

The mediality of pre-recorded digital performing arts on YouTube: a skills-development module

Stephen Faber*, Marié-Heleen Coetzee & Marth Munro

Department of Drama, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Corresponding author. E-mail stephenfabersf@gmail.com*

Abstract

This article assessed the efficacy of a skills-development module in pre-recorded digital performing arts (PRDPA) that was presented as an online workshop within the South African educational paradigm. The PRDPA module embraces the democratisation of online media that the internet, in specific YouTube offers. PRDPA skills may enable young performers to introduce themselves to an online audience, promote themselves as performing artists and facilitate the efficacy of their online presence and digital footprint. The article drew on the theoretical domain of mediality, which included online presence, digital performance and PRDPA; and on the domain of education, which included social constructivism, and teaching and learning in a social network environment. The research was conducted as a qualitative, empirical study following a case study approach that made use of elements of cyberethnography and a differentiated comparative analysis. The pre-workshop videos and the videos that were created as part of the workshop by the workshop participants were analysed, as well as the responses of a group of experts to the material generated by the participants before and after

the presentation of the module. The analysis was supported by an evaluation of the module by the participants.

Keywords: Pre-recorded digital performing arts, online presence, digital performance, cyberethnography, mediality, YouTube.

Introduction

This article reports on an empirical case study on the design and assessment of a skills-development module in pre-recorded digital performing arts (PRDPA) at National Qualification Framework (NQFⁱ) level 8 for drama and performance studies students. Using the term 'performing arts' as part of PRDPA is deliberate to retain the aesthetic and framed qualities and meaning the term implies. PRDPA have the capacity to encompass many forms of technological and digital performance and can incorporate multiple forms of new media. The term 'PRDPA' has been established by the authors to describe a type of technological and digitally created performance. As educators working in drama in tertiary education, the importance of PRDPA has become clear. All three authors have experience in performer training, and online teaching and learning. Faber's experience as a lecturer in coaching and guiding students in creating video content informed the crux of the research project. The module aims to encourage an entrepreneurial mindset and equip students with skills in online content creation that will enable them to begin to establish an online presence that can be used as promotional

content, enhance active participation in the performing arts sector or become a starting point for a career in and of itself.

Current internet cultures, technologies, and online platforms available provide an opportunity for young performers to introduce themselves and their work to a broad international online audience and for self-promotion. South African performers such as Julia Anastasopoulos (SuzelleDIY), Anne Hirsch and Lesego Tlhabi (Coconut Kelz) as well as untrained performers such as Lasizwe Dambuza and Blessing Xaba, along with non-South African performers such as Miranda Sings, Todrick Hall, Prince Ea, Rhett and Link, etc., offer examples as to the career prospects digital content development may offer. These performers make use of YouTube, as the platform is popular amongst the age group of 18-34 internationally and in South Africa, easily accessible, controllable data usage and promote participatory culture. YouTube seemed to be an appropriate online medium to base the module on.

YouTube

Since its inception, YouTube has become one of the most visited websites in the history of the internet. YouTube, a merging platform between the internet and television (Kim 2012, p. 53), is a video sharing website and was started in 2005 by Jawed Karim, Steve Chen, and Chad Hurley. According to Ace (2016, n.p.), it was the exposure of Janet Jackson's breast at the Super Bowl half-time concert, as well as the tsunami in Thailand in December 2004, that triggered the idea of a video sharing platform.

The first video, *Me at the Zoo* was uploaded on YouTube on 23 April 2005 by Karim and received 80,442,520 views and 3,967,195 comments by 3 December 2019, with more views and more comments, added every three minutes on average. Less than a year later, Google purchased YouTube for \$1.65 billion (Bellis 2018, n.p.). In 2007 the site was launched in the United Kingdom and eight other countries and in 2010 in South Africa. Ace (2016, n.p.) states that by 2010, YouTube received three billion views per day and gaming and vlogging channels started to gain interest.

According to YouTube, 'everyone deserves to have a voice, and [...] the world is a better place when we listen, share and build community through our stories' (YouTube 2019, n.p.). According to Jarret (2008, p. 133) the retired YouTube slogan 'Broadcast Yourself' is an indication of the users' centrality and the possibility of global mass participation. The content of professional companies compete with user-generated content, becoming a 'metaphor for the democratising power of the Internet and [...] gives unknown performers, filmmakers, and artists new ways to promote their work to a global audience [...]' (Levine 2010, n.p.). It must be mentioned that the idea of democratisation is not unproblematic and has been subjected to critique especially in the face of YouTube's possible currency as surveillance capital. A discussion of this aspect falls outside of the scope of this article. Of importance to artists who utilise YouTube and other social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, is the practice by directors, casting directors and producers who make use of online platforms when considering

performers for castings and auditions. In this regard, the online following of an artist might have an influence on casting decisions. This is an indication of the importance of a well-managed online presence for performers.

Contributors to YouTube is a diverse group, ranging from large media producers such as television stations, sports companies and major advertisers to small-to-medium enterprises seeking inexpensive distribution channels and alternatives to mainstream broadcast structures. The YouTube community also consist of cultural institutions, artists, activists and quasi-professional media producers who disrupt the professional-amateur divide. Quality of content is not consistent as the platform is used by professionals and amateurs.ⁱⁱ Unlike televisionⁱⁱⁱ, YouTube is accessible through mobile devices globally, involves low obstructions to creative expression and is supported by a hyper-engaged, highly-connected younger audience consisting mostly of Millennials and digital natives who are content with accessing arts and entertainment digitally and online and who embrace the participatory culture of social media (Miles 2018, p. 306).

YouTube content can be created at a low production cost, relatively low technical skills requirements, and low-cost distribution (Blank 2013, p. 591). A module in PRDPA can tap into the aforementioned to open up another career path in screen performance, increase entrepreneurial thinking and enhance career autonomy. This article focuses exclusively on video creation in relation to PRDPA for online personal publishing on YouTube. YouTube is continuously changing and developing and host a diverse variety of content. It ranges from high-end video

production to low-end content created on smartphones and a range of hand-held devices.

YouTube videos of the aforementioned YouTubers are between one-and-a-half minutes and nine minutes long. Their videos contain content with a comic or satirical slant. Each YouTuber caters for a specific audience in mind and has a strong following. They also managed to translate their YouTube success into offline success in activities such as live performances, television and film appearances, book publications and other notable achievements. This offers a starting point for thinking about the design of a PRDPA module. PRDPA is a skills-development programme towards on-screen media practice with the aim to start building a digital footprint and enhance online presence. Online presence obtains certainty through the medial practices of PRDPA and is related to digital performance.

Mediality and online presence

Digital performance is a generic term to define performances with a substantial digital and technological component. An online presence is established when digital performances are published online. Dixon (2007, p. 1) argues that during the last decade of the twentieth-century, computer technologies influenced live theatre and performances, and new forms of performance genres appeared. He defines digital performance broadly to include performances where computer technologies play an essential role and impact on content, techniques, aesthetics and the delivery of performances. These performances include live events, as well as performances and activities accessible through computers and the internet. Digital

media applications for performances are diverse, and the internet as a platform for distribution, collaboration and as a database contributed significantly to the development of digital performances. Dixon (2007, p. 3) describes digital performances as a 'virtual performance of the self', embracing aspects of everyday life. This aspect is also identifiable in the work of the YouTubers mentioned earlier.

Digital performance includes a variety of ways of producing performances (live, recorded, multimedial, intermedial and transmedial) for distribution on the internet or as part of a live performance. Papagiannouli (2011, p. 273) mentions terms such as intermedial performance, virtual theatre, cyberformance, telematic performance, cybertheatre, cyberperformance, hyperformance, cyberdrama, online theatre and networked performance to refer to modes of digital performance. PRDPA is related to digital performance as it makes use of the internet as a stage. However, that is where the relation ends since PRDPA is developed and produced as a pre-recorded performance without aiming to bring remote performers and audience together in real-time.

Pre-recorded digital performing arts

As suggested by Poole (2011, p. 28), performing artists have an opportunity to self-determine their professional status through digital performances on the internet, through 'self-curating or co-curating their work online', creating an opportunity for agency for artists. The traditional gateways are removed, and artists are in a position to take their work directly to the audience. Holland (2014, n.p.) contends that performing online is less expensive than renting a venue, awards access to

audiences from all over the world and creates novel ways for artists scattered all over the globe to cooperate and to interact with viewers.

PRDPA can be framed as a type or genre of digital entertainment. Although it is not theatre, nor the same as theatre that is available online, it is pre-recorded online performances. Although Papagiannouli (2011, p. 273) refers to digital performance as virtual theatre, cyberformance and online theatre, PRDPA does not fit into any of these classifications as it is not an event or space, but rather a product in the same way a music video or film is a product.

PRDPA videos are not live performance or live performances repurposed, but rather in 'an environment of hybrid digital production' (Lavender 2017, p. 340). As a practice, PRDPA has the potential to make a positive impact on the career and professional opportunities of performing artists. Therefore, PRDPA is not live theatre, but performances using the internet as a stage which is 'a medial resource for a multimodal dramaturgical arrangement' (Lavender 2017, p. 350). It is a mode of production and an 'assembled technology of dissemination' (Lavender 2017) where the final product requires an online audience.

Considering the discussion, PRDPA is a performance, developed and pre-recorded as digital video, edited and packaged to be distributed online. The performance can be any of the following, but is not limited to, a monologue, a dialogue, a poem, storytelling, a song, a short sketch (comedy or dramatic), a musical performance, a parody, a short film, acrobatic sequence or a dance piece. PRDPA is not merely

transposing performances to the internet but the creation of a newer mediality with similar characteristics to the online video. PRDPA is an epistemology of mediality that repurposes some of the fundamental qualities of theatre, video, film, television, radio and new media, 'through the new mediality provided by internet technology' (Lavender 2017, p. 346).

Lavender (2010, p. 128) advocates that the migration to the digital world (digital devices and online digital platforms) had an impact on how arts and entertainment are recorded and distributed, as well as how consumers watch and listen to online entertainment. The process of digitisation underpins how films, television, radio, photographs, newspapers, books, magazines, musical recordings and performances are conceptualised and produced (Lavender 2010, p. 128). It is from this notion that we posit that PRDPA, which is an online interaction, is of value to live theatre, which is an offline interaction. It is due to what viewers experience online through PRDPA that a need to attend a production develops. More than live theatre, PRDPA offers higher value and opportunity to the individual performing artist to establish agency and independence. The development of a pragmatic PRDPA skills-development module required an appropriate research approach.

Research approach

The research was conducted as a qualitative, empirical case study approach making use of elements of cyberethnography and a differentiated comparative analysis.

Cyberethnography is the study or analysis of a social media setting while being immersed in it (Miriam 2011, n.p.) and appropriate for use when interactions between group members transpire online (Gerlitz 2013, n.p.). It involves reading about, and listening to people in social media settings and observing what they do online. Conversations, comments and observations are summarised, and themes and characters identified. In the case of this article, the cyberethnographic observations assisted with establishing themes related to video content and observable video production techniques. The theme extractions assisted in formulation and developed a scalable content analysis relating to video content, videography and video editing.

The scalable content analysis took the form of a descriptive analysis which aimed at achieving a differentiated comparative analysis. The purpose of the descriptive analysis was, therefore, a means to an end by comparing the pre-workshop videos (video 1) with the videos the participants made as part of the workshop (video 2). The descriptive analysis consequently enabled the comparative analysis. The 'explanatory variables' (Pickvance 2001, p. 14) is the criterion for evaluating the online content created by participants. The criterion (concept, videography and editing) remained constant and were used for the analysis of the content created. The assessment instrument consists of the differentiated comparative analysis of the PRDPA videos created by the participants, an assessment of the PRDPA videos by an external review panel made up of industry professionals and post-workshop feedback from participants.

The practical component of the study took the form of a scheduled online workshop that took place over 30 notional hours during 36 calendar days. The 30 notional hours translate as three credits^{iv}. The 30 hours are divided as follow; three hours for 16 online video lessons, two hours for four prescribed readings, one hour for two theoretical quizzes, two hours for facilitator engagement, four hours for the pre-production phase, nine hours for the production phase and nine hours for the post-production phase. The sampling method was purposive, and recruitment of participants stated the salient characteristics of participants as having to be fluent in English and having at least an NQF 6 qualification in drama/theatre/performance studies. Individuals were selected according to their willingness to participate. Eleven participants completed the online workshop. The presentation of the workshop was framed in a social constructivist educational paradigm and teaching and learning in a social network environment.

The PRDPA workshop was presented on the online learning platforms Blackboard and Thinkific. Two participants (P) made use of Blackboard and nine participants accessed the workshop through Thinkific. The two participants who accessed the workshop through Blackboard completed an NQF level 7 qualification. The nine participants who accessed the workshop through Thinkific completed an NQF level 6 qualification. All 11 participants have completed at least undergraduate studies in Drama, although at different institutions (P2, P4, P5, P6 and P10 completed postgraduate studies in Drama). Some of the participants had previous experience in the creation of videos, and some had no experience. The module design took

into consideration, that not all participant (and students at tertiary level) had access to advanced technologies or unlimited access to the internet.

Pedagogical and methodological frame

The PRDPA module is pedagogically rooted in constructivism and methodologically in teaching and learning in a social network environment (SNE). Although constructivism can take many forms, the main underpinning of all forms of constructivism in education lies in the notion that learners construct their own knowledge. The emphasis is on knowing as a process and not as a product. The process is characterised by elements such as hands-on activities, technology, learner-centeredness, cooperative and collaborative learning, learning through discovery and critical thinking.

According to Weegar and Pacis (2012, n.p.), constructivists see learning as a search for meaning. The constructivist theory of learning postulates that knowledge is constructed by the learner and that the learner develops understanding through their own experience. The process is enhanced through the guidance of the educator, and the co-creation of knowledge occurs in the learning environment within the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978). Wood, Brunner and Ross (1976, p. 90), tag the activities learners can do on their own, the activities the learner can do with assistance (the ZPD) and the activities the learner cannot do. The ZPD is the space or zone where it is possible to learn through the guidance of a more knowledgeable other.

Draper (2002, p. 522) defines constructivist education as ‘the philosophy, or belief, that learners create their own knowledge based on interactions with their environment including their interactions with other people’. From this social interaction model comes the theory of social constructivism where the focus is on shared experiences in the learning context. Social constructivist learning theory can be a process that is individual or collaborative project-based learning, experience-based learning, problem-based learning, learning by doing, inquiry-based learning or play-based learning (Topolovčan 2016, p. 1148). Social constructivism has received renewed attention in the twenty-first-century with the rapid development of Web 2.0 technologies and the impact of these technologies on teaching and learning.

The South African educational paradigm is partly rooted in social constructivism as it embraces teaching and learning in a variety of contexts, including vocational, occupational, academic and professional. The philosophical underpinning is applied competence consisting of foundational competence, practical competence and reflexive competence (SAQA 2012, p. 3). Applied competence includes foundational competence and embraces the intellectual and academic skills of knowledge construction and comprises of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Practical competence includes operational activities and reflexive competence integrates learner autonomy (SAQA 2012, p. 3). The South African educational paradigm is therefore underpinned by a social constructivist philosophy.

Teaching and learning in a SNE require a mixed-method approach. The combination of the SNE with face-to-face and activity-based methods offers a variety of opportunities for teaching and learning. In a study on activity-based learning, Margaryan, Collis and Cooke (2004, p. 265) recommend that 'flexible multimedia packaging' is required to enhance mixed-method 'technology with social interaction and collaborative learning, workplace-based activities' with supervision to facilitate the effectiveness of e-learning. Margaryan *et al.* (2004, p. 265) postulate that the 'key to the learning approach is the sharing of experiences related to these learning activities'. The submission of work by the students becomes an important aspect of the sharing because '[o]nce a collection of submissions is available, follow-up activities are built upon it'. Such learning should also involve 'social interaction and collaborative learning' (Margaryan *et al.* 2004, p. 266).

Online pedagogical practices often emulate online social practices (for example social media usage, internet shopping patterns etc.) and offer a way for interaction between educators and learners, and between learners, to construct new knowledge and to formulate processes for learning new material and skills. This can be seen in the similarity of the application interface and switching between applications on a mobile device. Offering courses online or in a blended, hybrid or e-format is a common practice in many universities worldwide and South African universities are no exception. The nature of online learning is that learners are able to access course material at any time and at any place and thus allows the learner

more control over the pace of learning which fits in with social online practices and the social constructivist learning theory (Janicki & Schell 2012, p. 31). Alvarez and Olivera-Smith define SNEs or social networking sites (SNSs) as online environments or sites 'sharing a variety of technical features that allow individuals to form associations, linked by heterogeneous motives, and constitute a social structure ('social network') made up of nodes interlinked by more than one type of relationship' (Alvarez & Olivera-Smith 2013, p. 315).

These online environments or sites syndicate a learners' personal profile with interactive and collaborative tools such as chats, blogs and forums. These tools reinforce a sense of community and collaboration to those in that online environment and form part of learning platform software or learning management systems (LMSs) such as Blackboard, Moodle, ATutor, and a wide variety of others. Alvarez and Olivera-Smith (2013, p. 315) explain that the SNE is embedded in the LMS (a formal learning environment). The SNE supports a learning task, and the LMS assist instructors, coordinators and educational managers to monitor learner participation and enable online teaching and learning. The designing of a SNE for teaching and learning should include multi-channel social interaction and diverse media to support the individual preferences of students.

Following, we will discuss the phases of this research project, namely (1) design, (2) presentation, (3) evaluation and (4) recommendations for improvements.

Design

The PRDPA module requires practical competencies and operational activities, which are part of the applied competencies as the philosophical underpinning of foundational competency that embraces analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Reflexive competencies are applied when assessing the PRDPA created for use and success. Setting the PRDPA module against an NQF level^v 8 requires the incorporation of applied competencies to reach learning achievements appropriate to NQF level 8. These include intellectual independence, the strengthening of skills, relating knowledge to undertake professional and high-skilled work and conducting research.

In relation to the module in PRDPA, intellectual independence is required for the conceptualising of ideas and content. The application of technical and digital skills, and creative and performance activities, such as scriptwriting, directing, acting, or any type of performing arts, requires the skill to relate knowledge to undertake professional and high-skilled work, when conceptualising, creating and producing a PRDPA video. The module is supported by theoretical engagement through published reading, which underpins the skills and activities and includes artistic research or practice-based research leading to creative output. The module demands critical thinking skills of students engaged with the module. Students develop the ability to relate knowledge and skills to a range of methods, practices and genres related to the creation of professional PRDPA videos. The module encourages active and applied learning to develop skills that contribute to

participants' understanding of and ability to create PRDPA videos practically. The module is offered as praxis and necessitates a high skills level in the execution and final presentation of a PRDPA video. Learning achievements required for the module are based on the categories of applied competencies as suggested by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA).

The learning achievements are broadly divided by SAQA (2012, pp. 10–11) into ten categories:

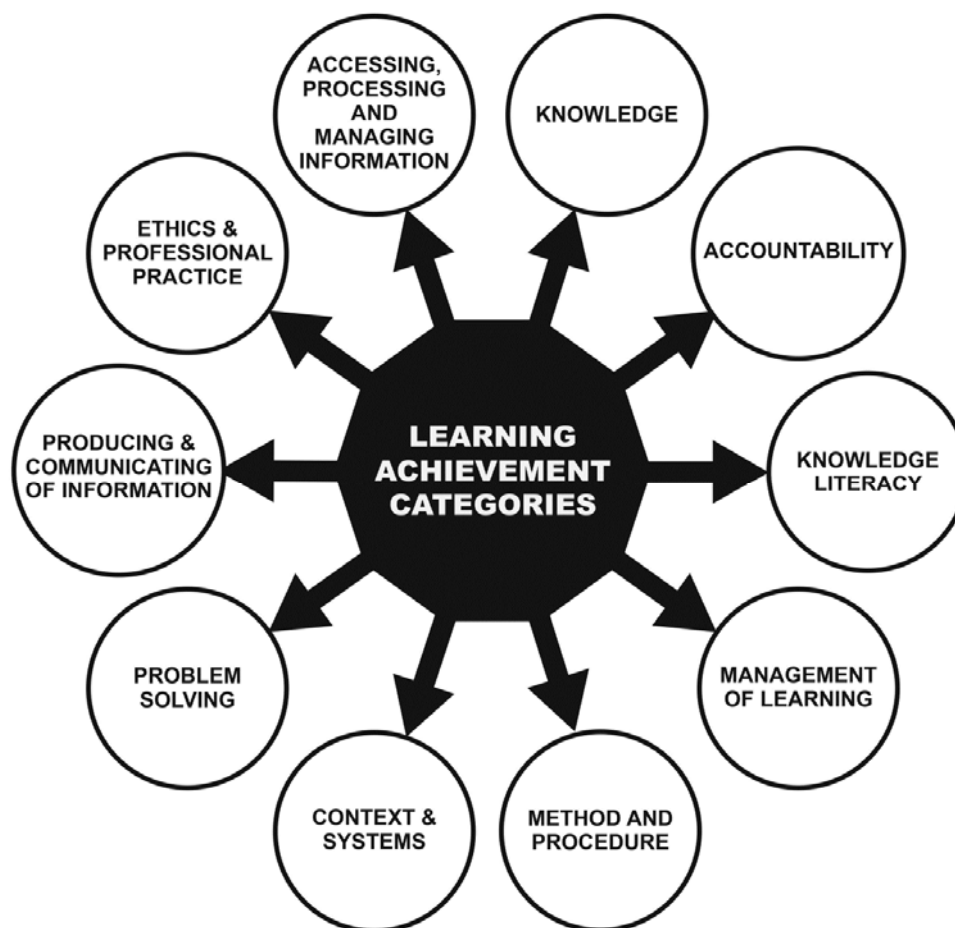


Figure 1: SAQA's ten learning achievement categories

In terms of the module in PRDPA, the applicability of the learning achievements as stipulated in Figure 1 is set out in Table 1:

Table 1: SAQA's ten learning achievement categories in relation to PRDPA.

SAQA learning achievements	Learning achievements related to PRDPA	Activities in PRDPA	Alignment with Bloom/Anderson et al.'s taxonomy
Knowledge	Awareness and understanding of PRDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading of related/relevant academic material 	Remember, understand, apply, analyse and evaluate
Knowledge literacy	To interrogate multiple sources of knowledge, including technology hardware and software, performance practices (live and digital) and online self-publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrieve relevant knowledge applicable to the creation of PRDPA videos • Execute video editing techniques when creating a PRDPA video 	Remember and apply
Methods and procedures	The methods and procedures involved in the creation of a PRDPA video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of choices in a specific context 	Understand
Problem-solving	Problem-solving as challenges arise during the pre-production, production and post-production phases when creating PRDPA videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make judgements and decisions when creating PRDPA videos 	Evaluate
Ethical and professional practices	Displaying an understanding of, and the application of ethical and professional practices in the entertainment industry and online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of choices in a specific context • Execute video editing techniques when creating a PRDPA video 	Understand and apply
Accessing, processing and managing information	Accessing, processing and managing information pertaining to the entertainment industry, video production, filmmaking, performance practices, online media and PRDPA, and being a performing artist in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make judgements and decisions when creating PRDPA videos 	Evaluate

	general		
Producing and communicate	Producing and communicate creative PRDPA concepts and products through concept treatments, scripts, storyboards and recordings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create, develop and produce PRDPA videos 	Create
Contexts and systems	The context in which PRDPA videos are created and for what purpose; and the systems involved in the creation and distribution of such videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of choices in a specific context 	Understand
Manage learning	The skill (of learners that are engaged with the module) to manage their learning and applicable activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute video editing techniques when creating a PRDPA video • Break up and organise the creation process into sections or parts to examine the choices made for the PRDPA video • Create, develop and produce PRDPA videos 	Apply, analyse and create
Accountability	Being accountable for the self, others and the videos created		NA

Assisting with the understanding of NQF level 8, and more specifically the gauging of the module in PRDPA against the descriptor, Anderson, Krathwohl, Airasian, Cruikshank, Mayer, Pintrich, Raths, and Wittrock's (2000) revision of Bloom's taxonomy is employed. The revised taxonomy is characterised by verbs and action words describing the cognitive processes of thinking levels. Figure 2 provides the classifications with action words for each classification with a description for

PRDPA on the right in the figure, linking the classifications and action words to PRDPA.

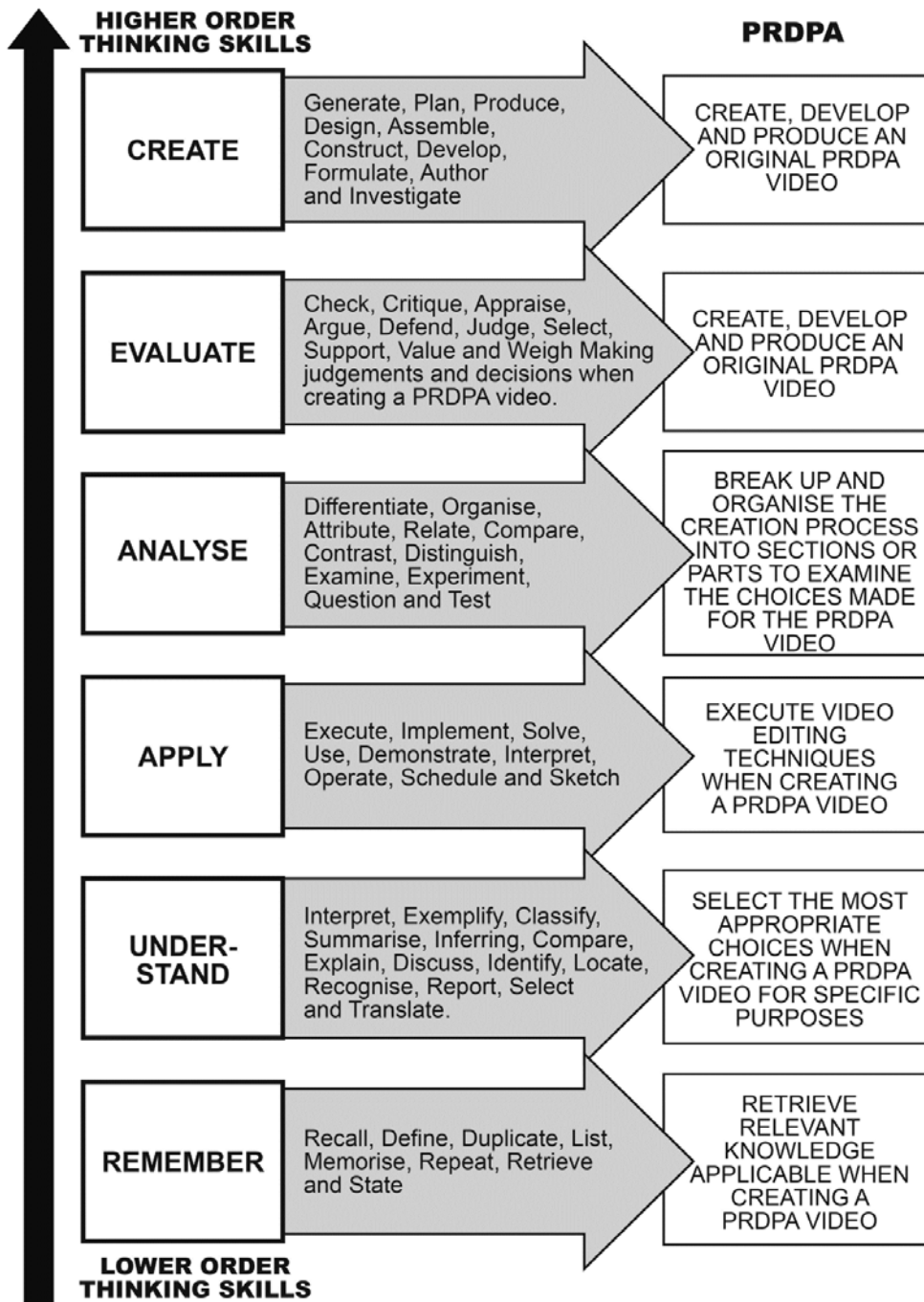


Figure 2: Alignment of the PRDPA module with the taxonomy classifications and action words

The Centre for Public Management Inc. (2009, pp. 21–26) divides digital media skills into three classes, namely softs skills, hard skills and technical skills. In addition to the three digital classes, Jenkins (2006, p. 6) proposes a set of core digital media skills that are social in nature and consists of play, performance, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgement, transmedia navigation, networking and negotiation. Making use of the digital media skills above, the module in PRDPA endeavours to develop the skills as set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Digital media skills

Soft skills	Hard skills	Technical skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working multidisciplinary teams in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storytelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video editing, video editing software and applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play and performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hardware and Software knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of how people consume digital content online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating video camera equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of digital trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative thinking 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating performances for online publication 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multitasking 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking and negotiation 		

These skills are identified as the most appropriate and directly relates to the creation of PRDPA videos and the intended learning outcomes of the module.

Seven intended learning outcomes include: (1) the demonstration of an understanding of concepts pertaining to PRDPA practice through the conceptualisation, planning and production of a PRDPA video. (2) Apply performance and cross-disciplinary practices that may inform understanding of PRDPA in a PRDPA video. (3) Through the practical creation of a PRDPA video, an awareness and the application of production skills, methods and processes (i.e. pre-production, production, post-production and video editing) occur. (4) Demonstrate the application of technical skills required to engage with selected digital media through the editing of a PRDPA video. (5) Integrate performance knowledge and skill with digital video production in creating a PRDPA video. (6) Use narrative techniques and practices in the development of PRDPA concepts. (7) The creation of a PRDPA video.

Presentation

The teaching and learning process is managed through 16 video lessons hosted on YouTube. These video lessons drive the module, presented as an online workshop, consisting of nine phases. During the nine phases, core digital media skills and classes of digital media skills are developed through the creation of PRDPA videos. The PRDPA module is positioned within the participants' zone of proximal development. This implies that only individuals with *no* or *little* experience in creating videos are suitable as candidates for the module who will create PRDPA videos *with* guidance from the facilitator. The acquisition of knowledge and skills occur during the process, towards achieving self-efficacy after completion of

the module. After completion of the PRDPA module, participants apply new knowledge and skills, creating PRDPA videos independently, *without* assistance from a 'more knowledgeable other'.

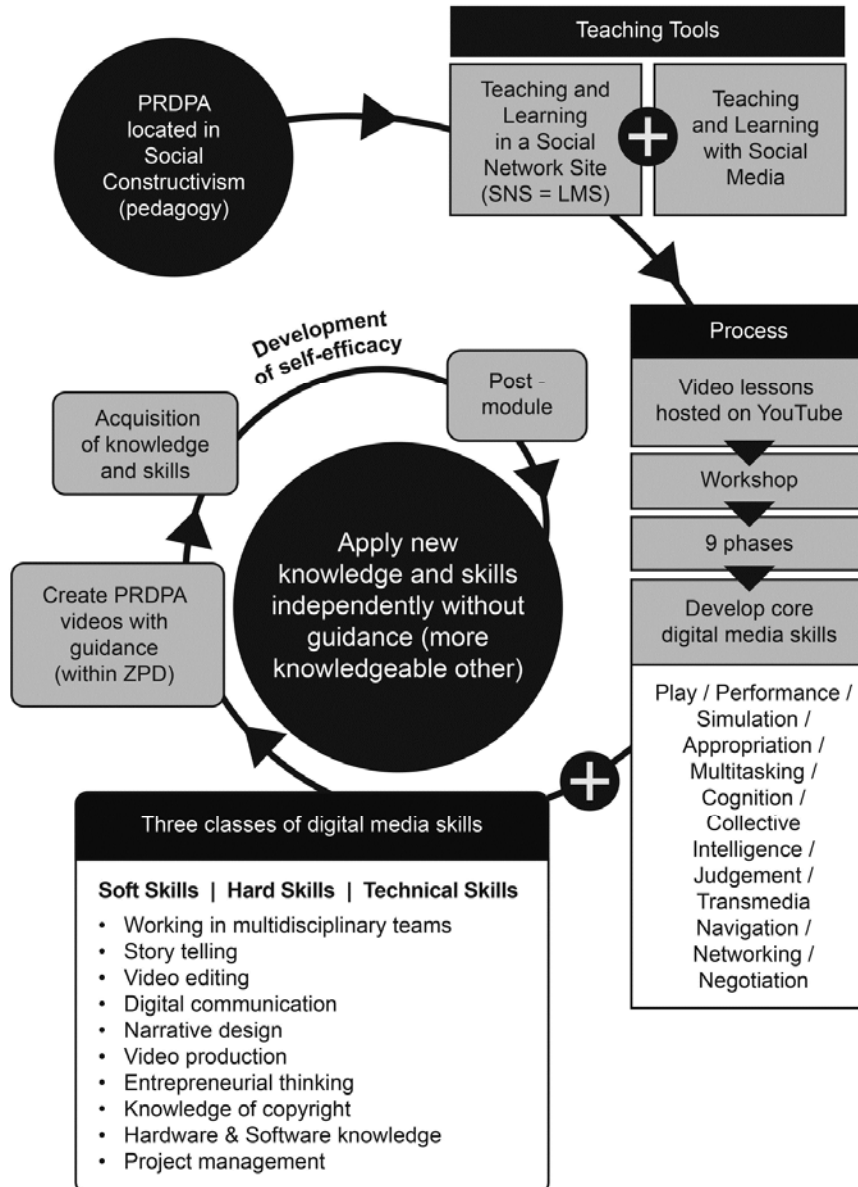


Figure 3: Arrangement of the teaching and learning strategy

The design included the development of the module content, learning material and 16 videos lessons that formed the primary source of information and communication for the online workshop presented to the research group. The workshop study guide, the reading material, the videos for the pre-phase and phase one were available from 17 June 2019 for the 11 participants to orientate themselves and access the four pre-scribed readings to complete the reading before the commencement of the workshop. Participants had the freedom to access the workshop at a time suitable to them.

All participants had to submit two videos. The first video is a pre-workshop video and participants had to create and produce a video without the assistance of the workshop facilitator. The participants did not have access to the other video lessons at this stage. The purpose of the pre-workshop video was to establish each participant's pre-workshop knowledge and skills, as well as making a comparison between the two videos created by each participant, therefore assisting with assessing the efficacy of the module in PRDPA.

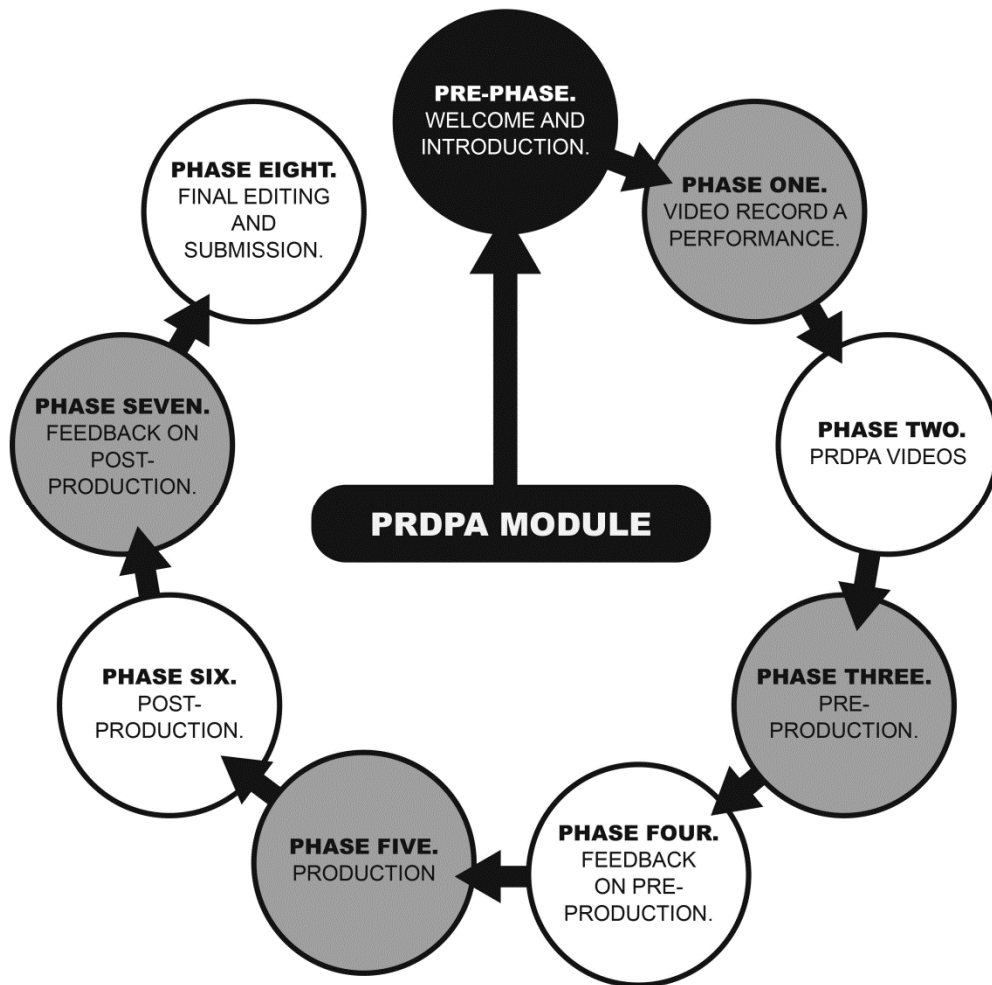


Figure 4: PRDPA module workshop phases

During the workshop participants access an electronic classroom through Blackboard or Thinkific, and a closed Facebook group. In phase one, participants video record a pre-workshop performance. In phase two, participants watch a series of videos, read readings and complete tasks. Phases three to eight, takes the participants through the planning and creation of a second PRDPA video. Participants document the conceptualisation of a PRDPA video, and the planning

conceptualisation is emailed to the facilitator of the workshop for feedback and recommendations.

As part of the workshop, participants engage theoretically with four prescribed readings, and these are monitored through two quizzes. Quiz 1 entailed 20 questions based on Kattenbelt's (2008) 'Intermediality in Theatre and Performance: Definitions, Perceptions and Medial Relationships' and Smith's (2019) 'Pervasive theatre: post-screen audiences and professional performance practice'. Quiz 2 entailed 20 questions based on Chen's (2013) 'Exploring Personal Branding on YouTube' and Miles' (2018) 'Do We Have a LIFT-Off?' Social Media Marketing and Digital Performance at a British Arts Festival'. The 11 participants completed both quizzes with an average of 89% for quiz 1 and an average of 93% for quiz 2. Therefore, the integration of the theoretical component is executed successfully by the participants.

The workshop did not require participants to use professional and expensive equipment to record and edit their videos. It was recommended that participants use what they have or what is possible to negotiate through networking. This made it economically easier for participants with limited or no funds available and experiencing constraints. Eight participants used their mobile phones for the recording while P2, P9 and P10 used video cameras. A variety of editing software and mobile applications were used by the participants. Six participants used editing software, while five used video-editing applications. The software and applications

offer free versions, making it possible for participants to gain access without paying for a subscription.

Evaluation

The two videos of each participant were used to determine, through a differentiated comparative analysis, and against the assessments of the external audit panel, if there were noticeable improvements and application of knowledge and skills gained during the various phases. A conclusion, making use of the differentiated comparative analysis and outcome of the external audit panel along with the feedback given by the participants regarding the workshop, was drawn to determine the efficacy of the skills-development module.

Two shortcomings are identified by the external audit panel. Firstly, the content has been flagged by the majority of the panel members. This implies that the workshop should focus explicitly on content development in the pre-production phase. This might contribute to content that is more developed and thought through. Secondly, some of the panel members identified the lack of a direct promotional message as advertising communication. Therefore, the workshop should include a section focussing on advertising. Apart from the two identified shortcomings, all the panel members agree that the second video is better than the first video for all participants. Therefore, the assessments of the panel members are proof of the efficacy of the workshop, specifically regarding videography and editing, and that skills development did occur for all 11 participants.

Upon completion of the workshop, participants provided feedback and evaluation. Two main themes are identified as shortcomings of the workshop in the participant evaluation. Firstly, participants expressed interest in gaining more information and skills regarding video editing techniques. The workshop provided only an introduction to editing covering the essential functions and process of editing. The participants asked for the inclusion of a section that provides an in-depth educational experience that benefits participants to gain a better understanding and confidence in video editing. Secondly, several participants requested a section focusing on online marketing, social media advertising and set-up, and management of a YouTube channel.

The recommendations provided by the participants inform possible adjustments and the inclusion of video editing tutorials and introducing participants to techniques and practices associated with social media marketing. The advertising and marketing shortcoming correlate with the panel assessment.

Including social media marketing as part of the workshop might prove to be beneficial to participants. It necessitates an extension of the workshop in its current form, or it might be of higher value to present these aspects as a second workshop or follow-up workshop. The scope of the workshop deliberately excluded marketing and advertising as the focus is on creating videos. The next logical step would be to distribute the videos created online, and a transmedial communication strategy is required. Social media marketing and online distribution will be a more pragmatic contribution as a follow-up workshop or the next step in the process.

Findings of empirical research

Eight of the participants had no experience with creating videos before the workshop, with three participants (P1, P2 and P9) who had experience. Two of the three participants (P2 and P9) with experience displayed noticeable skills and understanding in the pre-workshop video. The external audit panel did not highlight this difference, and their assessments reference improvement of the second video, concluding that detectable skills development did occur. The third participant (P1) had experience with creating only one video before the workshop, and there is no difference between the participant's first video and the videos of the eight remaining participants' pre-workshop video. The differentiated comparative analysis and the assessment made by the external audit panel reach the same conclusion regarding P1.

The equipment used by each participant serves as proof that it is possible to create PRDPA videos using mobile phones and using mobile video-editing applications. Throughout the video lessons, an emphasis is placed on using what is available to the participant, and accessing skills and equipment through networking. The reason for this emphasis is to facilitate participants' understanding and insight that expensive equipment and sophisticated technical skills are not necessarily required when taking the first step when creating videos for online publication. The fact that the majority of the participants used their mobile phones as recording devices serves as evidence that it is possible to create videos without expensive equipment. Through taking the stance of 'using what I have' and applying the skills

taught in the workshop, all the participants created a second video that is an improvement on the pre-workshop video. The differentiated comparative analysis and the assessment by the external audit panel support this argument.

The participant feedback identifies weaknesses in the workshop. Several participants suggest adding a component focusing on social media marketing, as well as enlarging the video editing component in the form of additional video editing tutorials. The panel assessment did not identify video editing as problematic, and the addition of such a component would be in support of participant confidence and experience in video editing. Although social media marketing or online marketing is an essential aspect of establishing a digital footprint and developing an online presence, the intention of the workshop was skills development in the creation of PRDPA videos and not online marketing. Therefore, social media marketing falls outside of the scope of the workshop. However, since the participants indicate interest in social media marketing and mentioned several times by some members of the external audit panel in their assessment, a component in social media marketing would enhance the efficacy of the workshop, provide a pragmatic use for the video and create a post-workshop purpose for the video.

There was a noticeable difference between the pre-workshop video and the second video of all the participants. Considering that the external audit panel assessed all the participants with noticeable improvements in video 2, a conclusion can be drawn that there is enough support that the skills-development module is

effective. The argument is supported through the triangulation and incorporation of participant feedback.

Conclusion

A module in PRDPA may enable young South African performers to create digital video content in the form of PRDPA as a starting point for creating an online presence, and embrace the opportunities and benefits afforded by an online presence. The skills developed through the PRDPA module might be transferable to other art forms or individuals interested in creating videos for YouTube. Other art forms include amongst others, media art, visual art, dance and literary art as broad art forms classifications.

The article contributes to the area of PRDPA, which at the time of writing offered little scholarly research or scholarly discourse in English and Afrikaans. Possible future research should focus on in-person presentation of a similar workshop or training programme; a specific focus on one selected performing arts discipline, i.e. dance or performance poetry; as well as intermediate and advanced training in the creation of PRDPA videos.

There is a noticeable difference between the two videos created by each participant and that the skills-development module in PRDPA is effective in its current form. This is confirmed by the feedback provided by the participants and the analysis of the external audit panel.

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NOTES

ⁱ The NQF in South Africa applies to 10 levels which are divided into three bands of which band three consists of university degrees. NQF level 8, therefore, includes Honour's Degrees, Post Graduate Diplomas and Professional Qualifications.

ⁱⁱ We acknowledge that the binary opposition between professional and amateur is problematic, that traditional interpretations of the poles of the binary is collapsing rapidly and that interpretations of the terms are shifting due to the internet, among other reasons.

ⁱⁱⁱ Online streaming platforms in South Africa such as Netflix, Showmax and DStv Now, amongst others, fall within the realm of television, broadcasting and filmmaking. However, these online platforms are not necessarily as easily accessible by user-creators or young professional artists as is the case with YouTube, which does not require large budget production value.

^{iv} The notional hours translated as three credits did not form part of a formal training programme. The allocation of credits assisted with the adherence to the specification and requirements of the NQF (specifically band three which includes level 8) and in this instance, formed part of larger research project and the contextualisation thereof within a South African educational paradigm.

^v Level descriptors provide a framework to assist with the designing of curricula with appropriate learning achievements required at each NQF level. The purpose of the NQF level descriptors is to provide a broad indication of learning achievements and to guarantee logic and consistency in the learning achievement

for the allocation of qualifications and part qualifications (units or unit standards). In addition, the NQF levels provide markers to assist with formulating the exit-level outcomes of qualifications. Qualifications are positioned in the framework on a specific level and embrace learning in a variety of contexts, including vocational, occupational, academic and professional. The philosophical underpinning of the levels is applied competence consisting of foundational competence, practical competence and reflexive competence (SAQA 2012, p. 3).