

Explaining low learner participation during interactive television
instruction in a developing country context

by

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DEDICATION

For Dad - whose precision and patience with chromosomes bore much fruit of export quality.

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ADDENDA

- 1 Video clip: A visual overview of the case study - *TeleTuks Schools*
- 2 National map indicating research sites
- 3 A brief history of how television developed
- 4 Interactive television in selected developing countries
- 5 Collage of *TeleTuks* viewers on site
- 6 Ethics documentation
- 7 Survey questionnaire
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- 27 *TeleTuks* promotional pamphlets emphasising interaction
- 28 *Gartner Group©: Hype Cycle*
- 29 A chronology of *TeleTuks Schools* community project

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGN	Africa Growth Network
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
ESL	English Second Language
GDE	Gauteng Department Education
HG	Higher Grade
HU	Hermeneutic Unit – everything of relevance to a research project (<i>Atlas.ti™</i>)
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ITV	Instructional or interactive television
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PD	Primary Document – raw data prepared for analysis (<i>Atlas.ti™</i>)
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SG	Standard Grade
SITE	Satellite Instructional Television Experiment
<i>TeleTuks</i>	The official name of the University of Pretoria's ITV channel.
TLEI	Department of Telematic Learning and Education Innovation
UP	University of Pretoria

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry focussed on a single unit of analysis: *TeleTuks Schools*, a community outreach initiative of the University of Pretoria, South Africa and is classified as a case study. It sought to explain why despite technology that permits bi-directional oral communication during televised instruction, learner participation was poor. The exploration of literature related to instructional television (ITV) and social communication, ensured a richer understanding of ITV as delivery mode as well as potential reasons for low responsiveness during telelessons. It also raised awareness of the particular challenges of utilising ITV in a developing country context. This inquiry was informed by an interpretivist paradigm and the theoretical stance related to a synthesis of several communication models designed for mass media while the concept *interaction* as a key element of instructional communication was also dissected. Initially, a small-scale quantitative approach, established *how* prevalent poor participation was while rich experiential interview and video data identified *why* learners refrained from participating overtly. The use of *Atlas.ti*TM to systematically analyse the volume of unstructured data as a single unit, not only facilitated analysis but also enhanced the validity of the inquiry. An inductive analysis of the research data generated three significant and interrelated themes: *Paradoxical perceptions, Presenter nescience, and Problematic practicalities and partnerships*. These accounted for why learners did not respond as expected during televised instructional episodes. Key findings suggested that the rate of learner participation during telelessons was not influenced by an isolated factor as initially anticipated, but by a combination of variables. Technical and methodological design limitations were complicated by ineffective communication skills on the part of both presenters and viewers. Incongruence between the findings and initial suppositions added to an overarching sense of mismatch and led to the proposal of a theory linked to instructional dissonance *i.e.* the ignorance or denial of distortions that negatively affect communication between the instructor and student. Instructional communication is successful but not meaningful as a mismatch of sense or utility occurs. Recommendations for theory and practice are deemed applicable to mediated instructional contexts. Research avenues for further exploration relating to interaction in blended learning environments have been suggested.

KEYWORDS: Communication process, Developing country, Dissonance, English Second Language learners, Instructional television, Interactive television, Interaction, Mismatch, Telelesson, *TeleTuks*.