convincing that "its tools improve the ways we explore and explain aesthetic works" and could "expand our interpretational procedures" (in Colbert, Miles, Wilson and Weeks 74). Although research on blended learning in general has increased significantly in recent years, accounts considering its use in literary studies remain limited (Colbert, Miles, Wilson and Weeks 75). This discrepancy likely results from the sense of a disjuncture between the subjective and open-ended nature of enquiry in the discipline, and the limitations of the formats afforded by LMSs. In this, the field's "emphasis on the importance of interpretation and ambiguity" is often seen as being incompatible with the 'factuality' associated with e-learning (Steggle 90). However, with rapid technological developments, the need to consider both the implications of these limitations and their potential for English Studies educators arises.

The focus on the potential of a blended learning model, as opposed to the use of pure e-learning in course dissemination for the discipline of English Studies, stems from the perceived value of face-to-face engagement for outcomes strongly linked to the acquisition of complex

procedural knowledge. With many perceiving the "ability to develop and sustain nuanced readings of texts through sophisticated argument" as a key disciplinary outcome, with the demonstration of this ability taking place through "discursive forms of assessment [such] as the essay" (Colbert, Miles, Wilson and Weeks 77), the current state of technological development does not cater to these needs. Since the kind of feedback required for developing these abilities requires some informality and flexibility, Pritchard states that modelling procedural knowledge "is most effective when delivered face-to-face rather than through recorded or written material" (617). The same is true of the drafting process in writing, and as such, the possibility of a move towards pure e-learning might not be suited in ensuring that students achieve the desired outcomes.

However, the possibility of combining face-to-face and online mediums in optimising students' learning exists (Ruyters, Douglas and Law 47). In this assertion, one should consider the current nature of physical instruction and how the level of reflective and immediate feedback required in English Studies education, might be increased when combining traditional approaches with ICT affordances. As such, consideration of the implications for English Studies should begin with examination of the most common face-to-face formats currently in use; the lecture and the tutorial. However, alongside the consideration of these is a preliminary investigation of the ways in which dissemination of subject knowledge might be altered to optimise the opportunities particular to the face-to-face environment. As such, the discussion that follows places considerations of the current employment of face-to-face sessions alongside possibilities for enhancing their efficiency through the incorporation of ICT affordances. This discussion remains somewhat general, since the relationship between ICT affordances and the principles of cognitivism (as they apply to English Studies) is examined more thoroughly in the concluding chapter.

4.3) Traditional Lectures

Traditional lectures in this context are understood as a session where a single lecturer (generally) addresses a large group – often upwards of a hundred students (Pritchard 610) in a didactic manner (Huggins and Stamatel 227). The format is often used to provide background information (Linkon 247), and according to Pritchard the format is suited for "communicating information, definitions, theorems, methods and overviews; modelling problem-solving, heuristic and formal reasoning, and 'expert' thought processes [as well as] motivating students

to approach the subject with an appropriate attitude and enthusiasm" (610). Assuming that "the fundamental goal of the lecture is to increase the learning of students beyond what they can learn from reading a textbook" (DeWinstanley and Bjork 19), and since the format is likely to remain the most "common, economical and efficient method of teaching" for quite some time, it is important to recognise both the advantages and limitations presented by this format (Gülpinar and Yeğen 590). On the level of practicality, the lecture format carries benefits such as being efficient for very large classes (Heward in Young, Robinson and Alberts 41), having a sense of immediacy, and providing lecturers with a strong sense of control over the "content, flow, and class environment" (Huggins and Stamatel 227).

Although this format presents a solution to diminishing resources, the method is often criticised for leading to "poor attendance, high student apathy, and passive and impersonal learning environments" (227), with many believing that this mode "renders students passive, silent, isolated, and in competition with each other" (Fernández-Santander 34).   Many also believe that the didactic approach to teaching reaches only the lowest levels of 'knowledge' and 'comprehension' (Gülpinar and Yeğen 592). As such, Andrea Revell and Emma Wainwright suggest that some students, being assessment driven, might only attend lectures with a focus on surface learning (212), since the format is considered unsuited for teaching students to think critically (Tiwari, Lai, So and Yuen 548). Such a lack of engagement is discernable in cases where lecturing is a process in which "information passes from the notes of the lecturer to the notes of the student without passing through their minds" (Fernández-Santander 34) and some, like Parker Palmer, believe that the approach is often characterised by lecturing that is 'authoritarian', listening that is 'unengaged' and memorization that is 'mechanical' (in Showalter 50).

One means of overcoming these tendencies is by ensuring the instructor's ability to engage students (Huggins and Stamatel 233). According to Showalter, pedagogical experts suggest engaging students in an activity during first sessions, "even in a large lecture" (47). One issue arising from passive learning is decreased attention – an issue that often plagues the lecture format (Young, Robinson and Alberts 42). In overcoming this tendency, DeWinstanley and Bjork suggest "posing real questions (as opposed to rhetorical questions)" (28), whilst Christopher Huggins and Janet Stamatel point to the fact that some lecturers have "incorporated more visual aids, such as videos or PowerPoints, personal response systems, Twitter feeds, or think-pair-share activities" in order to make lectures "more engaging and interactive" (228). However, the efficiency of these methods produce inconsistent results. DeWinstanley and

Bjork, for example, believe that the incorporation of modern teaching technologies, like Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations, could even serve to create divided-attention conditions for students (21).

On the other hand, using such presentations might increase the sense of structure within and between lectures. DeWinstanley and Bjork explain that providing outlines that contain only heading and subheadings increase not only the structure, but also encourages note-taking on the part of students (25). In addition, an increased sense of structure on the part of a lecturer can assist students' processing of information when the structure includes "spaced repetitions of key information within and across lectures" (24). Revell and Wainwright found that "good structure enabled students to prioritize information, to learn things in bite-sized chunks, and to integrate those chunks in order to see the 'big picture'" (216). Still, efficient lectures require clarity and "flexible delivery which takes into account instantaneous feedback from the audience, and the intelligent use of multiple communication channels" (Pritchard 619). In this, students prefer lectures that employ "simple, accessible language (avoiding academic jargon) and that [do] not present too much information in one go", in order to avoid cognitive overload (Revell and Wainwright 216).

Mehmet Gülpinar and Berrak Yeğen believe that "a well-organized lecture can provoke thought and enhance critical thinking if it aims at arousing students' curiosity, motivating them to learn, and guiding them into creative thinking" (590). Similarly, Revell and Wainwright hold that "the key to a good lecture is the degree to which students are encouraged to think for themselves and to engage in deep versus surface approaches to learning", and that lectures should therefore be "participative and engaging, as well as challenging and thought-provoking" (212). As Pritchard points out, it is also important for lecturers to approach the format as one which is communicative, realising that "the audience indicate through body language and facial cues whether they understand what is being communicated to them" (613-614). Although one of the shortcomings of the lecture format is that it "cannot address the individual concerns and needs of students, but has to be pitched to a generic student" (Showalter 50), a sensitivity to students' responses can assist in ensuring greater engagement. Donald Howard believes in lecturing as the best classroom practice, yet admits "that a good teacher, instead of 'lecturing away', gets students to speak their thoughts" (in Showalter 77).

Revell and Wainwright also found that many students expressed their belief that "the personal attributes of the lecturer and her/his ability to create a rapport with the class greatly influenced

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their engagement with a subject" and that more approachable lecturers made students feel less intimidated when asking or responding to questions, or indicating where further explanation was required (218). Pritchard also believes that the "strength of lectures is that they can simultaneously address cognitive and affective factors" when lecturers are able to "work with students' irrational side, addressing 'affective' factors such as habit, enthusiasm and identity, as well as with their rational side, addressing 'cognitive' factors related to learning" (611). As interesting finding, however, suggests that "extraneous comments made during a lecture (for example, jokes) were remembered better than topic statements" (DeWinstanley and Bjork 27) and regarding the use of guest lecturers, "student feedback suggest[s] that the novelty factor of the guest lecturer was both an advantage and a disadvantage [since] the new presenter's style" can serve as a distraction (Young, Robinson and Alberts 52).

In conclusion, although lecturing is "ubiquitous in higher education", this format "has to confront problems of attention span, memory and distraction [which are] not simply problems of poor or unmotivated students, but basic human issues of perception and retention" (Showalter 49). Even when problems of attention span are addressed, attention remains "a necessary but not sufficient condition for effective learning" as learning "requires accurate interpretation and thorough elaboration" (DeWinstanley and Bjork 21). As such, lectures are only effective when communication is clear and all the necessary aspects to an effective lecture are familiar to the lecturer (Pritchard 614-615). If learning entails triggering "the types of processes that result in durable encoding of the concepts, facts, and ideas covered in the lecture" (DeWinstanley and Bjork 20), then it might also be necessary to measure their efficiency in relation to alternative methods of dissemination (Pritchard 610).

4.3.1) Interactive Lectures

Since many consider higher-order skills' development to require a greater level of participation, many consider traditional lectures to be inadequate for developing these skills (McLaughlin and Mandin in Gülpinar and Yeğen 592). Those incorporating the principles of active learning into the lecture format use "constructive and task related activities", such as 'buzz groups', structured debate, or interactive technology, to break up the lecture (Young, Robinson and Alberts 42-43). In addition, it is possible for lecturers to intersperse multiple choice questions based on the material covered, in order to get students more actively involved in the lecture (Campbell and Mayer 747). Such variation might assist in combatting what is referred to as

'vigilance degradation' (Young, Robinson and Alberts 41) and, in one study, students reported that the inclusion of such activities was considered "successful and interactive" (Gülpinar and Yeğen 592). However, such interruptions do have some disadvantages, such as "decreased lecture time, reduced accuracy and lower control over the lecture" (Young, Robinson and Alberts 53).

4.3.1.1)   Clickers

One means of countering the disadvantages of integrating multiple choice questions into the lecture format comes in the form of 'clickers'. Clickers, also known as Classroom Response Systems, are software which allow educators to compile one or more multiple choice questions before a lecture session, which students are then able to access using devices with internet connectivity (including cellular phones), in order to submit their responses. The software then provides the educator with the results of student responses almost instantaneously and can therefore be used as a means of determining whether students have understood the material covered, either in the lecture or in preceding course dissemination.

As such, clickers are considered a useful tool for assessing "the degree of student comprehension in large classroom settings where interaction with each student [is] deemed impossible, and to assist lecturers in determining whether further exploration of a topic is required" (Hora and Holden 78-79). In employing this software in a literature studies course, Alice Jenkins noted that there is a strong need to include a response option whereby students can indicate when they did not know the answer as a means of eliminating the risk of random responses (530). Although some take issue with the fact that the medium only allows for multiple-choice questions, and is therefore not suited to open-ended ones (Hora and Holden 87), Jenkins believes that it is possible to move away from using this technology as a means of "assessing 'correct' knowledge", and to employ it as a means of stimulating discussion by encouraging reflection on the subjective responses that students would wish to have given (531). As such, clickers provide the opportunity to not only assess students' comprehension, but to also further the degree of interactivity, should their use coincide with further discussions on the questions employed. At the same time, the variety introduced to the traditional lecture format might assist in overcoming problems of attention-span.

The reasoning behind the assertion that clickers may be used for determining students' understanding of both material covered in the lecture and any material covered prior to the

lecturer, stems from an interest in the growing popularity in 'flipped classroom' models. Since the flipped classroom model might be used for both lectures and tutorials, this concept will be discussed under a separate heading. It is important to note, however, that the reasoning behind the move towards flipped classrooms, is largely related to the idea of increasing the level of interactivity in both lectures and tutorials.

4.4)   Flipped Classrooms

Flipped classrooms present a model whereby "students have to get acquainted with a new topic of the course on their own, outside the classroom", allowing for "interactive discussion, monitored by the teacher, of newly acquired knowledge, its clarification and finalizing through questions-and-answers" or learning activities (Nazarenko "Blended" 79). One of the major advantages of this model is that it allows for students to "prepare at their pace, level of understanding and schedule for the lectures" whilst allowing for educators to "provide adaptive and instant feedback to [an] individual or [a] group of students" (Kakosimos 2). Given the belief that complex procedural knowledge learning requires flexible input and timely feedback from educators, the suitability of the flipped classroom model for English Studies becomes apparent. By decreasing the time required for the provision of factual and conceptual knowledge in face-to-face teaching, the possibility of dealing with the more nuanced aspects to the subject matter is increased. Before discussing the implications which this will have on learning both inside and outside the classroom, some of the perceived disadvantages need to be considered.

In this regard, the time and effort required in constructing material for the online learning environment is considered to be far more than that involved in face-to-face instruction (2). In addition, the question of monitoring students' engagement with the work becomes of particular importance (2). Since the material presented online tends to be of greater importance when it aims at introducing, rather than consolidating knowledge, the risk involved when students do not complete the necessary activities by the required time could lead to a greatly diminished sense of value for the face-to-face sessions. One means of combating this risk is by employing LMSs' ability to track student activities (2). However, when such tracking requires monitoring on the part of the educator, their workload is increased.

Consequently, particular attention will be paid to those affordances which generate marks for students, since there is a general sense of the accountability which this brings. What is

important to consider here then, is Tarsem Cooner's assertion that, in using "technology-enhanced processes[,] assessment methods must also be adapted to take on board these changes" (284). As such, the mark allocation involved should be reflective of both students' efforts and the importance of each activity. When using assessment as a means of motivating student participation, a tendency to have marks associated with digital activities weigh very little (if they contribute to student results at all), does not suffice in ensuring student involvement. Since many LMSs allow for cut-off dates and times with online activities, those adopting such activities as a means of moving towards a flipped classroom model should do so in a way which utilises these affordances. The resultant course schedule might lead to some loss of the advantages of asynchronous learning, but will serve to increase the sense of urgency in the online learning environment.

In addition, active learning in the online environment requires of students to have a greater level of involvement during lessons. As such, it is important that, in addition to contents, interactive exercises be included in online lessons (Yang 686). This may be done through online exercises with instantaneous feedback, or those that submit responses to educators (Dewald 27), although the latter again increases educators' workload. Martha Somoza-Fernández and Ernest Abadal explain that it is important to include some form of exercises in online lessons, since these "reinforce what has been learned" (130). As such, when educators use questions in their online lesson formats, it provides not only the possibility of monitoring students' engagement, but also increases the level of information retention. As such, although aspects to text-based lessons and video lessons are discussed, the most suitable means of delivering lessons online might be SCORM packages and online quizzes, since both of these formats allow for a greater level of interaction with students.

### 4.4.1)	SCORM Packages

One of the affordances available to educators wishing to move part of their lessons to the digital sphere is SCORM packages. This format is one which allows for the transfer of material between different LMSs, and also allows for integrated assessment. Although great variation in the means by which SCORM content might be packaged exists, the discussion of this format

here will be as it appears when using programs like Camtasia Studio®[61], which allows for the integration of video lessons with user interaction. When employed in this manner, these packages afford educators with a greater level of creativity in lesson design, as well as the seamless integration of multimedia, resulting in a product which can be both visually appealing and allows for a greater level of student interaction.

Since such packages can vary significantly depending on one's approach to their use, some clarity as to their affordances might come from demonstrating one possible means of their application. In this, educators might use existing Microsoft® PowerPoint® slides, adapting their layout where necessary, convert them to video files, import them into a program like Camtasia Studio® and then add on aspects like narration, navigation buttons and question prompts. As might be gathered from this suggested model, the process is potentially time-consuming and requires both knowledge of the program used to create the lesson and additional funding for purchasing programs when open-source software does not suffice. In addition, the disadvantages of using this format include the fact that making changes or updating content is more difficult than when text-based lessons are used.

An advantage of the medium, however, is that it provides a greater sense of immediacy. In addition, the format requires of educators to break up any text into smaller chunks, which might assist readers (who, as mentioned, have often developed certain reading patterns due to the prevalence of Internet culture) in absorbing more information than when material is presented in longer text formats. Since students can control the pace of the lesson when navigation buttons are added, it also allows for self-pacing and provides students with the option of revision. The possibility of constructing visually pleasing presentations might also assist in engaging students. Since programs like Camtasia Studio® allow educators to incorporate video (either alongside text, or as the dominant means of communication in SCORM packages), the advantages and disadvantages of this component discussed below. However, the use of video lessons outside of SCORM packages does not track student engagement, unless they are used in combination additional affordances, like online quizzing, to ensure completion before face-to-face sessions.

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[61] Since the ability to integrate video lessons with interactive prompts, available to this program, are currently not available in any of the open-source equivalents, institutions which do not have funding to obtain the necessary usage-rights, might need to use the method discussed in Section 4.4.3, in order to combine video lessons with student-response prompts.

4.4.2)   Video Lessons

According to Anaraki, the use of multimedia has a significant impact on learning, with the "multi-sensory learning environment" being able to maximize information retention, increasing learners' attention, and enhancing students' problem-solving skills and motivation (60). In addition, since learning styles vary amongst students, the use of multimedia such as video might be of value to those students whose learning is optimised when information is conveyed visually and through audio (Dewald 26). Nancy Dewald also believes that although graphics might not always be necessary, the inclusion of this element can serve in making the "learning experience more pleasant for the student, by breaking up the text and by stimulating different types of thought processes" (30). As such, whilst graphic material is not necessarily associated with the process of literary analysis, increasing the visual appeal of lessons might serve to make them both more engaging, whilst breaking up content into more manageable sections for students.

In addition, the visual aspects presented in video lessons need not only be restricted to content. In a study by Sung Youl Park et al., it was found that students responded to seeing their educators in online learning (426). As such, one might consider the use of screencasting as a means of decreasing the sense of online lessons as being impersonal (Viggiano 40). With screencasting, students are able to observe the educator in the video format and the mode is often used when teaching procedural knowledge through modelling (Stonebraker, Robertshaw and Moss 176). As the lecturer works through the lesson's content, "articulating tacit information" (176), the benefits perceived in opting for voice-supplemented lessons (Ridgway 171) are drawn on in this approach. In comparison to constructing videos by other means, screencasting can be seen as being both inexpensive and time-efficient (Stonebraker, Robertshaw and Moss 176).

Since functionalities like fast-forwarding and rewinding might not be suited to such lesson recordings, it is "conceivable to provide recordings combined with a text search on the slides and thumbnails as additional navigation" (Henrich and Sieber 129), by using the affordances made available through programs like Camtasia Studio®. The inclusion of such navigational tools may be perceived as increasing the level of interactivity, as well as allowing students to revise content and self-pace their learning. In this, screencasting is able to "provide learners with an opportunity to actively process information, since they can directly (and repeatedly) access a specific topic and control the speed" (Lust, Elen and Clarebout 41).

However, as with SCORM packaging that includes video material, the increased efforts involved in updating material remains a concern (Silver and Nickel 394). In addition, both video lessons and SCORM packages that include them, require greater storage space on servers (Anaraki 60) and the format might lead to lessons loading more slowly (Dewald 28), especially when accessed off-campus. The inclusion of sound in video formats might also lead to students requiring additional hardware, such as earphones (28). Still, the greatest concern in using video lessons remains the fact that it does not necessarily lead to active learning, since it allows for passive absorption when questions are absent. As such, "static resources, such as videos, may not promote deep learning" (Stonebraker, Robertshaw and Moss 177), and the need to include some means of ensuring engagement becomes apparent. As mentioned, this might be done through the use of SCORM packaging, but in cases where the LMS provides greater flexibility in quiz construction, the incorporation of videos into quiz 'lessons' presents a possible alternative.

4.4.3)   Online Quizzes

Whilst online quizzing is normally associated with assessment, affordances allowing the inclusion of content pages (as found in Moodle), open up the possibility of using the medium as a tool for online teaching. Content pages allow for the inclusion of both text and other media, such as video and audio, and, when used in conjunction with quiz questions, can allow for a similar level of interactivity and engagement from students to SCORM packages. Although the questions and content might not be as seamlessly integrated as when using SCORM packages, the possibility of alternating between content delivery and questions remains, and, when using an LMS like Moodle, navigation between the two is possible. Since the benefits of using multimedia formats have been explored, it might be of use to consider the advantages and disadvantages of using text-based lessons alongside quizzes, before exploring the nature of online quizzing.

Although text-based lessons are often seen as being less engaging, more demanding and fairly static, the use of text as a medium both affords educators with greater ease when editing, and might be seen as particularly relevant to the discipline of English Studies. However, as Rothkopf sees is, "[l]earning from text, regardless of how carefully it has been written, cannot succeed without important activities on the part of the student" (110). One of the most important processes required of students during the reading process is comprehension, and as

such, one of the advantages of digital texts is perhaps the possibility they provide for incorporating hypertext.

Through the use of hypertext, educators are able to link both content and explanations to existing text, in order to assist learners with both vocabulary and concept development. In addition, students' sense of involvement might be increased when engaging with hypertext, since they gain a greater level of control over the learning process. However, though some feel that the use of these links "mimic[s] the associativeness of the human mind" (Benest 323), it is important to ensure that students do not come to feel "lost within a hypertext maze" (Dewald 28). As such, Andreas Henrich and Stefanie Sieber suggest the need to indicate optional and obligatory materials when hypertext is used (128). In addition, the use of 'tooltips', which allow for pop-ups to appear when hovering over a text, might assist in providing additional information to those who need it, without navigating away from the text to which it relates.

As mentioned, LMSs supporting the integration of content pages, allowing the inclusion of both text-based and multimedia content that would allow for lessons to take place within quizzes, assist in opening up the possibility of constructing online quizzes as a means of teaching, rather than as an assessment method. However, in the 'soft sciences', where factual knowledge is limited, the additional concern which arises regarding the perception of this medium as limiting the potential complexity of questions asked. This is because, when quizzes are designed in a way which allows for automatic grading, the question types available are multiple choice, fill-in the blanks and matching questions. Currently, little research exists on the possibility of using such questions in the context of disciplines characterised by open-ended questions and procedural knowledge. However, this lack of research does not equate to an impossibility of its application in such disciplines. In this, constructing questions in which the correct response requires insight into the various substantiating claims accompanying a response in a multiple choice format, for example, might serve to overcome such perceived limitations.

4.5) Tutorials

Since their incorporation into English Studies teaching programmes by Geoffrey H. Durrant (Robinson and Kissack 10), English departments have increasingly structured their courses around the tutorial format (Brooks in Penrith 116). Jolette Roodt defines the tutorial as "a small-group learning environment managed by an individual with more experience than the

group in the particular subject field", highlighting that, unlike lectures, these classes provide students with "extensive opportunities for expressing their own critical thinking and gauging the reaction of their peers" (15). As Davies perceives it, such interactive formats are of great value since they allow for "the development, in place of the older, more intransitive modes of 'discipline', of kinds of instruction [that are] more flexible, responsive and humane" (37). As such, the format is particularly suited to the execution of interactive learning activities, and allows for a greater level of guidance and feedback as is required in teaching procedural knowledge.

In order to fully embrace the possibilities arising from the smaller-group format which tutorial sessions provide, it is necessary for educators to recognise the risks of using these opportunities to teach content, or to dominate these classes with the modelling of procedural knowledge. The success of tutorial sessions is often determined by the particular group dynamic fostered here. Since this space is one which permits for a level of interaction not always possible in larger classes, the risk for permitting students to take on the role of passive receivers of knowledge needs to be countered. As such, sessions dominated by an educator's dissemination of information run the risk of producing a group dynamic that is not conducive to the optimisation of procedural knowledge development since this requires a greater level of activity on the part of the student. Consequently, the use of a flipped classroom model, to ensure that students enter the classroom prepared with the necessary factual and conceptual knowledge, might assist in transforming the tutorial into a space allowing more student-centered approaches.

However, when student-centered approaches are employed in cases where teaching assistants or tutors present tutorials, these educators require a greater level of guidance than is required for content-centered instruction (Wright, Bergom and Brooks 339). Such guidance should assist tutors with providing what Lev Vygotsky terms a 'directive structure', ensuring that "exercises move from directed questions to sophisticated activity, gradually weaning students from reliance on support to independence" (Cooperstein and Kocevar-Weidinger 143). When adopting a constructivist perspective on learning, "based on the principle that through activity students discover their own truths", the educator's role is linked to the facilitation of such discovery (142). Whilst Cooperstein and Kocevar-Weidinger state that questions are a useful means for eliciting students' discovery (142), it is valuable for educators to also develop their awareness of more structured activities suited to this task, since such tasks, when developed strategically, might assist in the development of multiple forms of knowledge. As such, the sections that follow consider how discussions and structured debates assist in familiarising

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students with the processes behind literary criticism, as well as how the small group format – when transformed into a 'community of enquiry' – might assist with concept knowledge development.

4.5.1)   Tutorial Discussions

In a study by Wojcik, Heitzmann, Kilbride and Hartwell, the three instructional techniques found in almost all guides to teaching in the social sciences were: discussion, enquiry, and supplementary reading material (245). Tutorial sessions commonly feature discussions, and these tend to be of a more organic nature than is permitted by the lecture format. The process remains an important tool in active learning since, as Donald Blight points out, "students are more attentive, active, and thoughtful [during discussions] than during lectures" (in Showalter 49). However, when one considers this process as a strategy, an understanding of how it functions in the educational landscape, alongside some of the issues that might arise during its implementation, is required, lest a sense of its 'naturalness' encourage overreliance on discussions that are not conducive to students' learning.

As Showalter points out, "the so-called discussion class is [often] just another opportunity for the teacher to do all the talking" (53). As such, she presents "a typology of the kinds of questions that are most productive in discussion classes", constructed by Roland Christensen, suggesting questions that are "open-ended, diagnostic, information-seeking, challenging, action-seeking, predictions, hypotheticals, and generalizations" (in Showalter 53). At the same time, educators should be weary of 'bracketing off' the issues discussed, since this can lead to a failure to "engage critically with the discourse communities that play the most far-reaching roles in their lives" (Winans 106). As Susanne Luhmann points out, there is value in perceiving "ignorance and knowledge, not as mutually exclusive, but as implicated and constitutive of each other" (in Winans 105). As such, steering students away from making statements that might be considered inaccurate, neglects opportunities for questioning the assumptions informing them. In this, the value of 'organic' discussions becomes apparent.

Discussions can also be seen as mimicking the process of literary analysis to some extent. For, although Jeffrey Wallen sceptically claims that "[a]t best, discussion leads to clarifying where we disagree" (254), Scholes' opinion that "criticism is not a matter of personal preference but of collective judgement" (35) informs his belief that "many interpretive obstacles to reading can be resolved by discussion in class or by group research where it is necessary" (29). The

same sense of discussion's relevance in the field of English Studies might be gathered from James Phelan's assertion that "the thesis of any argument emerges in response to questions and dialogues" (528). And although many experts are able to anticipate alternative perspectives through internal dialogue, Dewing believes that with novices such reflection should be enforced by social interaction (24) and as such, social interaction becomes an opportunity for students to "verify their understanding" (Cooperstein and Kocevar-Weidinger 144). In this, discussions can serve to build students' confidence in their own argument, whilst at the same time increasing their awareness of the need for substantiation when making claims in literary criticism essays.

At the same time, discussions could foster a greater sense of cultural understanding. Since dialogue includes "learning about how one's own meaning making is received by others" (Dewing 24), student-led discussions can "stimulate thinking about significant social studies ideas including differences and similarities among cultures […] and connections between current and historical events" (McCall 158). Such reflection also allows students to "explore their memberships in various discourse communities and develop a deeper understanding of what those affiliations mean in their lives", whilst negotiation their own position in these communities (Winans 105). As such, discussions present, not only opportunities for students to share their ideas and receive feedback, but also create a space in which they can develop an increased awareness regarding their perceptions of both others and alternative perspectives. Such reflection on 'positionality' is considered a key part of critical reflection by many social theorists (Smith 213). In this, English Studies' ability to foster social awareness through the study of literature can be enhanced through the discussions that might take place in tutorials.

4.5.2)   Structured Debates

Whether presented as an alternative to, or in addition to, discussions, structured debates can be of value in concretizing student's ability to synthesise information, as is required in the process of literary criticism. Since synthesis involves "weighing and balancing evidence, both for and against a number of possible hypothetical answers to a question" (Justice et al. 210), this process can be made more explicit when conflicting perspectives are not only produced, but also supported. According to David Johnson, confrontations "involve clarifying and exploring the issues, the nature and strength of the underlying needs of the participants, and their current feelings" (Schul 91) and, given the educational value which such 'conflicts' may hold, Gerald

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Graff holds that educators "should deliberately include disciplinary and political conflicts in their classes, whether through team-teaching [or] actual debates" (Showalter 31). As Wallen sees it, literary critics consider "discussion and disagreement [as] primary tools for the production of knowledge", yet struggle to disagree with one another in a meaningful way (254). In this, he believes that "avoiding what is truly challenging" leads to a loss of opportunities "to question our own ideas, to articulate something new, [and] to move beyond what we know" (254). The tutorial classroom, with its smaller group format, provides a space where debates can be fostered in a way that encourages all students to partake – thereby developing a greater awareness of the sensitivity to conflicting viewpoints which should inform literary criticism.

4.5.3)   Discussion Forums and Chat Rooms

Since the value of discussions in strengthening students' understanding of some of the requirements for constructing literary criticism is clear, the possibility of using online discussion forums or chat rooms for moving discussions outside of the classroom might be considered. The reasoning for including this affordance within the framework of tutorials stems not only from the fact that they may be difficult to manage with larger groups, but also from the fact that students themselves have expressed a preference for smaller group discussions (Sullivan and Freishtat 15). Where discussion forums tend to be asynchronous, chat rooms require of learners to be on the system at the same time – thereby countering the benefits involved with asynchronous online activities. Currently, a penchant for incorporating discussion forums seems to characterise the tertiary landscape (Ertmer, Sadaf and Ertmer 158). However, when comparing their value in relation to the level of involvement required from educators, as well as the implications of losing the organic nature of face-to-face discussions, the use of online discussions might represent a less than ideal option for English Studies educators. Before exploring the disadvantages informing this assertion, the potential benefits should be taken into account.

As Paula Maurino sees it, online discussions "can be an effective learning tool that leads to progressive knowledge-seeking inquiry and expansive learning" (47). This perception is based on the belief that discussions can assist students in "construct[ing] knowledge, filter[ing] it, discover[ing] individual differences, and striv[ing] toward mutual understanding" (Maurino 48). Since online discussions require of students to write down their perspectives, it could lead to a greater level of reflection on course content, where posts by other students might also assist

in building a "learning community" (Sullivan and Freishtat 14). Whilst discussion forums might not have the same sense of immediacy as chat rooms, its asynchronous nature produces a potential benefit. As Timothy Sullivan and Richard Freishtat point out, "asynchronous discussions allow more time to reflect on a topic in a more meaningful way" (18) and as such, the format is one which allows for a greater level of reflection before making statements than is possible during face-to-face discussions. This might assist students in making assertions with which they are more comfortable, since they do not face the pressures of providing explanations under pressure. However, whilst it is possible to perceive discussion forums as a medium which can "create opportunities for inclusiveness, enhance creativity, develop critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills" (Ruyters, Douglas and Law 47), there is a significant body of evidence negating the sense of their value.

As Alyssa Wise, Marzieh Saghafian, and Poornima Padmanabhan point out, the perceived promise of 'rich interactivity' rarely materialises in online discussions, which tend to contain "superficial comments and simple exchanges of information" and consequently, "putting students together in an online discussion forum does not necessarily lead to learning" (56). Maurino consents when she admits that not all discussions "will promote expansive learning or move a learner to the other side of the proximal zone" (47). Since "deep learning requires conflict or contradiction" (48), the fact that students have expressed an unwillingness to give opposing views, fearing that they would offend others (Ng 21), means that this medium might not be suited to promoting the awareness of conflicting viewpoints sought in literary criticism. In addition, since "question prompts play an important role in facilitating critical thinking" (Ertmer, Sadaf and Ertmer 170), discussion forums that are not characterised by a strong level of educators' involvement are also less suited to the development of critical thinking.

As Henrich and Sieber point out, encouraging student participation requires participation from educators (128). When such 'expects' are not utilised, this might account for lower quality responses from students (Maurino 48). Although Jacqueline Eastman and Cathy Swift consider the role of the educator as limited to starting discussions (35), many authors disagree with the suggested simplicity of their statement. As Wise, Saghafian and Padmanabhan point out, educators' roles include "assigning a clear analytic or synthetic discussion task with multiple possible response [and] providing detailed guidelines about the timing, frequency and kinds of contributions expected" (56) amongst other things. In addition, discussion topics need to be broken up into smaller questions to allow for specificity (Wang and Woo 284) and to counter overwhelming students. However, this process not only introduces the risk of having "the

various strands of discussion" confuse students (Ruyters, Douglas and Law 47), but also indicates the need for significant input from educators.

Since it has been reported that tutors' involvement in such online activities often leads to them "spend[ing] more time online (and off-line in preparation) than they would have spent tutoring the same course content in face-to-face situations […] compensat[ing] tutors for their increased work[load] could undermine the financial viability of eLearning programmes" (Fox and MacKeogh 122). In addition, there are significant benefits to face-to-face discussions, including the fact that these discussions are more efficient regarding time-management, allowing for conclusions to be drawn more clearly, as well as involving a greater level multidirectional interaction (Wang and Woo 283).

Although the fact that online discussions require greater educator involvement and might not necessarily foster learning might suggest that the format is less than ideal for the use in English Studies, the medium is not without potential value. Eastman and Swift's vision of online discussions as creating a space in which it is possible to "build a culture in the class where the instructor is not seen as the sole source for information, and the students learn to work with each other in solving problems" (36) might best be realised when this affordance is applied, in conjunction with wikis, as a means of developing 'communities of enquiry'. Since the concept is one which is best applied in small group contexts, the implementation thereof is particularly suited to the tutorial format, and although it is possible to apply this approach in the physical classroom, the increasing recognition of online resources' value in building knowledge means that the concept is becoming increasingly associated with blended learning. Whilst discussion forums might assist such smaller groups in the preparation of tasks, the application thereof leads to the discussion of the use of wikis for this approach to blended learning.

4.5.4)   Communities of Enquiry

Although the concept of a 'community of enquiry' originates from educational philosophy focussed on younger learners, the concept is not without potential when applied in tertiary education. The concept refers to "a facilitated group of people who work together on a consistent basis through enquiry into matters of importance to them" (Zellermayer and Tabak 34). Central to the idea is that enquiry is not directed by questions constructed by the educator, but should stem from questions arising through interactions within the group. As Linkon states, "[c]ritical cultural reading emphasizes inquiry" and "[g]ood readers constantly ask questions

about texts" (251). As such, encouraging students to construct their own questions within a structured environment presents another means of concretizing one of the processes involved in literary criticism. However, the principles informing this approach, being based in philosophy, do not intend for students to enquire as a means of obtaining singular answers, with process being seen as "circular to represent the continuing nature of inquiry which ends in some answers, enhanced understanding, but always more questions" (Justice et al. 204).

Despite it being based in such a philosophical stance, the facilitation of this approach might be key to ensuring that implementation thereof is beneficial. Since the process relies on the "deliberative skills of its members and their willingness to share ideas, time and power, despite conflicting interests, in the process of social inquiry" (Burgh and Yorshansky 436), it is important that power-relations are monitored and engagement is encouraged. Since an important assumption informing the use of methods like 'communities of enquiry' is that "learning is enhanced when the learner takes more active control of the learning process" (Justice et al. 204), the construction of guiding questions needs to be facilitated in a way which recognises all of the group members. Such "deliberative practices" need to be informed by the rhetoric of democracy, which "recognises diversity, pluralism, and multiculturalism" (Burgh and Yorshansky 449). At the same time, finding a topic which is of interest to the group will assist in encouraging deeper engagement and fostering "feelings of personal ownership" (Justice et al. 205).

In the context of English Studies, the inclusion of the principles behind 'communities of enquiry' might serve as a means of increasing social awareness. When it comes to the development of creativity and procedural knowledge, however, the application of these principles require specific guidance. Whilst online creative writing groups might be assisted by educators through the provision of resources which can assist in strengthening students' awareness of literary features and the means through which literary techniques might assist them in expressing themselves through literature, the development of critical procedural knowledge involves a somewhat different approach. By assigning students with the task of developing wiki pages related to some of the conceptual knowledge that might assist them in constructing literary criticism essays, students' research skills can be developed alongside their understanding of these concepts. Since the resources constructed in this manner are afforded a level of permanence through the nature of LMSs, students could come to assist educators in constructing valuable resources for future students – thereby countering the complexity

involved in developing conceptual knowledge in the discipline. As such, an understanding of the wiki format is required in order for educators to draw on this potential benefit.

4.5.5) Wikis

Wikis, or wiki pages, are defined as "shared online sites that offer the opportunity for collaboration as the content of published documents can be added to, or amended by, anyone who has access to the site" (Ruyters, Douglas and Law 47). As such, the use of wikis in education can allow students to create and edit web content pages (Mak and Coniam 439). Whilst the format allows for the inclusion of multimedia, it is generally text-based – making it easy to edit and accessible to students (Eteokleous, Ktoridou and Orphanou 103-104). When this affordance includes comment functions, it also allows for students to suggest changes without removing work done by others (Ruyters, Douglas and Law 47). As such, wikis present a suitable space for optimising 'communities of enquiry' projects, whilst also drawing on the possibility for this form of group work to produce resources for English Studies students. However, for these benefits to be realised, it is important to ensure that the task behind the construction of wiki pages, as well as the conduct of group members, is clearly delineated.

Since wiki pages generally have a specific title indicating their interests, the use of this medium can assist in focusing the efforts of 'community of enquiry' practices. It is believed that the use of wikis in education allows for a dynamic in which students "are encouraged to interact with course materials and each other in order to further their understanding", thereby creating a group dynamic that encourages a move away from the perception of the educator as the sole provider of information (Morley 261). As such, wikis assist in fostering the kind of relationships considered to be desirable within 'communities of enquiry' practices. In addition, the kind of engagement with course material suggested here allows for the development of both conceptual knowledge and resources that might be of value to other students.

Whether students are assigned topics or construct these according to the group's interests, the possibility of hyperlinks in wiki pages means that, as the process of enquiry leads to expansion of interest, students will be able to link any related material to the original topic. In this, it is possible to perceive wikis as a means of assisting in conceptual knowledge development, since a sense of the relationships between various concepts and topics can be increased. In addition, when using student contributions to wiki pages as a future resource, the format allows for content to be updated with relative ease (Eteokleous, Ktoridou and Orphanou 104). Another

benefit of having students construct wiki pages intended to assist with conceptual knowledge development is the fact that, when guided to do so by the educators, students may be better equipped in assuring that the degree of semantic gravity and density remains suited to the level of their peers.

In terms of assisting students with the writing process involved in constructing literary criticism, the use of wikis has potential on several levels. As the content is largely based on research conducted by the students, instructing them to include references, and potentially also links to their sources, can assist in familiarising students with the practice of referencing. In addition, since wikis allow for students to practice reviewing and editing (Eteokleous, Ktoridou and Orphanou 104), students' involvement in wiki page construction might also lead to improvements in their own writing on multiple levels, such as content, language and structural editing, through the insight gained from the assistance offered by their peers. In this regard, a study by Wheeler and Wheeler which "found that students using wikis improved their writing skills and showed more interest in reporting sources, specifically in searching for possible reliable sources" (in Eteokleous, Ktoridou and Orphanou 104), is encouraging. However, since some suggest that editing can be seen as counterproductive in cases where a significant amount of a student's work is deleted (Morley 262), it is important for educators to monitor "the process of contributing, editing, and developing submissions online" (Ruyters, Douglas and Law 48), in order to ensure that the potential benefits of wikis are realised.

Educators should also try to ensure continued engagement with the development of wikis, since it has been suggested that contributions might easily become sporadic (48). In terms of content editing, as suggested previously, the use of discussion forums for building 'communities of enquiry' might also be of use. As such, educators might assist students by creating spaces for such discussions. In addition, there might be some value in delineating various roles for students to choose from in order to ensure that communication is structured and the tasks of each member is clear. Although these suggestions indicate the need for some involvement on the part of the educator, the perceived benefits of using wikis – in that it assist with both the learning process and with the construction of future resources – might deem their incorporation worthwhile. In addition, through the tracking options available when using wikis, student contributions might also assist in providing further insight into how students approach their work (Sharma and Tietjen 3).

4.6)   Glossaries

As discussed in the previous chapter, the relationship between conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge is such that an understanding of certain concepts can assist students in mastering certain procedures. As such, incorporating digital glossaries in English Studies courses should be considered, since the affordances of the digital landscape allow for greater ease of access and navigation for students. As Dion Nkomo and Mbulungeni Madiba point out, students need both the "appropriate terminology and information regarding meaning, register and examples of its usage" in order to enable both their understanding and production of academic texts (157). In this, glossaries might be considered helpful in that they allow for the integration of information and the reduction of semantic heterogeneity (Velardi, Navigli, and D'Amadio 18). As with wiki pages related to the discipline's interests, developing online glossaries for students could assist, not only in providing students with access to the relevant concepts within the field, but with establishing a stronger sense of the nature of the discipline.

However, constructing online glossaries can be a time-consuming process. In this, experts in the discipline are required to identify the key concepts to be included, produce definitions of these terms, and give structure to the results (Velardi, Navigli, and D'Amadio 18). Whilst developing glossaries can be approached incrementally, the sense that continuous updates are required (18), in addition to the sense that some students might require "encyclopaedic information about the concepts so that they may master the respective subject field" (Nkomo and Madiba 157), encourages a perspective thereof as one that might be optimised when done in conjunction the development of a wiki database containing subject-related knowledge. In this, educators could use the information gathered by students to gain insight into the relevant concepts and draw on these wiki pages to construct more concise explanations, whilst including hyperlinks to the relevant wiki pages, thereby assisting students who could remain uncertain regarding a term's meaning when relying on a single definition.

4.7)   Blogs

'Blogs', or weblogs, typically consist of "dated entries, displayed linearly in reverse chronological order" which may include images and links to other pages, in addition to text (Powell, Jacob and Chapman 272). Regarding their use in education, they represent "versatile tools" potentially "allow[ing] for improvements in various skills ranging from individual reflection to collaborative learning" (Deng and Yuen 95). When used alongside additional

pedagogical strategies it is believed that blogs are able to "encourage student participation, personal reflection, communication, and the development of critical thinking and writing skills" (Powell, Jacob and Chapman 275). However, whilst blogs allow for students to "take creative risks, and make sophisticated use of language and design elements" (Duffy and Bruns 33), Charles Tryon notes that the style and intentions associated with blogs differ strongly from those characterising "polished essay[s]" (128).

In addition to their tendency to encourage a less structured and more personal style, the use of blogs introduces additional concerns in the education context. In this, the difficulty presented in tracking conversations between individual sites (Deng and Yuen 97) and the general impracticality of applying this affordance in larger groups, given the increased workload for educators hoping to monitor students' engagement (Neira-Piñeiro 554), are of concern. In addition, when public blog platforms are used, in cases where the LMS does not include this affordance, Tryon found that some students expressed hesitance, finding the public nature of the format to be intimidating (132).

Given these implications, the use of blogs as a means of assessment, or for encouraging student interaction, may be impractical. However, in cases where blogs are employed as a means of encouraging students' reflection, or for the publication of creative writing projects, the decreased need for educators' participation means that this affordance is not without potential for English Studies educators. In the case of individual reflection, such value may be increased when the LMS employed allows for students to create blog entries privately. With creative writing projects, however, the belief that the affordance's allowance for feedback and commentary "can foster deeper thinking and learning" (Deng and Yuen 95) might represent a means of concretising students' sense of readers' responses to their work when published publically.

4.8)   Digital Literacy

As mentioned, justifying the use of multimedia in blended learning courses requires some reflection on whether their use holds significant educational benefits. However, in the context of English Studies, exposure to digital media, as well as the provision of access to new media, does introduce an additional potential benefit for students. Whilst Nicholas Burbules believes that electronic environments might encourage perspectives that are insufficiently critical, the author also suggests that hypertext, which he compares to poetic tropes, represents a particular

language of association and comparison (in McKenna 82). Enhancing students' level of critical reflection on the affordances and nature of digital communication, therefore, could assist in further strengthening their sense of genre conventions and strategic employment. In this, Kress' belief that digital texts will come to 'rival' traditional writing (in McKenna 83) points towards the value of assisting students through reflection on the nature of the digital landscape as it relates to communication.

As such, Scholes perceptions of the current context as an "age of manipulation", and of media as 'assaulting' those lacking critical thought (15) point towards the need to enhance digital literary. However, through an exploration of digital media's potential for reaching wider audiences, and given their increasing popularity, there might be value in extending the reflections of critical creative writing to this landscape. By assisting students in reflecting on the means in which they might employ such popular media in their own writing, whilst maintaining an interest in aspects associated with literary value in past media formats, the contribution of local authors might be extended to combatting the seemingly superficial nature of communication in this sphere.

4.9)   Constructivism and Blended Learning

Before concluding this chapter and moving towards a consideration of the relationship between blended learning and cognitivism, there is value in briefly considering the relationship between this approach to teaching and the principles of constructivist learning theory. As mentioned, the selection of cognitivism as a dominant theory of interest does not reflect a lack of recognition of the value of constructivist insights. Of particular interest here is constructivism's recognition of the importance of reflecting on contextual factors' influence on the learning process. As mentioned, there is a sense of this interest as aligning with the call towards a situated form of humanism, since some hold that this form of humanism should take into account "principles and values consistent with the national ideals of freedom and justice" (Nkondo in Cornwell 118). Such justice should include a recognition of the potential inherent in all individuals, and thus should strive towards nurturing individuality, rather than serving the "cultural mission" of foreign ideologies (Readings in Cornwell 118).

In this, the lack of flexibility characterising some affordances and the strong sense of structure encouraged by cognitivism, could be perceived as opposing these ideals. However, since secondary education in South Africa is often characterised by insufficient encouragement of

critical thinking, realising the critical potential of individuals does require some strategic pedagogical input. As such, balancing the rigidity of the online learning environment (as relating to those affordances which do not encourage text construction on the part of the student) requires of educators to optimise the potential which face-to-face instruction holds. As such, the cultural influences conducive to students' individual identities need to be not only recognised, but celebrated in the context of face-to-face instruction. As such, 'situated knowledges'[62] should be both enhanced and encouraged during these sessions in order to counter the potential limitations of cognitivist approaches.

4.10)   Conclusion

As mentioned, the ICT affordances discussed here were selected due to their perceived value in the discipline of English Studies and their alignment with the current interest in developing factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge. As demonstrated, the possibility of using online resources to assist students in learning complex procedural knowledge does exist. However, in cases where the LMS employed does not present the affordances mentioned, educators will need to reflect on the possibilities available in their particular LMS in order to determine how these might serve in providing the potential benefits laid out in this chapter. In this regard, the particular interest in the degree to which the resources used might increase the level of interactivity during the learning process might pose a particular challenge to those working with largely text-based ICT affordances.

Whilst the benefits of asynchronous learning activities include aspects such as providing students with more time for reflection and the ability to self-pace their learning, indications of the limited value of online discussions and the sense of face-to-face affording a greater level of flexibility and engagement, encourage the use of blended learning models, instead of the sole reliance on pure e-learning for disciplines like English Studies. This is particularly true when considering how discussions can contribute to students' sense of what constitutes an argument, as well as the importance of providing support and acknowledging conflicting viewpoints in literary criticism. As such, the possibility of increasing the amount of interaction when content and concept teaching are done preceding face-to-face sessions, as is the case in

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[62] The term, which was coined by Donna Haraway, is used here to refer to knowledge that accounts for the subjectivity of the thinker, acknowledging those particular individual histories and experiences that might have contributed to the individual's understanding of particular phenomenon.

flipped classroom approaches, should be embraced when attempting to optimise the value of face-to-face sessions. In addition, considering the limited potential for meaningful discussions where larger groups of students are present, such as in lectures, clickers may serve to not only lessen the effects of waning attention, but could also motivate students to prepare for these sessions, as well as assisting lecturers in determining where students might require further explanation and inspiring topics for further discussion.

The structure of this chapter hoped to demonstrate the potential relationships between certain ICT affordances and the existing classroom formats that these might complement. In the case of a flipped classroom approach, having students enter face-to-face sessions prepared could serve as a strong motivation for using ICTs alongside either lectures or tutorials. Although the fact that the field currently strongly relies on assessment through essays means that pure e-learning might not be possible, within the blended learning approach disciplinary knowledge suited to the online learning environment needs to be identified. As such, aspects of the writing process and conceptual knowledge that might assist in increasing students' sense of what is expected of them, can be taught online. In cases where educators are able to do so in a manner which incorporates a high level of interaction from the students, the value of such lessons is increased.

In addition to the use of online lessons, or in cases where a flipped classroom model is not adopted, educators might consider the value that providing glossaries and wiki pages might have in laying the foundations required for the development of conceptual knowledge. Since online resources allow for repeated and easy access, as well as easy updates where text-based mediums are used, these online resources allow for both developing subject specific resources, and can increase the longevity of human resources' value. Such human resources can also include students when 'community of enquiry' projects are used in developing subject specific wiki pages or developing critical creative writing texts that may be incorporated into courses.

As mentioned, however, educators need to consider the design and layout of their online learning environments in order to avoid students becoming confused and to ensure that the learning process is not hampered by cognitive overload stemming from chaotic LMS layouts. Whilst this can be done by grouping resources either by type or topic, the use of labelling and including sufficient framing regarding guidelines and educational outcomes might also assist in ensuring the successful navigation of the online components used for blended learning. Where the principles behind gamification might, for example, lead to an increase in students'

motivation and engagement, ineffective interface design might have a negative effect on the efficiency on online resources. In this, it is important to ensure that complexity does not lead to unnecessary interaction with students, putting greater demands on their memory, or confronting them with "visual chaos", by structuring LMSs in a way that "enables the user to concentrate on learning rather than fiddling and having to remember idiosyncrasies of the system as a whole" (Benest 333). In addition, it is believed that framing individual activities with both clear instructions and a sense of their educational outcomes increases their value. In this, the suggestions made regarding the various ICT affordances that might be suited to the discipline of English Studies, might only be of use when the approach to their incorporation into and the means of accessing them on the LMS are done in a manner which accounts for users' online behaviour.

Whilst the chapter that follows hopes to further insight into the reasoning behind those affordances selected for discussion here through the reflection on the implications of cognitivism for their use in English Studies, the range of ICT affordances that might be deemed suitable for the discipline is not restricted to those mentioned. However, the use of additional alternatives available might be informed by principles similar to those motivating the selection of those discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5
Discussion and Recommendations

5.1) Introduction

The preceding study set out to determine whether English Studies could overcome the 'legitimisation' crisis faced by the Humanities, in a context of mounting pressures for the commercialisation and massification of tertiary education. Of particular concern were the implications of the disjuncture between government expectations of increasing student enrolments and the coinciding budgetary constraints limiting the possibility of increasing human resources to cater to the burgeoning student population. This motivated the interest in blended learning, given the sense that the approach is one that may present long-term financial benefits. Stemming perhaps from a sense of misalignment between the nature of online learning environments and the more fluid conception of knowledge characterising English Studies, the research available on the use of blended learning models in this discipline was limited. As such, the current study further sought to overcome the potential implications for educators wishing to implement such models, by constructing a potential resource for educators.

Since conceiving of this study as a potential resource for educators motivated attempts at easing navigation through a strong sense of structure, the exploratory nature of the work might easily be overlooked. Since this approach resulted in a broad scope of interests, thereby limiting the depth afforded to individual topics of interest, it becomes necessary to highlight some of the issues that might be addressed by subsequent research in the field. However, before addressing what such research might entail, there is value in revisiting the main findings as a means of consolidating them. Given the complexity arising from the study's interest in the multitude of factors that need to be considered in constructing a blended learning course for English Studies, it is important to note that the section which follows represents only one means of incorporating these findings, and that the intention remains one of stimulating further reflection on the topic.

5.2) Blended Learning in English Studies: A Cognitivist Approach

Whilst the third chapter of this thesis included some sense of the relationship between disciplinary conventions and the principles behind cognitivist learning theory, this section seeks to consolidate these findings with the potential relationship which ICT affordances might have with the kinds of knowledge identified. In addition, it hopes to take into account how

textual features and educators' approaches might all serve in optimising the development of the key traits identified in this thesis. Given the sense that strategic course dissemination may assist in developing students' perception of knowledge, as well as the concerns mentioned regarding the problematic relationship between affective immersion and cognitive distance, this section is structured according to this sense of meaningful course structuring[63].

5.2.1)   Social Awareness: From Subjective Recognition to Social Critique

Since social awareness, in the context of this thesis, constitutes both empathetic understanding and a recognition of social constructs, the discussion which follows will begin with a consideration of the implications of the former, and end with reflections on the latter, since it pertains to a movement towards critical thinking. With the sense that literary texts are able to draw its readership in to a greater extent than more 'factual' texts, it is believed that this ability renders the medium suitable for engagements with human nature and subjective experiences. Whilst the recognition of shared experiences might assist in overcoming tendencies of Othering, the sense that a lack of cognitive distance might counter critical engagements with texts, leads to the belief that more subjective engagements with literature might be optimised if they precede interventions aimed at increasing critical faculties. If courses hope to draw on the value of this literary feature, then the texts presented during the initial stages of course delivery will have to contain relatable aspects approached in a subjective manner.

In this, the alignment between affective immersion and 'hot' media is apparent. The understanding of 'hot' media as those in which extra-sensory features override cognitive engagement, means that including new media formats containing subjective or connotative elements, might present an efficient way for educators to begin their courses with accessible, yet engaging texts[64]. In cases where the availability of texts which possess the lack of contextual distance required for encouraging affective immersion is limited, one might reflect on the potential production of such resources that might stem from encouraging digital literacy

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[63] As mentioned, the interest in initial exposure to the discipline, does lead to an increased interest in first-year programmes, but given time-constraints, it is possible that the process laid out in this section might require some of the consolidating practices, such as critical creative writing, to continue on into second-year programmes or beyond.

[64] In this, whilst longer texts, like the novel, might also possess the ability to draw in its readership, their inclusion early on in a literary studies course might be problematic given time-constraints since current reading patterns might negate students' ability to complete their readings before lessons begin.

within the context of critical creative writing projects, as the texts generated might serve for teaching in subsequent years.

Regarding the role which ICT inclusion might play in disseminating such texts, the ability to upload multimedia presents a means of extending course delivery beyond the constraints of the physical classroom. However, an additional possibility arises when intending to situate such initial, more affective, engagements within the greater outcomes of the course. By encouraging students to make use of the 'blog' format as a means of reflecting on their responses to these texts, a more concrete sense of their initial textual engagements might be developed. Whilst monitoring or assessing blog submissions with large groups is impractical, the format retains value as a resource to the individuals who constructed them, since students might be asked to revisit their responses later on in a course as a means of reflecting on both the development of their own critical faculties, but also as a means of demonstrating the ability which literary texts have to elicit such responses.

Regarding social awareness as it relates to an understanding of the relationship between societies and ideologies, educators' role in achieving this outcome is clearer. In this, the need to guide students' focus on the manner in which the setting in a narrative, or the contextual background of a text, comes to influence the experiences of individuals arises. Conceptualising of this process in cognitivist terms, the process is one which requires both factual and conceptual knowledge. Through an understanding of concepts such as ideology, or perhaps even 'Othering', the value of the factual knowledge relating to the historical and contextual background is unlocked, since students are assisted in reflecting on the relationship between these aspects. Given the sense that initial readings are often conducted in a subjective manner, given a tendency to 'read for the plot', there might be value in providing such information before the initial reading takes place, in order to provide students with a clearer sense of what they need to focus on.

With regards to text selection, texts containing representations of setting in a naturalistic manner might be seen as being of value during this stage of course dissemination. In acknowledging the influence of time constraints, educators might therefore need to incorporate short stories, and might choose to adopt a comparative lens in order to strengthen the sense of social influences. Although alternative options do exist, one means of achieving this outcome might therefore be to select two or three short stories that come from disparate backgrounds.

In reflecting on the role which ICT affordances might have during this stage, the use of webpages, or wikis, to relate contextual background information preceding an engagement with the text might serve to enhance the value of students' engagements. Considering the statement that contextual distance might also introduce the need for educators to bridge students' understanding of the language employed, either hypertext or tooltips providing definitions for novel terms or concepts might be employed. In solidifying students' understanding of central concepts, such as ideology, Othering, gender roles and the like, might best be done through the inclusion of glossaries linked to wiki pages, or through the use of video lessons[65]. In addition, the engagement with concepts related to social phenomenon also creates an opportunity for educators to employ the principles of 'community of enquiry' practices as a means of decreasing the semantic gravity and density of concepts by encouraging of students to contribute to the development of wiki pages related to these concepts.

5.2.2)   Literary Criticism: Developing Complex Procedural Knowledge

Although the movement away from subjective immersion and towards social critique represents a shift towards critical thinking, developing the complex procedural knowledge required for effective literary criticism to take place, requires significant input from educators. As such, this section will reflect on how the various processes involved in literary criticism relate to the types of knowledge identified by cognitivists, in order to gain insight into how such development might be approached strategically. Again, the interest in the potential contribution which might come from incorporating the use of ICT affordances in English Studies courses, leads to reflections on the relationship between these resources and the kinds of knowledge required for complex procedural knowledge development.

In order to approach the teaching of literary criticism, there is value in reflecting on the various processes involved in this practice. Consequently, one might begin by recognising the initial engagement with the texts as one which requires a particular approach to reading, followed by the reflections involved in analysis, and leading to the composition of essays informed by and structured according to specific academic conventions. As such, this section will begin by looking at the ways in which close-reading practices might be taught optimally, followed by

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[65] In cases where the concepts introduced during this stage of course dissemination are particularly complex, or where these might hold particular value for the course as a whole, video lessons (which could be constructed to include questions through SCORM packaging) might be required, since students might require more time to familiarise themselves with the kind of self-directed study which takes place when using hyperlinked resources.

reflection on the relationship between analysis and literary criticism, as a means of consolidating the various processes during the composition of literary criticism essays.

Regarding the teaching of close-reading, the practice possesses a greater sense of focus than practices like overall-extended close reading. When the process is taught after the more situated and conceptual approaches suggested for increasing students' awareness of societal influences on ideological constructs, its use becomes a means of concretising practice, rather than negating a recognition of texts as contextually situated. In relation to the types of knowledge delineated by cognitivists, mastering this procedure requires an understanding of what the concept entails – an understanding which could be solidified through modelling.

In selecting texts through which close-reading might be taught, length becomes particularly relevant. Since only applying the approach to sections of a text might require constant references to details located outside of the selected passage, short written poetry might therefore present a suitable medium for teaching close-reading. Educators could also consider applying some of the principles informing close-reading to visual media, since these texts are also able to feature as an accessible whole. An additional consideration might also stem from reflection on concepts, like connotation, thematic relationships, or contrast, which could be introduced during the teaching process.

Although modelling can be done in the physical classroom format, there are some aspects to the online learning environment which may serve to enhance the efficiency of the modelling process. Since screencasting allows for learners to observe the educator, but also allows for the text to be presented alongside this, it is possible that this format might enhance their sense of the substantiation informing the claims made by the educator. Since SCORM packaging also allows for a greater deal of interaction, and for the provision of additional information, such as definitions which might ensure mutual understanding, this affordance could potentially ensure that the links between the 'factual' information contained in the text, and the analytical claims made by the educator, remain apparent.

Where close-reading practices relate strongly to the units (or signifiers) that produce meaning within any given text, the process of analysis might be regarded as one which generally introduces more additional considerations during one's engagement with a text. Whilst many of the aspects that might optimise the teaching of close-reading also apply to teaching literary analysis, an important difference might be the need to identify any terminology or concepts that might assist students in the analytic process. As mentioned, the theoretical approaches

considered to be of use in adopting students' prior knowledge in moving towards more nuanced understandings include New Criticism, Formalism, genre studies and narratology. In this, attempts at ensuring a sense of cohesion in a course might lead to the incorporation of the terminology produced by New Critics in expanding on the close-reading of poetry into analysis.

Using a genre or Formalist approach as a means of developing a greater sense of textuality, the poetic form might then be taught alongside other texts through a comparative approach. If this technique is used as a means of returning to texts studied during a prior interest in societal influences, the possibility arises for using an interest in text structure as a means of negating the restrictive focus of close-reading practices. When the suggestion for using short stories as a means of engaging with representations of 'setting' in order to reflect on the nature of society was adopted, then the possibility of revisiting some of the texts previously examined, but approaching these through a more structured analytical stance, arises. To this end, narratology might serve as one means of revisiting texts that were previously incorporated due to the value of their thematic interests.

However, where narratives incorporating a naturalistic style might best be suited for stimulating social awareness, the move towards Formalism might require of educators to also include texts containing more explicit traces of their construction[66]. In sensing the potential relationship between Formalism and genre studies, this shift allows for clearer reflection on text construction in general, since the features of various genres might be discussed as they relate to their purpose.

In moving between these specific interests, the value of repetition in solidifying procedural knowledge needs to be acknowledged. As such, the proposed structure is one which seeks to enhance the sense of how the degree of factual, conceptual or procedural knowledge present in particular approaches might influence their efficiency during initial course dissemination. As such, moving between those approaches deemed suitable needs to take place only after the preceding knowledge required has been established. To this end, glossaries, wiki pages or online lessons might be used to communicate the principles informing 'teachable' approaches to literary criticism, and there might be value in aiming to construct lessons with a clear focus and repeated modelling of the analysis throughout.

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[66] Genres suited to this task might include modernist short stories, some written poetry, as well as post-structuralist texts.

One of the potentially valuable outcomes arising from constant modelling, lies in its ability to increase students' sense of literary criticism as a whole. Since this complex procedure constitutes a concept in and of itself, repeated exposure to different approaches might assist in developing students' understanding of the distinguishable features present in literary criticism. However, before students are expected to produce literary criticism essays, academic writing conventions need to be taught explicitly. Although an awareness of some aspects, such as substantiation for claims resulting from exposure to modelling, or structuring and referencing conventions presented on wiki pages, might develop through engagements with online resources, reflection on the characteristics of literary criticism essays leads to an increased sense of the inefficiency of sole reliance on modelling as a means of equipping students with the perception of knowledge required for producing nuanced readings.

While online resources could easily be used to convey the necessary information regarding academic writing conventions, as well as testing this knowledge through online quizzing, for example, the inadequacy of pure e-learning becomes most apparent when reflecting on the meta-cognitive element present in literary criticism. In this, research indicating that online discussion forums are rarely able to reproduce the level of interaction and potential disagreement found in physical discussions, the value which literary criticism tends to attach to a recognition of the influences on one's thinking and its tendency to encourage reflection on potential counter-arguments, means that the final shift towards such reflective thinking might be difficult to support in the online learning environment.

Although suggestions for overcoming this limitation might include encouraging students to revisit blog entries made during the initial exposure to literature in order to identify ideological assumptions, or by presenting students with literary criticism articles demonstrating the possibility of opposing viewpoints, the value which comes from group discussions or structured debates appears too complex to replicate in the online environment. As such, following the short reflection on the implications that blended learning might hold for developing creativity and innovation, the general pedagogical implications of blended learning will be considered, in order to increase the sense of how this might impact face-to-face teaching.

5.2.3)   Creativity and Innovation

Claims that the construction of arguments, as are required in literary criticism, entail innovation since it represents writing that not only draws on the text studied, but moves beyond the text to

include the writer's perception thereof, can be seen as justifiable. This is particularly true when the perception of critical thinking incorporates an understanding thereof as merging both divergent and convergent thinking. However, since the convergent aspect might be regarded as encouraging the selection of those ideas which pertain to the specific focus of an essay, there is a sense that the level of creativity might be restricted. Consequently, English Studies' potential for developing students' creative capabilities might be optimised through the inclusion of creative writing projects.

Whether the teaching of creative writing takes place within the proposed method of critical creative writing, or whether educators opt for more traditional approaches to creative writing, there remains some value in calling for reflection within this practice. Such reflections might include considerations of literary devices employed, or the nature of the chosen genre in the case of critical creative writing, but should always include some reflection on both the communicative power of language and considerations on the nature of the intended readership. As such, creative endeavours might be seen as aligning with the kind of knowledge which cognitivists term 'meta-cognitive' knowledge.

As is the case in encouraging this kind of reflection for the purpose of consolidating the process of literary criticism, ICT affordances might possess limited potential. In this, the blog might again be considered the most suitable format for stimulating reflection, or allowing students to publish their works, should educators choose to draw on the potential benefit of incorporating the use of the online learning environment. Again, there is a sense that monitoring these spaces might present a challenge for educators working with larger groups. However, when students are encouraged to engage with others' work in this sphere, their informal feedback might assist in increasing students' awareness of readers' responses to their work.

5.3)   Reconstructing English Studies in South Africa: Pedagogical Implications

With the choice of cognitivism as a dominant theory of interest in this thesis, reflection on the contextual influences has at times been neglected. Although this opens up space for subsequent research, there is a sense that some initial reflection on the implications of these contextual factors as they relate to the general implications of a blended learning model, remains of use. In this, a sense arises of the important role which face-to-face instruction plays in maintaining the humanist origins of English Studies, which might come to serve calls for the Africanisation of tertiary education. As mentioned, the conception of Africanisation maintained in this study,

is as a process whereby the individual voices of African academics might contribute to existing thoughts and conventions. As such, the humanists' tendency to value individuality might be seen as being aligned with these efforts.

Since the online learning environment is characterised by limitations resulting in a penchant for 'factuality' and diminished levels of interaction between individuals, the value of face-to-face instruction in blended learning models stems from its potential to overcome these limitations. Concerns regarding the experiential approaches to teaching practices in the discipline, stemming from the general lack of pedagogical interest characterising English Studies, might therefore be countered when such teaching coincides with the use of online resources constructed in accordance with the principles set out in this thesis. Consequently, traditional modes of instruction might increase their value by drawing on their ability to heighten interaction between students and educators, and by celebrating individual differences and creativity within these spaces.

Since an awareness of differing viewpoints or potential contributions which can be enhanced through exposure to others is highly valued in the discipline, the use of physical discussions or structured debates within these spaces may serve to increase their value. In stimulating such discussions, lecturers might consider the use of clicker systems as a means of heightening students' involvement and stimulating subsequent discussions on the questions presented. Similarly, employing the 'community of enquiry' method for generating online resources also encourages a greater level of interaction between students. Ensuring such interaction, however, might require of educators to have this approach incorporated into some face-to-face sessions, in order to concretise students' understanding of what the practice entails.

5.4)   Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

Whilst the current study was largely motivated by the current lack of research addressing the topic of blended learning in English Studies, especially within the South African context, the complex interaction between multiple factors that should inform the development of blended learning models suited to this context and discipline gave rise to insights regarding various aspects which might require further investigation. This section will attempt to identify both the limitations of the study, as well as some areas which could allow for further research. However, given the persisting belief in the value of individual insights and the potential which exposure

to information might hold for generating thought, it is hoped that the current study would inspire additional interests which might not be anticipated here.

First and foremost, the current study was limited by its theoretical nature. Consequently, determining the practicality and value of the insights generated by this research can only stem from implementation. Such implementation might be conducted using either qualitative or quantitative approaches. Qualitative research based on students' experiences might serve to increase the sense of the implications of such models as they relate to constructivist's interest in contextual influences, whilst quantitative studies might produce insight into the effect of such models on student achievement.

Similarly, the theoretical nature of this study, alongside limitations regarding length, resulted in the presentation of only some of the factors which might come to influence text selection. In particular, the lack of depth afforded for discussions surrounding reader response as this might relate to cognitive distance or affective immersion in the current context, did not allow for the evaluation of the suitability of specific texts. With the general lack of reader-response theorists working in the South African context, the possibility of such specific evaluations remains an area in which further contributions could be made regarding text selection. Similarly, the current study incorporated only a limited discussion on those theoretical approaches suggested by the research to be of particular educational value. Consequently, it may be of value for educators to reflect on potential means of increasing the 'teachability' of alternative theoretical approaches which may be considered of value.

In addition, the particular focus on ICT affordances presented in this thesis might be perceived as having led to a limited reflection on the relationship between the traditional modes of instruction and how seamless integration between the online learning environment and the physical teaching sessions might be achieved. Whilst the choice of blended learning as a focus was motivated by a sense of the inadequacy of pure e-learning for the discipline of English Studies, financial constraints might lead to an increasing reliance on online resources, and as such, it could also be of value to continue research on possible ways of overcoming this perceived inadequacy. In addition, the brief overviews given on the potential of ICT affordances did not allow for a more in-depth examination of such potential. As such, studies examining the use of individual affordances in English Studies may further insights into their potential for the discipline. As mentioned, the limited research on use of online quizzing in

'soft' sciences, for example, exists, despite a sense that strategic question construction might render the format applicable to these disciplines.

Since the current study focused on departmental implications for blended learning, more research might be conducted in order to establish institutional implications. In this, the sense that tertiary education in South Africa might come to rely more strongly on government funding, could motivate investigations into the possibility of cooperation between departments at various institutions in further limiting the financial implications of developing online learning resources. In addition, the focus on departmental implications, neglected considerations on the implications for students, particularly in a context where some students may require some training in order to ensure that they are able to navigate the online learning environment.

Finally, as a point of potential interest, debates surrounding the nature of the discipline in its current context do exist. However, since many of these debates do not take the educational implications into account, there might be some value in further reflection on this matter. Since the current study was focused on three potential outcomes, much can be done in investigating alternative outcomes. Similarly, the call towards Africanisation in tertiary education has not stimulated significant reflection on the implications of the digital landscape. Consequently, those subscribing to the belief in the value of Africanisation might consider how this movement relates to the idea of digital literacy, given the increasing influence that such media have on the public.

5.5) Conclusion

Although a move towards blended learning approaches might be motivated by financial constraints, the shift is one which might have significant consequences for the discipline of English Studies. Given the online learning environment's penchant for factuality, the move is one that encourages educators to concretise their own sense of the discipline and to reflect on the current pedagogical practices employed. In this, attempts at consolidating a discipline characterised by the complex procedural knowledge required for literary criticism with the nature of the online learning environment encourages reflection on the learning process.

When adopting cognitivists' delineation of the various kinds of knowledge and their perceived relationship between these, the potential of drawing on students' existing knowledge and

dualist perception of knowledge as a means of encouraging the development of both conceptual and procedural knowledge becomes apparent. As such, it becomes of value to reflect on the suitability of various ICT affordances for presenting either factual, conceptual, or procedural knowledge. In developing resources to assist in such development, the possibility of use 'community of enquiry' practice, amongst others, presents a means of developing online resources in a manner which might overcome the implications of semantic gravity and density's influence on understanding.

However, in trying to consolidate ICT affordances with the potentially relevant outcomes identified in this thesis, the greatest limitation of the online learning environment appears to be its inability to encourage the meta-cognitive processes required for consolidating literary criticism. Similarly, those hoping to embrace the potential that the discipline might hold for encouraging the convergent and creative thinking required for innovation, might find the lack of flexibility afforded by the online learning environment to render this space inadequate for such development. Consequently, the choice of a blended learning approach, rather than employing pure e-learning for course delivery, highlights the need for educators to strive to maintain the more personal, interactive and flexible nature of face-to-face teaching. In heightening the level of interaction possible in these environments, flipped-classroom models might be employed to ensure that a dynamic in which the educator is perceived as the sole provider of knowledge might be countered, thereby encouraging the recognition of the value which individual voices might hold within the context of education.

As such, despite perceptions of blended learning as being unsuited to the teaching of 'soft' science disciplines, the challenges presented in adopting such models should be perceived as opportunities for further reflection. In reconstructing the discipline of English Studies as one which has significant potential value in the South African context, it is important to ensure that teaching practices are optimised to ensure that the relevant outcomes might be achieved. In this, it is hoped that the current study will encourage educators to reflect on the means by which these outcomes might be achieved and to encourage a renewed interest in the value of education in this country.

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