

**EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMAL AND CONCEPTUAL SKILLS OF
GRADE 10 VISUAL ARTS LEARNERS WITHIN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT**

**A full dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of**

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ABSTRACT

Visual Arts, a specialist school subject, is taught in a limited amount of schools in South Africa and contain both practical and theoretical lessons. The lessons and curriculum for this secondary school subject are structured according to the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) Further Education and Training (FET) phase Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document. Typically, schools hire Visual Arts specialists with extensive knowledge and skill as this subject focuses primarily on practical aspects. Consequently, learners should learn new formal skills to create aesthetic artworks and develop their artistic abilities. In addition, the subject also contains a conceptual component, where the learners need to create artworks that possess a cognitive visual message conveyed to the viewers.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a worldwide lockdown in 2020, closing schools and preventing these trained art specialists from teaching face-to-face while forcing learners to stay at home and learn online. These learners faced challenges in completing their Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs) and studying by themselves (Self-Actualization) without the supervision of a Visual Arts educator.

This study explores the impact that COVID-19 had on the 2020 Grade 10 Visual Arts learners, who were new to the Visual Arts class when the lockdown occurred, regarding their formal and conceptual skills development. This dissertation aims to determine whether North Gauteng educators influenced the skills that their learners developed and focused on during the national lockdown period. In addition, the study determines whether the learners themselves selected and explored the skills that they developed. This is achieved through the analyses of selected PATs of Grade 10 Visual Arts learners and interviews with the respective Visual Arts educators of the selected schools.

The study will show that most educators value formal skills over conceptual skills, as they prefer a simplified approach to teaching formal skills. All participating schools developed learning skills differently as revealed in my study, yet they had similar outcomes across the Visual Arts subject. Even though the CAPS specify what educators should focus on, it does not change how the Visual Arts educator will teach.

Keywords: Visual Arts, CAPS, Formal skills, Conceptual skills, Self-Actualization, Constructivism, Humanism, online environment, art education.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original writing. Sources referred to in this dissertation have been appropriately acknowledged by explicit references. Other assistance received has been acknowledged. I have not knowingly copied or used the words or ideas of others without such acknowledgement. This dissertation is being submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for a MA Fine Arts degree at the University of Pretoria. This work has not previously been submitted to any other university or institution for examination.



C. Fourie

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

4IR	-	4 th Industrial Revolution
BA	-	Bachelor of Arts
B.Ed.	-	Bachelor in Education
CAPS	-	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CBT	-	Computer – Based – Technology
DBAE	-	Discipline-Based Art Education
DBE	-	Department of Basic Education
FET	-	Further Education and Training
HOD	-	Head of Department
LSP	-	Learner Support Program
NCS	-	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	-	Outcome Based Education
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAT	-	Practical Assessment Task
PGCE	-	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
ZPD	-	Zone of Proximal Development

a

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Visual Arts are described as a “broad field of creativity that practices the hand, eye, intellect, and imagination in conceptualisation” (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) 2011: 4). The Department of Basic Education’s (DBE) Further Education and Training (FET) curriculum expects learners to create two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks that reflect the aesthetic, conceptual, and self-expressive concerns of groups or individuals (CAPS 2011: 4). However, the way visual arts are taught and applied was changed by the outbreak of COVID-19¹ which resulted in both a national and international lockdown on the 5th of March 2020 (Zubane, Khoza & Mlambo 2022: 1). The pandemic forced both new and experienced educators out of their comfort zones. They were forced to re-assess, plan, and implement new styles and approaches to teaching and learning. Consequently, most educators had to rely primarily on e-learning (use of technology within- and outside the classroom) and other online methods (Danielson, Ekenberg, Hansson, Kahiigi, & Tusubira 2008: 77-78). This, however, posed several challenges, such as hindrances for learners who lack access to electronic devices, who have no means to charge these devices, have no or limited access to the internet or were not familiar with online teaching and the processes accompanying it. Although it was important to continue educating learners during the pandemic via e-learning, the question arises of how e-learning impacted the learner and the teaching experience. Thus, this research aims to gain an increased understanding of how e-learning influenced the formal (the use of basic artistic technical skills and the implementation of the formal art elements to create an artwork that houses aesthetic qualities) and conceptual (focus on making an artwork that expresses certain notions or ideas, normally these artworks disregard aesthetics and focus more on the idea behind the work) skills development of learners within the current (Post COVID-19) curriculum.

¹ Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infective disease that cause most people to fall sick with symptoms of fever, dry cough, tiredness and loss of taste or smell (Zubane *et al* 2022: 1).

This study focuses on public schools' Grade 10 Visual Arts educators and learners, the impact the pandemic had on the development of formal skills as opposed to conceptual development within an online environment, and how this changed during or because of the COVID-19 pandemic, if at all.

1.2 Problem statement

During one of the Visual Arts 'Roadshows' (an external meeting) at the beginning of 2020, as a Visual Arts educator, I was allowed to observe and analyse various educators' work ethics and the way they structured their learners' Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs).² It was evident during this meeting that most Visual Arts educators predominantly focused on the aesthetic beauty of their learners' work, rather than questioning the idea or message behind the work. This showed that technical and formal skills, that is skills an artist possesses and utilises leading to the production of aesthetically pleasing work for an audience, presenting artists that are more likely to be confident, creative, visually literate, experimental and expressive (Davis 2009: 1), are generally deemed more important than the idea behind the work.

This observation, I infer, is also true in the public domain, as most viewers focus on the aesthetics of an art piece (formal skills) rather than the story behind it (conceptual skills). Most viewers are not educated in the way of art, thus mainly understand what they see, and can recognise, rather than questioning what inspired the work they see. Therefore, the public domain influences the way we see and perceive art. Consequently, the learners are influenced to make art that society and the government, i.e. Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Visual Arts educators, deem worthy as per 'The Guidelines for Practical Assessment Tasks' (2022: 5). Meaning that the educator has to set up an

² A Practical Assessment Task (PAT) consist out of two components. The conceptualizing process (Topic 1) and the making of the final product (Topic 2). Equal weightings are allocated to both of these components, which is instructed in both the CAPS (2011: 39-40) and amended CAPS (2020: 32-33) document. The learners are expected to create an artwork in response the PAT-theme brief that the educator provided, which consist of a detailed document setting out all instructions, goals and an assessment rubric that the learners must follow. The conceptualization process consists out of visual research, experimentation, sketches and exploration of the theme that is presented in the sourcebook (CAPS 2011: 46). The final artwork is created in response to the research done in the sourcebook and may consist out any medium (CAPS 2011: 13). There are 2 PATS expected throughout the year and 1 exam PAT, which makes a total of 3 PATS to be completed throughout the year (see figure 1).

assignment brief for the learner that informs the learner of the exact aims and purpose for the end product with regards to the topic, medium and size (The Guidelines for Practical Assessment Tasks 2022: 5) Through the creation of the PAT briefs can result in the limiting of self-expressions, due to difficult or shallow conceptual themes created by the educator. Thus, it could be argued that Visual Arts educators neglect self-expression or certain related skills by placing certain limitations on the learners, such as limiting what is expected from the learners(such as the topic, medium or size of the medium), despite the explicit emphasis on self-expression in the CAPS ADDENDUM A (CAPS 2011: 48; Davis 2009: 1), which states that the learner needs to have an “expressive” book called a source book (as stipulated in Topic 1: the making of the conceptualizing process). The content of the source book needs to include planning, brainstorming, research, sketches to even mind mapping, indicating that the CAPS document guides the educators and learners to a specific outcome, even though it does state that it “encourage[s]” creativity (CAPS 2011: 48).

The subject Visual Arts concerns itself with educating learners to improve and develop their formal and conceptual skills. Yet, it seems as if the often-self-imposed limitations set by the educators, normally through the specification of the themes/topics of the assignment briefs, limiting the size, artistic material or even due to a lack of technical knowledge themselves, influence the conceptual development of the learners within their artwork, impacting what they can or cannot create.

1.3 Aims and objectives of study

The COVID-19 pandemic forced educators and learners alike to rely on online teaching and learning methods, changing the way we teach and are being taught. This adjustment had to be made in a short time period, despite concerns about the lack of technology within rural areas of South Africa and without time to follow any proper curriculum development processes (Zubane *et al* 2022: 6). The study consequently explores the effect e-learning had on the way Visual Art educators had to teach and how the online environment impacted the Visual Arts learners’ development in terms of both conceptual and formal art-making skills. The aim is to determine whether the educators focus on

formal competency or conceptual development, and whether this focus depends on the educators' experience in Visual Arts and/ or the impact of the online environment. Thus, the objective of this study is to establish how artistic skills (formal or conceptual) have been implemented, either through the educator's influence or as a result of the learner's self-discipline because of the online environment. The second aim is to understand what skills Visual Arts educators wish their learners would develop as opposed to what they had developed during the Covid-19 pandemic in an online environment. The research furthermore also shows how the online environment influences the learner's ability to do self-discipline compared to traditional classrooms.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Main Research Question

How do Grade 10 Visual Arts educators in public schools implement or approach the teaching of formal skills as opposed to conceptual development within an online environment?

1.4.2 Sub Questions

- 1) How does an online environment influence the learners' formal and conceptual skills development compared to traditional learning, i.e., face-to-face learning?
- 2) Why do educators and learners favour certain skills of art within an online learning environment?

1.5 Concept clarification

1.5.1 Traditional learning

In my study, *traditional learning* refers to the way Western education has been presented for centuries, where the educator presents a class in front of learners, generally referred to as face-to-face sessions. Face-to-face learning is a pedagogical approach where the

educator and learner are both present and actively involved in the learning and teaching process within the classroom setting (Norman 2020: 1). It usually is where the educator presents the information and materials within the same time and place. The focus of this method is for the educator to provide information to the learner (Danielson, Ekenberg, Hansson, Kahiigi, & Tusubira 2008: 79) and for the learner to absorb and apply this information. This method of learning, however, limits the learner's chances of gaining and retaining new knowledge, as it limits the amount of knowledge that is provided. Most of the information is obtained from the textbook and what is said in class, and not what is taught outside the class. These learners are seldom exposed to real-world teaching, but they are rather boxed into a classroom, where an overload of information is thrown at them to form a subject.

1.5.2 E-learning

E-Learning is defined as the gaining and acquiring of knowledge that is facilitated using electronic resources and devices (Lian, Meyen & Tangen 1999: 18). E-Learning can be used to produce and transform learning in numerous ways, including computer-based, asynchronous, and synchronous learning (AEN 2002: 1). This is where the learner takes authority and ownership of learning, therefore, facilitating their own learning. Danielson *et al* (2008: 78) introduced e-learning as a concept to improve the learning state of a learner.³ In their study *Exploring the e-Learning State of Art* (2008), they define e-learning as a notion that was derived from the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which evolved and transformed traditional education. This resulted in the evolution of socio-cultural development, with the growth in the use of technology as a guide and tool within the educational system.

According to Garrison and Anderson (2000: 87), e-learning provides opportunities to improve and support learning through its dedication towards impacting learning, resulting in better understanding. E-learning was considered as an alternative to face-to-face

³ E-learning refers to the use of technology within- and outside the classroom. There is a lot of information on the internet, especially the latest features of virtual touring of museums. The information can be shared via online methods with the learners, where the learners can use it to expand their knowledge. Even when learners are absent from school, the work that was discussed in class can be obtained via this platform (Danielson, Ekenberg, Hansson, Kahiigi, & Tusubira 2008: 77-78).

learning during the school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), who conducted studies on what impact COVID-19 had on the learners and schools, their findings revealed that e-learning is something that still needs to grow and develop but has the capabilities to access specialised materials that is beyond that of textbooks (OECD 2020: 4-5).

The current international COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many challenges, which include data and connectivity problems, a lack of devices, and a lack of know-how on the part of both educators and learners. These challenges are also experienced by South African schools and universities (OECD 2020: 2). Danielson *et al* (2008: 79-81) explore effective strategies of e-learning and ways to implement it within basic education, as discussed in more depth in Chapter 2 of this study.⁴ Take note that in this study e-learning or distance learning are referred to as online learning.

1.5.3 Facilitating of Learning

The concept *facilitating of learning* could be considered the most appropriate 'replacement' for learning. Learning is the most fundamental part of education but with the combination of facilitation it can result in a much more growth-oriented environment when developing the learners' knowledge and skills (Slabbert, De Kock & Hattingh 2011: 99). Facilitating learning is not a new concept. It has been used in educational literature as far back as the 1970's, and the use of this term has increasingly been used in contemporary literature. Facilitating can be distinguished from instructing, teaching, training, or any other teaching method (Slabbert *et al* 2011: 100). Dr Edna Rooth (1995: 188), director at LifeSkills Africa, defines facilitating learning as not teaching, telling, or guiding, but rather the process where the learner seeks out their own knowledge. She concludes that facilitating learning is completely different from teaching, not engaging with any teaching methods, skills or techniques that exist (Rooth 1995: 190). Facilitating learning assumes the actualisation of everyone to strive and develop their own unique

⁴ Effective e-learning strategies are linked to how well the educators know their learners. This method considers clear learning objectives, keeping the content and subject matter visually appealing and interactive to present an effective strategy (Danielson *et al* 2008: 79).

potential. Facilitating is considered in contrast to teaching, where teaching guides and controls the learner's learning, facilitating allows the learner to take control and responsibility of their own learning (Slabbert *et al* 2011: 100). Facilitating challenges the learners to maximise their unique potentials through the process of authentic and lifelong learning (Slabbert *et al* 2011: 101).

1.5.4 Learning theories

Learning theories have important associations with education, as these theories help educators to understand what is effective and ineffective when teaching the learners. In other words, it helps the educator understand how their learners learn through using methods and strategies to ensure a success in education (Thomas 2020: 1). Below I briefly define the four learning theories: Behaviorist-, Cognitive-, Constructivist- and Humanistic Learning, and how these theories are effective in teaching an online classroom.

1.5.4.1 Behaviorist learning

A study, *Integrating the Visual Arts in the Curriculum* (2002), by Arthur Efland found that art development is centered around the notion of cognitive development theories. Important literature in this regard are the contributions of Jean Piaget (1974) and Lev Vygotsky (1978). These leading theorists provided theories focusing on the cognitive development, exploring notions on how to enhance the creative thinking abilities of the learners, which can guide the learners to analyses artwork and convey these influences within their artwork.

Throughout the late 1990s, the educational system was dominated by Behaviorism (Bruner 1992: 22). This learning theory was already widely used within various schools' conduct and culture, as seen in the widespread implementation of tests and achievement-driven policies in America and later transgressed throughout the world. Even South Africa started using these learning principles in their schools (Bruner 1992: 22). This theory was influenced and enhanced by theorists such as Clark L. Hull (1943) and B. F. Skinner

(1937), who argue that all forms of learning should be reduced to conditioning.⁵ Conditioning underestimates how unique people are, neglecting that a person's environment influences their way of thinking. Therefore, when a class is presented with only information-based methods, where the educator believes every learner is the same, the results in learning may not be effective with all the learners. An educator must consider that everyone is unique, and that learners' prior knowledge is different, resulting in them understanding work or information differently (Bruner 1992: 23). This notion is presented in the following section, in which I consider *Bloom's Taxonomy* (1956).

The six levels of cognitive learning are recorded in the publication, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* by Benjamin Bloom.⁶ Bloom (1956) claimed that learning is categorised according to two learning methods, cumulative- and hierarchical learning. These notions moved away from the classic behaviourist theory in learning. Cumulative learning refers to the way we store knowledge and hierarchical learning indicates that different behaviours can join and become something more complex (Rohwer & Sloane 1994: 79). The taxonomy (see Figure 2 below) established three main domains called the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.⁷ First, the cognitive domain consists of six levels, from recall (the lowest level) to evaluating (the highest level), focusing on the knowledge of the learner. Second, the affective domain focuses on how people tend to deal with external and internal phenomena emotionally. It involves feelings, attitudes, and emotions. An example in class is when the learners participate in a class discussion, when asking questions relevant to the information discussed in class or within the world. Third and final, the psychomotor domain includes coordination, use of motor-skill areas and physical movement. An example is when learners are observing art and copying it, which demonstrates skills of observation and coordination (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001: 1). The taxonomy is regarded as important for it is still used in contemporary classrooms.

⁵ Conditioning is a type of learning process that modifies the behavior through reinforcement or punishment (Skinner 1937: 273).

⁶ The six levels are remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001: 1).

⁷ There are three domains of learning: The cognitive domain (knowledge), the psychomotor domain (skills) and the affective domain (attitudes) (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001: 1).

It is important because it helps educators identify reachable learning goals and how to develop strategies to meet them.

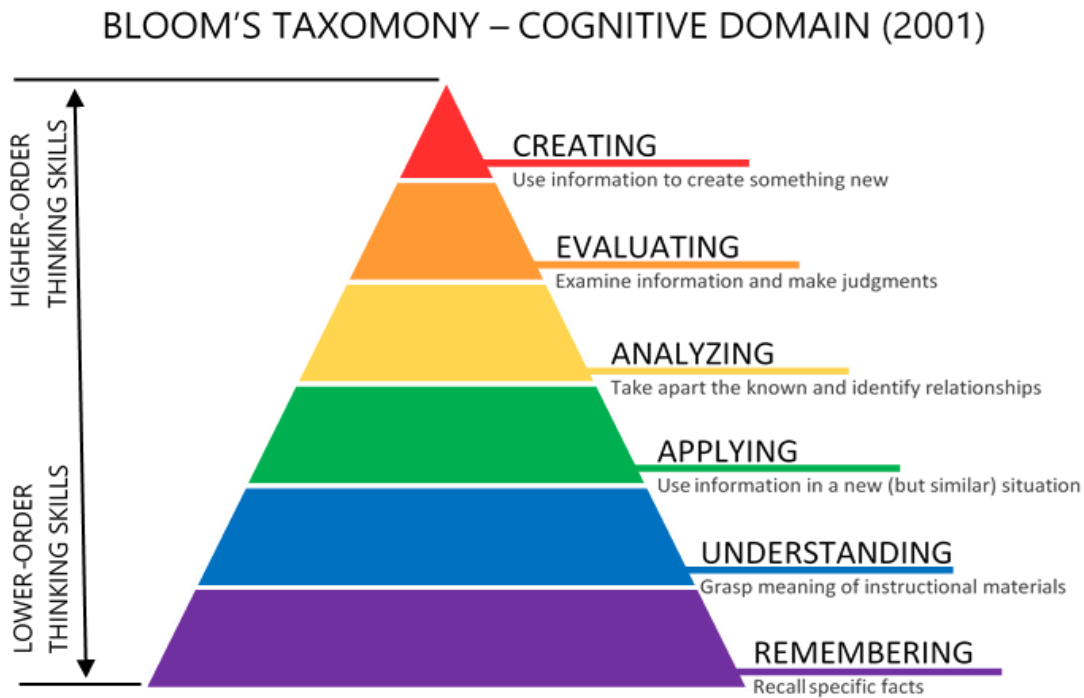


Figure 2: Bloom's taxonomy, the cognitive domain (Anderson & Krathwohl 2001: 1).

Bloom's Taxonomy (see Figure 2) helps to create achievable goals for educators and learners, which help guide educators to build effective lessons and guide the learners in understanding the content and application of the new information. The taxonomy assists in learners achieving new skills, development of knowledge, and a different attitude towards learning. The taxonomy is divided into levels of thinking, from basic knowledge to remembering, whereby learners recall facts and concepts. As time passes, knowledge develops into the highest level, 'create', where new or original work is created. This links back to the schools subject Visual Arts where learners first need to understand basic art elements and principles before they can develop their own unique artworks through self-learning and the guidance from the educator. Whether it is conceptual or formal work, it is up to the learners to create their unique work, which is influenced by their individual background. Although both formal and conceptual elements are utilized in the creation of art, not all learners are exceptional with technical skills and aesthetic qualities. Sometimes

this results in their work placing emphasis more on creating a message (the conceptual) than on the basic elements of art (the formal). The opposite is also true, when learners focus more on the formal art elements and skills than on the conceptual message of the work. The learner thus focuses on the skills they are proficient at instead of the skills they lack.

1.5.4.2 Cognitive Learning

By the 1960s Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development for children, with the research of Bruner, Oliver, and Greenfield in *Studies in Cognitive Growth* (1966), provided a basis for the development of the cognitive development theory. This cognitive theory was based on Piaget's concept of the underlying acts of intelligence, which he called schema. Cognitive development is considered in contrast to behavioral theory, where emphasis is placed on development, conditioning, and learning. *Teaching-learning dynamics*, edited by Jacobs (2016), explains Piaget's schema.⁸ This theory posits that learning content is divided and constructed within assimilation and accommodation, which can occur when a person interacts with ideas or experiences (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe 2016: 4). Flavell (1996), in *Psychological Science*, indicates that already learned knowledge is altered by new knowledge, resulting in understanding or cognitive development. Assimilation refers to an existing schema, which provides meaning towards a new experience, as the learner notices similarities among objects, applying new understanding to existing experiences. Accommodation is a process of altering ideas that do not fit into the existing schema, thus modifying or changing ideas or experiences of existing thoughts (Flavell, 1996: 200). Piaget's schemas depend on the individual's experience of the external world. These learners' cultural impacts and own experiences can be reflected in their own artworks. Cultural impact refers to the popular trends within the external world e.g. celebrities and fashion. The notion on the cultural impact also links back to the expectations of the CAPS (2011: 12) Topic 3: Visual Culture Studies, where learners are expected to consider visual artists throughout the years and build their

⁸ Schema is a mental structure, which is a systematised array of behaviours or thoughts an individual is forming, resulting in ideas, understanding and creating new information (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe 2016: 4).

experiences and skills based on knowledge they have developed based on research on the artists before them. Furthermore, the individual's artwork can reflect what they themselves have experienced, their cultural influences and teachings from the educator. Culture and experience are therefore the central point in developing the formal and conceptual skills of the learners (Ostraff & Barney 2015: 1).

Landsberg, Krüger & Nel (2015) explore Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), through the notion of scaffolding that helps the learners understand new information. ZPD refers to the educator observing the learner, who learns a particular task or body of information. The process starts with the learner not being able to do a certain task at first. Then later, with some assistance, they can do it. Finally, they can do it on their own. The final step in this process represents the learner's actual level of development. During this process the educator is referred to as a guide, as they guide learners who encounter different learning challenges (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 244). In some instances, the educator guides the learner on what skills, mediums or concepts they have to incorporate within their Visual Arts assignments. Therefore, often learners are creating artwork based on what the educator deems worthy, rather than on what the learner wants to create. After a few assignments the learners should be developing their own PATS in response to a brief by the educator, with the necessary skills that they were taught in class, with minimal influences from the educator, creating work that can be deemed worthy by the educator and curriculum.

Classroom activities should be based on and applicable to the actual world. Learning takes place on two levels: interaction with others and integration into the individual's mental structure. Social interactions are crucial to the construction of knowledge (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 274). These constructivist approaches are considered within the online context of developing formal and conceptual skills. I rely on this theory to provide a better understanding of the learners' cultural impacts and experiences, through what the learners have experienced and learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is through the works of art that the viewer is able to see the individual's viewpoint and development of what they have experienced (Ostraff & Barney 2015: 1). It reveals the development of

skills which the learner has explored in the online context during the time spent at home during the national lockdown.

1.5.4.3 Constructivist Learning

When exploring constructivist teaching, it is necessary to refer to Piaget (1974)'s and Vygotsky's (1978: 26) notions that knowledge is obtained through experience. Since 1997, the South African school curriculum is based on constructivist theory (Jacobs *et al* 2016: 41). According to Gravett (2005: 19), constructivist learning ensures that the learner constructs their own knowledge, where educators are skilled enough to teach the learner in a manner that these learners construct their new knowledge in the learning environment. This means that learners must take responsibility for their own learning, and educators need to develop the learners' growth through well-constructed assessments, that are not solely reliant on the learning content and examinations. Instead, educators should connect the teachings to the real world and the learners' experience of the world (Skosana & Monyai 2013: 54).

Constructivism is sometimes associated with educators taking a step back and allowing their learners to take charge of the learning process, hence the learners facilitate their own learning, where they must find the new information themselves. This is contrasted with traditional modes of direct teaching, which requires learners to re-produce the information exactly as is. Constructivists are moving away from traditional teaching towards facilitating learning, which is based on educators providing learning instructions and the independent learning of a learner (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 242). This approach helps this study to establish whether learners are taking charge of their own learning in an online environment and choosing the skills – formal or conceptual – that they believe are important.

1.5.4.4 Humanistic Learning

Humanistic learning focusses on human capabilities, creativity, personal growth and/ or choice (Chris Hare 2019: 1) This theory is supported by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers (cited by Hare 2019: 1), who presented the notion of experiential learning, believing that people learn through overcoming challenges in real life. The flaw, I infer,

with Humanism is that Humanists believe people are good and noble, where everyone is on the road towards learning and personal growth. Yet, it is not so - no one is perfect and human beings are not necessarily good and noble. Every individual has their own thoughts and ideas, some may be lazy making sure that they do the bare minimum of what is expected of them. Not every learner will take it upon themselves to be responsible enough to do their own learning. They need to be supervised to make sure the work is done. Here Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (1943) is relevant, as his model produced the major concept in Humanism which is Self-Actualization. Self-Actualization is the level at which a learner can truly experience growth. The Humanistic approach is centred around the individual's potential rather than on the specific learning content. Meaning is created through the learning experience, which allows learners to grow (Hare 2019: 1). Within a Humanistic approach in online learning, the learners become their own facilitators of learning, where they can identify what skills they want to develop, whether conceptual or formal. The learners can do research on artists and artistic styles they want to focus on, watch videos, read up on the artists' styles or analyse their artworks, to establish what they want to develop. This is often the result of minimal communication between the educator and the learner in an online environment, due to physical (and possibly emotional) distance between them.

In my study, I believe that the humanistic- and constructivist approaches are ideal methods to consider when considering online teaching. As mentioned before, these theories hold that the learners construct and choose the skills and knowledge they want to develop. My study thus considers the tensions between an online Visual Arts environment as a space where the learners are guided towards a specific outcome that the educator stresses as opposed to a space where the learners take charge of their own learning and the educator merely acts as a facilitator, guiding the learners' development. The former can result in the educator limiting the growth of the learner by choosing a skill, which a learner does not necessarily want to focus on, while the latter empowers a learner to choose between formal or conceptual skills they want to explore and implement within their work, as the educator assists them from a distance.

1.6 Literature Review

This brief literature review discussed here in Chapter 1, provides a contextual understanding of what this study explores. It provides clarity regarding the terms and concepts used throughout the study, eliminating possible confusion. The literature review provides an overview of literature investigating formal and conceptual Visual Arts development. Before continuing with the study, it is vital for the reader to understand the shift that took place from face-to-face learning to an online learning environment. By exploring how the different skills influence the unique individual, the literature review focuses mainly on the influence these online methods of learning have on the skills development of the learners. By exploring the additional aspects of e-learning and its influence on the formal and conceptual skills within the current curriculum, this brief literature review concludes the change of the learning theories from the traditional classroom setting to the forced implementation of an online learning environment. An in-depth literature review will follow in Chapter 2

1.6.1 Discipline-Based Art Education

Education is a vital part of knowledge development within society, resulting in new ways of thinking and producing new ideas within the areas of teaching and learning (Bleimann 2004: 191). Generally, learning takes place through 'doing', exploring, and experimenting. Within a school environment this form of learning is controlled and learners need to participate in learning activities and assessments in class to reveal their understanding of the given work (Danielson *et al* 2008: 77). Therefore, education is concerned with the way learners obtain knowledge and skills, which modifies their existing knowledge and skills to solve problems (Shuell 1986: 411).

According to Walling and Davis (2020: 1), basic art education developed within a transformational paradigm, proposing that the practical component of Visual Arts becomes a complementary discipline of art history, aesthetic, art production and art criticism. The transformational paradigm in education empowers learners to see the world through a different lens, so that they will challenge and change their understanding accordingly. The ultimate purpose is for learners to develop critical thinking skills,

especially in art (Baker, Ng & Friesen 2019:1) Additionally, Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), as discussed below in section 1.6.2, is defined as a process of teaching and learning on how to produce, understand, and evaluate art forms created by others. Therefore, art education combines constructivism and instructional theory through the works of Jerome Bruner (1960), Jean Piaget (1974), and Lev Vygotsky (1978). Both Piaget (1974) and Vygotsky (1978) infer that new information must be based on the actual world to be applicable towards experience of the learners to develop new knowledge. This belief indicates that art education should focus on trial and error, analysing traditional artworks and creating artworks, to present a new understanding and developing new skills, which can result in the understanding of art (Walling & Davis 2020: 1). This relates to the CAPS (2011: 12) document, which suggests that the theme of the assignments should be linked to the Visual Culture Studies (Topic 3) taught in class, so that the learners can study these historical artists and their artworks, and incorporate these artists and their styles into the assignments. Specifically, it is expected that learners take inspiration from certain artists' styles and techniques, and incorporate these influences into their own work, while developing their own unique styles. This suggests that the Visual Arts educators are providing ample information to the learners to use to develop their artistic skills. Visual Arts educators help develop the learners' artistic skills in the sense of critical thinking and development of conceptual and formal skills. However, the CAPS (2011: 13) strongly advises that the learners need to find their own solutions to their progress in art, rather than the educator imposing their ideas onto the learner. Even if the Visual Arts educator is the facilitator of learning, the learner needs to critically think in order to build their skills in a constructive manner.

1.6.2 Theoretical Framework

By using a constructivist framework and a qualitative research approach, this study explores the learning theories of Jean Piaget (1974), John Dewey (1938), and Lev Vygotsky (1978) whose theories are used in postmodern education. These theorists are considered together with B.F. Skinner (1937), who presented ideas on how to improve

constructivist methods through the use of positive and negative reinforcement.⁹ Each theorist introduces different concepts and their beliefs on how it affects the cognitive ability of their test subjects. Comparing these theories to my own study, I am following the same beliefs that the different teaching and learning methods implemented within the classroom affect the cognitive abilities of each learner differently. Specifically, these theories help guide the study in understanding how online teaching affects the learners' development of formal and conceptual skills (Hare 2019: 1), providing a better understanding of which approach affects which skill of the learner and whether the educator or the learner is the facilitator of their learning. These theories will be strengthened by a Humanistic approach, which was introduced by Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1959), as briefly discussed above.

The constructivist theory is the ideal approach to developing learners' ways of thinking. This can be done, by for example letting the learners try certain processes on their own by presenting unfamiliar work that was not presented in the textbook. It is through trial, error, and guidance that the learners will start interpreting artwork through their understanding of it. Furthermore, a form of assessment should be considered, which will indicate if the learners understood the work. According to the CAPS abridged document section 4 (2020: 32), this assessment shows the credibility of the learners' work. This assessment considers whether the learners followed the theme of what was asked, for example whether they were creative and innovative with their ideas, used the basic art elements, as well as the design principles. Over time the learners will start developing their creative thinking and will be able to analyse artworks considering the art movements and formal elements when interpreting the works. Therefore, Jean Piaget's notion of constructivism helps develop a learner's understanding of art, which they can implement within their artworks (Efland 2002: 14). This theory is rooted in the belief that providing new knowledge and ideas create more personal artworks that contain a personal belief or message. The evolution of traditional learning to online learning resulted in

⁹ Reinforcements are linked to strengthening the likelihood of a response. Positive reinforcement is established through a stimulus and reward, while negative reinforcements provide consequences. For example, with positive reinforcement, if a learner answers correctly, they will get a treat, making them want to learn more to answer correctly. A similar approach is used with negative reinforcement, where an incorrect answer results in punishment (Skinner 1937: 274).

transforming conventional learning theories into three more innovative models. These three major online learning theories are (1) Community of Inquiry, (2) Connectivism, and (3) Online Collaborative Learning. (1) Community of Inquiry is based on Cognitive learning theory, which consists of three distinct elements; cognitive, social and teaching. This model supports online and blended learning, where the educator and learner actively share information, ideas and opinions. (2) Connectivism accepts that technology plays a significant part in learning, and it promotes group discussions and collaborations, allowing a variety of viewpoints and perspectives on problem-solving and decision-making. Connectivism happens outside of an individual through social media, online networks, blogs and other information databases. (3) Online Collaborative theory is derived from Constructivism, where the learner is encouraged to solve problems through discourse collaboratively, and the educator plays the role of facilitator. In addition, this model believes that the Internet helps shape the learner's knowledge through online discussions or intellectual convergence through an assignment or essay (Picciano 2021: 174-176).

My study, however, considers how the humanistic approach can guide the learners to develop their own understanding of art, and consequently how it influences the development of formal and conceptual skills respectively. Unlike the constructivist theories where the authority centres on the environment, socio-political situation, or the individual's situation, humanistic learning centres on the learner being the source of authority. This theory was introduced by Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers (Hare 2019: 1), who proposed that the learner determines their own learning method and materials. Rogers (1969) presented the notion of the Experimental Learning Theory, based on the *Hierarchy of Needs* (Maslow 1943), which emphasises the theory of human motivation, highlighting that humans work towards the fulfilment of a goal, whether it is to get food because they are hungry, or growing through Self-Actualization (Hare 2019: 1). These theories furthermore assist in establishing e-learning's influence on the curriculum within high school education, since the learners are mostly at home and must take it upon themselves to be responsible to do the work on their own, without any real supervision. My study intends to show that a shift between the implementation of constructivist theory towards humanistic theory has taken place, moving from a traditional, face-to-face teaching and learning approach towards online teaching and learning methods.

My study, therefore, intends to show that secondary and tertiary studies transcend from a constructivist approach towards a humanistic approach, transforming the authority of learning from the educator towards the learner/student. This means that the high school learner's growth is in their own hands, controlling their own learning. The challenge with this theory is that educators usually believe they do not have to participate during the learning process, so they just stand aside. Yet, in accordance with the CAPS document, it is expected that the educators are still the facilitators, where guidance needs to be given to the learners (CAPS 2011: 4). The humanistic approach suggests that Self-Actualization will guide learners to a better understanding of the work and help them develop their skills. Learners are given the chance to do their own studying especially during the pandemic, where they had to do their own studying at home and develop their own skills, without supervision of educators.

Teaching is continuously evolving, and as such, good educators always need to ask themselves how they can improve by making the class pleasurable and innovative. Due to technological advancements within the postmodern society and the COVID-19 pandemic, educators increasingly rely on online teaching and learning methods, not only in the advanced technological countries, but also a country such as South Africa that is considered poor, where a lack, and mismanagement, of funding to obtain these electronic supplies, exists (Plageron 2014: 1).

During the national lockdown, the minister of Basic Education, Angie Motsheka explained that the department used 123 radio stations and six different television channels to reach out and continue teaching the curriculum lessons to the learners, who have access to limited technological devices. This was made possible through COVID-19 Learner Support Program (LSP) (Zubane *et al* 2020: 6). Furthermore, to ensure equal quality learning opportunities and to prevent the loss of additional school time, the government introduced “zero-rated platforms”, which made it possible to continue lessons based on the curriculum using Educational websites which did not require mobile data (Department of Basic Education Report 2020: 8). However, the effectiveness of these measurements that were carried out by the government are called into doubt, as the wide digital divide of the South African rural areas and urban areas are still deeply rooted in South African

communities, with challenges regarding technology, access to the devices to participate in the lessons, and money to pay for digital services (Zubane *et al* 2020: 6)

Within the contemporary world, everything started to toil around electronic devices, which is evident even in education where most lessons are presented through a PowerPoint presentation or computers and other electronic devices. The era of the 21st century is regarded as the era of technology, where the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) seems to be taking over our lives. Technology in contemporary life plays an important role, as it is less time-consuming to search for information online, than in a library or stack of books, and also much easier to use. One of these fields where technology can be felt is the field of education. It has been revealed that the tools of technology guide and develop the learners' knowledge and minds, for technology works faster to obtain information to assist the subject or assignment project (Raja & Nagasubramani 2018: 33).

The world of the 21st century, according to Charles Jencks (1977: 87), displays an absence of cultural dominance. This implies that art education emphasises multiculturalism¹⁰ and the expansion of traditional work. Within art, this means education focuses on mixing different artistic styles and media to generate works of self-expression. Jencks (1977: 87) presented the notion of freedom of expression, similar to that of learners' own artistic expression, where learners can express their own desires and beliefs. Within a South African context, in the PATs, creating fairies, dragons or some sort of fantasy world are labelled as cliché and are generally rejected within the classroom, based on my teaching experience in teaching Visual Arts. The CAP (2011: 12) document specifies that the artworks should be creative and encourages learners to take different approaches when experimenting with their assignments, yet learners are to a large extent restricted by the educators in terms of what they are allowed to do. Furthermore, the CAPS document strongly suggests that the assignment themes should be linked to the Visual Culture Studies topics (Topic 3), meaning that the assignments should follow the theoretical lessons that were taught in class (CAPS 2011: 12). Themes generally follow South African and historical artists, so that the learner can introduce the specific

¹⁰ This refers to the way society deals with cultural diversity, where society works toward harmonious coexistence of different cultures (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2005).

techniques and approaches of these learned artists within their own artworks (CAPS 2011: 13). This notion relates to the work done by Davis and Walling (2020: 1), who introduced Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), directing Visual Arts learners to present works that are considered appropriate by the educators as well as the curriculum.

Davis and Walling (2020: 1) believe art education should use DBAE, defining it as a process of teaching and learning on how to produce visual artworks and how to understand and evaluate art forms created by others. DBAE is an education program, created by the Paul Getty Trust (1953). DBAE focuses on the four disciplines surrounding art rather than on studio work. These disciplines are art critics, aesthetics, art history, and art production (Davis and Walling 2020: 1).¹¹ The use of these criteria produces the idea that learners will develop their knowledge, beliefs, and values of making personal and artistic decisions on their own. That can only be achieved by having a basic understanding of the nature, value, and meaning of the arts (Consortium of National Arts Education Assessment 1995: 18-19). As DBAE helps develop the learners' understanding in art, it can help grow both their artistic skills, formal and conceptual. Therefore, the Visual Arts educator should remember that some traditional methods need to be housed within online teaching and should not be discarded. Thus, the educator must consider what is successful in their teaching and what is not and adapt these methods within the online environment accordingly.

Howard Gardner (1983) developed a multi-intelligence theory, which indicates that children think and learn based on their unique individual strengths. These intelligences range from verbal intelligence, intelligence that is developed from reading, writing and speaking to musical intelligence, to be able to understand the sound and rhythm of music. These multi-intelligences focus on the strengths of each individual, where each individual has their unique ability to solve problems, create their understanding and value what they love (Gardner 1983: 1-3). This theory emphasises the development of the learners'

¹¹ Art Critic – specialises in analysing, interpreting and evaluating art.

Aesthetics – making art that is pleasing to the viewer's eyes.

Art History – it is the study of aesthetic objects and visual expression in historical contexts. It comprises different cultures around the world and throughout history. Art history is generally studied chronologically.

Art Production – making and producing work with significant meaning (Davis and Walling 2020: 1).

cognitive abilities, allowing them to become more creative in their work over a period of time. Normally, in the subject Visual Arts, the Visual-Spatial Intelligence tends to be visible, where learners are able to understand an artwork and what it represents. It is also the intelligence where the person is likely to be able to draw and paint (Gardner 1983: 1-2). In Visual Arts this can mean learning to analyse art that in the end guides these learners to understand art, which can result in incorporating these visually inspiring ideas within their work. I use this theory by referring to how the national lockdown, commencing in 2020, resulted in learning methods that vary between the processes of face-to-face learning, e-learning, and blended learning.¹² The circumstances forced educators to trust learners in doing their own work, i.e., doing self-study and Self-Actualization. Thus, these theories can help analyse data, which can place it in a certain framework, bearing in mind that online teaching can result in the learner deciding the focus of their own artistic development (Gardner 1983: 3).

Constructivist and humanist approaches go hand in hand with online teaching, as both guide learners to facilitate their own learning. The constructivist approach is, however, more limited in this regard, as the educator guides the learners towards a specific idea, skill, or mindset, whereas the humanistic approach presents Self-Actualization, allowing the learner to choose their path of learning. This means, the learner becomes their own facilitator, where they focus on what they want to improve in terms of skills and knowledge. These approaches can be used to interpret data in order to present and establish which skill is focused on with the PATs of the learners. This information will be compared to when the educator is the facilitator of the learning process versus when the learner is the facilitator.

1.7 Research methodology

1.7.1 Research design

This study follows a qualitative research approach while exploring integrated literature sources from both primary and secondary sources. A qualitative approach will assist in

¹² Blended learning refers to the use of both traditional learning and online learning methods to enhance the learning experience.

exploring the effect that the online environment has on Visual Arts educators' teaching of formal and conceptual skills.

My study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm. I am using art-based methods, such as interviewing Visual Arts educators and analysing selected practical assessments (PATs) of the participants to explore the impact of the online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³ The research methods used focus on how the online environment influences the development of Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' conceptual and formal skills development. By using art-based research methods, I analyse the practical assessment tasks (PATs) of selected Grade 10 learners. I intend to identify what skill the Visual Arts educators mainly focus on in an online environment. Art-based research is a systematic interpretation and analysis of the use of artistic processes, in the making of art within different methodologies and skills (McNiff 2008: 29). It is primarily used to understand the work and experiences behind creating these works. Art-based research reflects on the usage of a large variety of art genres (painting, drawing, performance, writing, installation art or photography). I use these genres of art during data collection, analysis, interpretation and/or dissemination (Jones & Leavy 2014: 1-2). Still, it is emphasised that the researcher must sustain good enough knowledge, abilities, and skills within the field of study, specifically Visual Arts (Franz 2010). The art-based methods of data collection and analysis used in this study are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.7.2 Data gathering

The focus of my study is on the Grade 10 Visual Arts educators' implementation of the curriculum during the national lockdown where every lesson had to be given online. I am using Visual Arts educators from public schools that have several diverse learners, such as learners who are academically strong and some who are not, some that have

¹³ As discussed above, there are three PATs in total; however, for this study, the first two PATs, done during terms 1 and 2, are analysed during this study. PAT 3 is an end-year PAT done over two terms (terms 3 and 4), which can produce better results than the first two PATs due to the duration of the end-year PAT. This is one of the reasons why the first two PATs are analysed. Secondly, the learner is introduced to art within the first two terms and is still creating artwork based on their novice artistic skills.

advanced technological capabilities and others that do not. I asked the Grade 10 Visual Arts educators to collect three Grade 10 learners' PATs (created during term 1 and 2 of 2020) that fall under a specific category. Some learners with strong academic capabilities compared to that of those who are struggling with technological issues (either one struggling with working online or one that does not have the resources to work online). My study includes both economically poor and economically stable schools. The chosen Visual Arts educators of these learners include educators who have experience within their subject (educators that took the subject Visual Arts in high school, for at least three years, and studied at least three years in teaching art at university level), and some who are new and inexperienced. For this purpose, I have chosen to include four Grade 10 Visual Arts educators from public schools in Pretoria. The schools and educators are kept anonymous, to protect the identity and private information of the schools and educators (according to the POPI Act requirements). Therefore, the schools, educators and learners will be referred to as follows: School A = Teacher A + Learner A1, A2 and A3, School B = Teacher B and Learner B1, B2 and B3 and School C = Teacher C and Learner C1, C2 and C3. Each of these selected educators have their own experiences and work at different schools, with different backgrounds. Most importantly to my study, some of these schools are technologically advanced, while some are not, as this helps identify the influences of the online environment. Some learners have access to the online environment and can do a lot of research on Visual Culture literature, whereas the learners that do not have online access or any technological access, need to find an alternative way to develop their skills and learn. Chapter 3 elaborates on the selection processes used in this study.

Since the selected schools encompass diversity in various ways, the Grade 10 learners whose works are chosen for analysis in my study are also diverse in terms of economic status, background as well as academic achievements, technical skills, and conceptual skills. I have chosen three learners from each selected school, making my total number of participants twelve Visual Arts learners, whose term 1 and 2 PATs are analysed. I specifically chose three learners: one lower, one middle and one high performer, as it is indirectly in line with Bloom's taxonomy. Looking at the Bloom's taxonomy pyramid (page 9) from the top down, one can see that the highest level of thinking is 'creating'. It is clear

that creating is most relevant to the arts, where learners must create their own art pieces. Evaluating and analysing are rooted in the research of artists and their artworks and criticizing the work that was done (e.g., art critic). Understanding applies to the understanding of the art styles, periods, analyses/interpretation of artworks and using of the art techniques. Mentioned on page two are three topics related to the Visual Arts. Topic 1: the conceptualisation process involves creating a sourcebook with ideas, research, studies sketches, and experiments, which leads to Topic 2. (2) Topic 2: the final artwork, after the completion of the sourcebook and planned out ideas, the learner creates the final product with one of the mediums the learner practised with. Topic 3: Visual Culture Studies is art history theory. Topic 1 and 3 can go hand-in-hand, the theory taught in class can be used as a theme for the PAT briefs, or the learner can research the specific artist taught in class and incorporate their styles and techniques with the study sketches, to practice and improve their technical skills. Finally, remembering the art elements and design principles within art is important when analysing and creating their own artworks (Arneson & Offerdahl 2018: 3). The Visual Arts educators arranged for learners' work that falls under the category of higher and lower thinking levels to be collected. I have explored how well the Visual Arts learners have applied the Bloom's thinking levels within their PATs. It is up to the Visual Arts educators to distinguish how well, moderate and/or poor usage of higher levels of thinking the Visual Arts learners have implemented within their work. They provided me with three Visual Arts learners' practical assessments; (1) Low application of Bloom's taxonomy, (2) moderate application of Bloom's taxonomy and (3) high application of Bloom's taxonomy (Arneson & Offerdahl 2018: 5). To strengthen my findings, additional data was gathered through interviews with the Visual Arts educators of the learners' whose works I am analysing. By interviewing Visual Arts educators using semi-structured interview questions, I am investigating which skills are emphasised during online teaching and hence reveal which skills they favour in the classroom and why. Focus is placed specifically on their online teaching techniques that they have implemented during the nation-wide lockdown and how the online platform has guided the educators to continue the work from different remote places.

Furthermore, these interviews revealed the experiences of the educators, regarding the traditional method and the online method, which provides information on how technology

influences a learner's growth. Using an interpretivist approach, therefore, not only enhances the understanding of the artworks and the skills developed by the learners, but also provides a reflective understanding of what the online methods bring forth. Reflection can provide professional growth and improvement opportunities, not only for the learners but also the educators (Osterman & Kottkamp 1993: 2).

Take note that these findings show that there is not necessarily a correct or incorrect answer to my research questions, but instead provide a deeper insight into how educators approach teaching different skills in an online environment. These findings also reflect the perspective of the involved educators, so the findings may vary from each Visual Arts educator's perspective. Examining the results of the online learning (i.e., the learners' artworks) made it clear which skills educators focus on during online teaching and learning, and are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of the study.

1.7.3 Data analysis

To see the learners' growth in art and development in their styles, a comparison between their first PAT (term 1) and their second PAT (term 2) is done. This comparison showcases the art method of the learners' work. I, therefore, analyse the works, using my own interpretation, based on the different art elements that I have tabulated as well as interpreted the meaning behind each artwork. By analysing various learners' works taught by the same educator, I have been able to establish a pattern and certain preferences prevalent in certain educators' learners' work.

When analysing artistic objects or images, I intend to use iconological and iconographical analysis methods. An iconographical analysis comprises an objective description of the work, as well as a formal analysis which relies on detailed descriptions of the art elements and design principles used within the work under discussion (SAGE 2015: 3). Iconographies bring about the interpreting and understanding of how cultures and the society read visual images, and make sense of the visual images, by connecting within political, economic, social, or religious references (Orrelle & Horwitz 2016: 3). An iconological analysis refers to the interpretation of these formal art elements and design principles and investigating the intended meaning of the work. These two processes are

separate from each other but are combined into a systematic process to help construct order within an analysis (SAGE 2015: 3). Edwin Panofsky (1974) suggests an integration of three levels of analysis; namely a primary, secondary, and tertiary level of analysis to help create order within the systematic processes. The primary level, *pre- iconographic*, considers all the aspects¹⁴ and purposes of the images, preparing it for the secondary level. The secondary level, *iconography*, seeks the meaning behind the signs/symbols and images. The analysis during the tertiary level, *iconological*, finds the deeper underlying meaning of the signs/symbols/images, which then can be reflected upon by the interpreter (Orrelle & Horwitz 2016: 6). These deeper underlying meanings present an alternative perspective of what the work tells the viewer and what skill the artist (learner) mainly focused on i.e., whether emphasis was placed on the formal or conceptual component of the work.

1.8 Limitations, validity, and trustworthiness

The application of a new teaching methods in the classroom must be systematically integrated, but the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an unexpected and fast movement towards embracing e-learning. My study recognises that not all schools were able to implement this new method towards online learning within the restrictions and time constraints surrounding the pandemic and lockdown regulations. My study is also based on the belief that in the South African context, not all learners might benefit from an online environment. Instead, this method of teaching should be integrated gradually within the classroom, to make sure each learner gets the same equal rights and opportunities regarding learning, by ensuring that each learner has similar resources at their disposal, to help them develop their artistic skills.

Technology has endless possibilities for assessing learners' understanding. The national lockdown of South Africa resulted in educators and the DBE having to find new ways of teaching and assessing their learners, such as lessons conducted through radio and television (Zubane *et al* 2020: 6). This study considers the barriers and opportunities associated with online learning in South Africa and the development of the learners'

¹⁴ I am referring to the basic elements of art and the principles of design.

artistic skills . One of the major challenges is that e-learning uses the internet and in the South African context, where South Africa is deemed as a poor country, not every child possesses a computer or has internet access.¹⁵ These challenges need to be considered throughout this study. Going forward, I need to acknowledge that the teaching and learning of the formal and conceptual skills could be influenced by a lack of resources or access available to the learners.

My study considers the possibility that technology could break down barriers to learning in education, allowing learners to take on the role of facilitators and do their own learning, taking responsibility for their own education and learning through their own experiences. But for this self-learning method to happen, the learner must develop skills of self-discipline and Self-Actualization (Efland 2002: 8). Therefore, the educator's responsibility may be more important than just being a facilitator. It is the educator's responsibility to guide the learners towards the best possibility for the learner to grow, considering their unique knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, issues relating to how this method will be assessed can be unreliable, for it does not factor in that every learner is unique. To understand the work, learners are expected to be guided by a facilitator of teaching. Efland (2002: 10) states that to enhance the learners' capabilities to understand, educators must effectively present information to captivate all learners. The way learners think, experience, and understand, influences how effective assessments are. For assessing a unique individual, their artistic understanding and skills can be difficult (Efland 2002: 10). Educators base their assessments on certain criteria, which they obtain from guidelines in the curriculum and set according to the outcomes for each lesson/ term/ year respectively. These criteria nonetheless limit what can be assessed within the concept of art. Considering these limitations will help guide the study into the direction of revealing how the educators are influenced and what skills they focus on.

¹⁵ South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world. More than 50% of the country's population lives in poverty. Most people are living in rural areas, with no water, sanitation, security and electricity (Plagerson 2021: 1).

Another limitation is that the interviews are conducted online through the use of Google Forums. This method makes it easier to record every answer of the Visual Arts educators on one system. Yet, this study only collected a small sample of data compared to the information that is available 'out there'. In the context of South Africa, there is an estimate of 6000 high schools and this study collected data from a minimum of three schools only (Schools4sa 2021: 1). This means that the data that is collected from the educators' interviews does not even touch the 1% mark of all the high schools in South Africa. This study depends on the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' PATs (created during term 1 and 2), the interviews of the Visual Arts educators, and me, the researcher, to analyse the data based on my experiences. Thus, the small sample size compared to a large sample size can be limited and untrustworthy. For this data can be limited compared to a larger scale research study, making it impossible to generalise the data to be applicable to all the high schools in South Africa (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young 2018: 13-15). Moreover, the interviews are limited because the questions and responses may not be as in-depth as possible. The questions I ask the educator are limited, so the educator will answer predictably and expectedly. As there are only specific responses, these educators can answer each question

1.9 Ethical considerations

Conducting research within educational institutes can cause some concern. Jenny Fleming (2018: 210), a New Zealand researcher, highlighted the importance of involving human participants. Most research involving human participants can expose the participants to physical, social, or financial harm due to the research conducted.¹⁶ Various ethical concerns are attended to during my research study. After inviting Visual Arts

¹⁶ Mental harm could for example include research on nudity within advertisements and can offend some participants. Financial harm is when a participant works for a big industrial corporation, sharing sensitive information, without consent and getting fired. Social harm is when confidential information of the participant is shared within the research (Polonksi 2004: 54).

educators and their learners to become part of my study, they are made aware that I am analysing the artworks of learners created for the Grade 10 PATs and interviewing the educators to see what influence online learning has on the learners' skills development. In South Africa the public schools fall under the authority of the DBE and conducting research without consulting this Department's ethical approval would place the researcher outside the Human Research Ethics regulation (Fleming & Zegwaard 2018: 210). Without any consent from the Department of Education and the human participants, the study and the findings could be rejected (Committee of Publishing 2018). Therefore, permission to conduct this study has been obtained from both the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Humanities' Ethical committee, and the Gauteng Department of Education. The foundation of ethical research is 'informed consent' (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 5).¹⁷ Consent is requested from the school principal and thereafter, the educators, the parents/caregivers, and the learners. The learners received an assent form.¹⁸ The participants were told what the purpose and nature of the study is, and that participation is voluntary. Voluntary participation should be in all research, no participation should be forced and therefore, all participants must agree to participate (Fleming & Zegwaard 2018: 207). They may ask any questions about the process at any time. All participants may withdraw from the study at any point during the study, without any repercussions. All personal information is treated as confidential. To ensure anonymity in my study, learners and educators are referred to as e.g., School A, or learner A, etc. and the artworks are also referred to as e.g., artwork 1, artwork 2, etc.

This study does not set out to change the curriculum but rather to present new information to the art educators, providing new insights in art education in an online environment. The Visual Arts educators are aware of what the purpose of this study is and that they have the choice whether they want to participate or refuse to participate in this study. The PAT

¹⁷ Informed consent refers to the participants being 'informed' what the research is about and how the data will be collected. Afterwards, the participants must give their permission to participate in the research study (Fleming 2018: 5).

¹⁸ "Assent" is a term used for people that are defined as too young to give consent, but old enough to understand what the study is about, the risk and benefits within the study and what is expected from the participants within the study (CSUSM 2021: 1). An assent form allows learners younger than 18 to refuse their participation in the study.

does not need to be obtained physically. Electronic copies can also be used to analyse the skills used within the artwork, as it should not affect the outcome.

1.10 Outline of chapters

This study comprises five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of findings

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

The general **introduction** to the study provides an overview, assumptions, background objectives and motivations for the relevance of the study. The **second chapter** is the literature review, which describes and discusses literature used throughout the study, as well as elaborates on the theoretical framework used throughout the study. The first two chapters consider so-called ‘traditional’ learning and what influence this has on learners’ conceptual and formal skills development. **Chapter three** describes the research design and methodology and the data gathering and analysis approaches. Exploring methodologies and data-gathering methods that will provide insight in terms of what skill learners and educators focus on and how e-learning differs from traditional learning regarding formal and conceptual skills development. **Chapter four** presents and discusses the findings of the data analysed, using my theoretical framework discussed in the second chapter. Lastly, the **conclusion** highlights the findings of the study and answers the research questions, while providing a summary of the study, illustrating the significance and implications of the findings as well as providing recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Based on my own experiences as an educator, educators' teaching approaches improve based on their past teaching experiences. However, COVID-19 changed the way all educators teach their learners. New protocols and changes to the school curriculum (The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)) were implemented when the country was required to enter a national lockdown (CAPS amended version section 4, 2020). Due to this, all learners were required to stay at home and receive education through online and alternative platforms. As a result, new means of teaching for educators were developed, that is online learning tools via online teaching platforms.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way teaching was traditionally defined. Usually, an educator will stand in front of a class, presenting a lesson on a slideshow or board, during which the learners visually interact with the work and take note of the information in their workbooks. This results in a constructivist manner of learning, where the educator makes sure that the information is connected to the learners' own real-life experiences. However, the national lockdown resulted in increased online teaching and learning, where everyone was forced to stay in their homes and study independently. Lessons were done online, and learners were required to be responsible for their work and ensure that they were up to date. This meant that learners had to facilitate their learning, as educators were not present daily to review, revise or monitor the learners' progress.

Considering this, the study considers how these online platforms have affected learners' development within the current abridged curriculum, with a particular focus on the formal and conceptual skills of Visual Art learners in Grade 10. It, furthermore, explores how public schools implemented formal skills as opposed to conceptual skills to determine whether the online environment influenced the way the curriculum is taught and how educators guide learners toward innovation in their art, or whether Visual Arts educators tend to focus on a specific artistic skill over the other. The literature to follow addresses two different artistic skills, namely, formal (to create something by hand, which is more traditional and that involves the formal art elements and design principles) and conceptual

(where traditional stylistic interpretations involving the art elements and design principles are ignored in favour of an idea or concept). But before data collection was conducted, it was imperative to understand what is meant by education in art, Visual Arts, curriculum, Critique of the curriculum, COVID-19 and the curriculum, advantages and disadvantages. The following sections consider the literature related to these concepts.

2.2 Visual Art

By exploring the work of the modernist theorist John Dewey in *Art as Experience* (1934), who focuses on aesthetic experiences in Visual Arts, I hope to provide a better understanding of what formal skills in the Visual Arts entail. It was during the twentieth century that Dewey believed that the value and nature of art should focus on the aesthetic experience, for both the audience and the artist (Dewey 1934: 278). People tend to look for aesthetic qualities in art rather than the message behind it, which forms the focal point of the aesthetic experience. Understandably, an audience would focus more on the aesthetics of an art piece rather than trying to understand why the piece was created (Wolcott 1996: 70). It is much easier to make art aesthetically pleasing than to make viewers understand the complexities behind the piece, i.e. what influenced its creation and what the intentions of the artist are. This makes it difficult for an audience to judge an art piece on all its merits. Thus, South African Visual Arts education is generally centred on technical and formal rather than conceptual skills.

Dewey (1934: 43) argued that to enhance the viewers' experience, it is best to engage them in a meaningful way, expressing the value of art. Dewey regarded the aesthetic experience as something different from that of an ordinary experience; it is more integrated and intelligible, as one must be well-versed in art history and the basic principles of art to analyse and interpret an artwork. For Dewey (1934), an aesthetic experience is something that one should experience by appreciating the creation of an artwork as well as the artist's inspiration for it. The artwork, therefore, has become an interaction between people and the artist, an interaction that is categorised between the perceiver and creator. Dewey (1934: 43) viewed the aesthetic experience as an aid to enjoying art, resulting in the foundation of a new experience. Furthermore, an aesthetic

experience is precious and unique; something that cannot be described but can rather be felt (Dewey 1934: 62). The aesthetic experience emphasises pleasing qualities, referring to it as something to be enjoyed for one's own sake. An aesthetic experience is placed in opposition to an intellectual experience, which, instead of emphasizing paint on canvas that is skilfully used, focuses on the conceptual meaning or idea behind a work. The nature of an aesthetic experience can be defined as a strong influence on the understanding of art, and in this study, within the field of art education (Wolcott 1996: 71).

Within a multicultural South African society, it is common to question the role of art. The artists, art critics, art historians and art educators in this post-colonial country regularly question the meaning-, aesthetics-, value- and forms of art. In contrast, it is believed that many postmodern artists criticise the construction of the meaning of art, believing that the concept behind artworks is a major issue concerning contemporary art and how people perceive it (Risatti 1990: 10). This notion is still applicable in the year 2022, even though there are continued arguments of what conceptual art is, some characteristics cannot be denied as conceptual art. A March 2022 article, *Conceptual Art: 4 Characteristics of Conceptualism*, written by MasterClass, identifies one of these characteristics to leave a lasting impact on the viewer, whether it is to shock the audience or just be bizarre. Conceptual art, which is different to the concept of an artwork, is an avant-garde style that uses non-traditional methods to create new forms of art, and emphasises the concept behind the artwork (MasterClass 2022: 1).

As explained in the previous paragraph, the definition of conceptual art is continuously changing, making it difficult to provide specific context in which conceptual art can be understood. Conceptual art is defined as art that focuses on the basic idea (concept) behind the work of art, above any traditional art constraints (Wolfe 1999: 1). While formal arts focus on Visual Arts and the creation of aesthetic pieces of work, conceptual art deconstructs the very definition of art itself. Through visual or performance art, conceptual art takes the idea and conveys it in an artistically way as possible (Wolfe 1999: 1). In addition, a study conducted by MasterClass, revealed four characteristics of defining conceptual art; (1) Avant-garde; conceptualism draws work of art from non-traditional styles, fueled by abstract expressionism, pop art, and Dada. (2) emphasis on the concept;

conceptualists discard any preconceived notion of what art is and create artworks to convey the initial concept. (3) Irony; in addition to serving as ironic critiques of the art market and world, conceptual works of art also stand on their own. In concept art, satire and lampooning, both artistic traditions and broader cultural trends, are used to lampoon and satirise the artwork (4) Minimalist; objects of conceptual art can veer toward minimalism, although it is not always the case. These artists demonstrate how straightforward a concept can be conveyed without a lot of fuss by utilizing a rudimentary method (MasterClass 2022: 1). Therefore, based on the four characteristics of conceptualism, this study uses these characteristics as a guideline in defining and understanding what conceptual art is.

Take note that there is a difference between conceptual skills and Conceptual art. A concept can be defined as an artwork that revolves around an idea created by a learner or artist. Thus, this study explores learners' conceptual skills in creating artwork that successfully communicates the message behind it. In addition, Topic 1, the conceptualising process, does not only focus on conceptual skills but also formal skills because Topic 1 is the planning of ideas, pictures, and the selection of medium and drawings before the final artwork (Topic 2).

Many contemporary South African art educators have attempted to reform and change their approach towards curriculum development, forming a more, all-inclusive study of art (Wolcott 1996: 68). This means they attempt to be more inclusive, applying both formal and conceptual skills equally in the classroom. This ensures that learners get a broader understanding of Visual Arts within art education, ensuring also that the learners are well-versed in different aspects of art, like aesthetic and conceptual experiences.

In an interview, American Conceptual artist, Joseph Kosuth (cited in Davis 2009: 1) describes the term “conceptual” to refer to anything that contains an idea. His definition creates the notion that anything can become art, as long as the notion of an idea has been embedded within the object. This is opposite to what traditional western art presents (Davis 2009: 1). The traditional western arts include all creative practices passed down from generation to generation. The purpose of traditional art is to express cultural and religious ideas and celebrate nature, family, and history. Previous artisan skills and

knowledge are exhibited, along with poetry and graphic arts from the past, focusing more on the formal skills over the conceptual (but not disregarding it). Dutton (cited in Davis 2009: 1) argues that contemporary art avoids formal art development. This is possibly why contemporary Visual Arts educators seem to mainly focus on conceptual development rather than formal skills development in their classrooms (See Appendix C, page 201-205).

The reader needs to understand that there is a clear difference between conceptual art (an art movement as described above) and the conceptualisation process described in the curriculum in Topic 1. The conceptualisation process (Topic 1) refers to the planning, research, sketch studies and experimentation of mediums in the sourcebook. Topic 2 in the curriculum refers to the making of the artwork (as planned during the execution of Topic 1). The making of the work refers to the creation of the artwork, and may include both the meaning of the work, as well as the formal and technical art elements. As the CAPS (2011: 9) states, both the conceptualisation process (Topic 1, planning, research and developing the ideas for the artwork) and the creation of the final artwork (Topic 2), count the same, with equal focus on both aspects within the art education. This implies that the conceptualising of the work (planning out the artwork and developing of creative ideas, which includes the planning of formal art elements such as the composition and use of colours) and making of the work (creating of an artwork that demonstrates technical skills) are both applied and should be focused on in the subject Visual Arts (CAPS 2011: 10).

Art education is defined by considering modern theorist John Dewey's seminal text *Art as Experience* (1934). While art education is a broad term, with a long and complicated history, the literature that I discuss focuses specifically on the skills and teachings implemented in the Visual Arts classroom environment. Art, which could refer to drama, Dance, Music, Visual Arts or Design, as whole is not looked at in this study, but rather focuses on Visual Arts.

2.3 Visual Arts Education

One of the vital conventions within the current curriculum of Visual Arts education is DBAE, where a study is consequential in presenting lessons on a broad range of Visual Arts theories, underlining what is learned from the art created during a certain period (Wolcott 1996: 69). In the late 1900s, most art educators valued aesthetic qualities and the ability to induce these artistic impactful experiences (Wolcott 1996: 69). In addition to these experiences, the current focus in art education is categorised as describing and analysing the elements and principles of art and design within artworks. Consequently, these aesthetic experiences are deemed as restrictive and insufficient in dealing with contemporary art (Wolcott 1996: 69). For the aesthetic experience makes sure the audience understands the work, therefore making use of technical skills to produce easy-to-digest art. However, contemporary art mainly focuses on the idea behind the work, which can deal with either aesthetic work or work that shocks the viewer, but the artist normally does not have to use the basic elements of art as they can move beyond them and use any material or means necessary to produce their artwork (Wolcott 1996: 69). It can, therefore, be safe to presume that contemporary Visual Arts educators value the formal artistic skills in art education rather than the conceptual skills. Results focused on aesthetics rather than an audience's intellectual experience, making sure that the basic elements of art are used to provide art pleasing to the viewer's eyes. Therefore, it is argued that artworks that are visually pleasing or stimulating to an audience might have their history and influence ignored as the audience does not necessarily know which historical influences are prevalent in that piece (Risatti 1990: 11). The aesthetic value of an artwork is, therefore, much more fundamental to the success of an artwork than would be the conceptual notion behind it.

The CAPS document describes Visual Arts as a subject that promotes creativity that is “practiced by the hands, eyes, intellect, and visualization” (CAPS 2011: 8). White (2004: 55) observes that the current teaching of artmaking in schools is a hybrid practice. Hybrid teaching refers to a mixture of on-campus and off-campus teaching. This means that the learner is taught in class or given an assignment in class and then has to practice outside the environment of the classroom, without the presence of an educator. Typical art

courses in the 21st century classroom include the teaching of observational and perspective drawing (modelled on academic practices), teaching colour theory and principles of design (based on a modernist curriculum), and teaching crafts and media (based on various traditional norms) (Efland, 1990: 82; Smith, 1996: 5; White, 2004: 55-57). Many studies on the history of art education explore the reasons why various artmaking practices were deemed important in a child's education at different points in time (Efland 1990: 122; Smith 1996: 5; White 2004: 72-73). All these studies remind us that the decision of what to include in a basic art education curriculum has a historical origin. Contemporary curricula that describe drawing or elements of art and principles of design as foundational are echoing the values and theories of a particular era, not objectively stating universal timeless truths. Artists and educators who are responsive to the needs of their current learners must consider contemporary as well as traditional artistic and critical practices and ask themselves what learners need to know to successfully make and understand art and culture today (Gude 2007: 11).

Gude (2007: 14) argues that a quality art curriculum does not just disseminate historical, technical, or formal knowledge of art. It also needs to accumulate the practice of art critique and understanding the art of others, to present quality art education. Through quality art education, learners can become familiar with the use of languages of multiple arts and cultural discourses and are thus able to generate new insights into their lives and into contemporary times. Therefore, quality art education must strive towards developing critical skills such as the ability to investigate, analyse, reflect, and represent multiple art and cultural discourses, which reflects an example of conceptual skills that can be developed within the learners' artistic skills (Gude 2007: 14).

2.4 Curriculum

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS 2011) is a single, all-inclusive, policy document that was introduced by the DBE for all subjects listed in the Nation Curriculum Statement for Grades R through 12, in South Africa. This document provides a subject outline of the teaching and assessment requirements for each specific subject. The curriculum expects learners to create artwork, whether it is two-dimensional or three-

dimensional, reflecting the aesthetic principles, conceptual ideas and the learners' expressiveness (CAPS 2011: 8).

Mary Stokrocki (2007: 1361) indicates that computer-based technologies (CBT) within Visual Arts education started in the 19th century.¹⁹ Even though Stokrocki (2007) research on technology developed is based during the 19th century

Throughout history, artists were considered observers, capturing the landscape and the socio-political issues surrounding them during the periods in which they lived, into paintings, drawings, sculptures or other forms of art. Due to the development of technology during the 18th century, resulting in the development of inventions like cameras and their mass production, the role of the artist has changed, leading to the change in the artist's role as they become social commentators, expressing themselves through their art. In his seminal text, *Ways of Seeing* (1972), John Berger states that art is unique and that it cannot simply be replaced. Photographers changed this meaning of art and developed something new which is considered a different art form by contemporary youths. The camera allows people to display copies of paintings within their homes, capturing an image of the canvas. Yet Berger (1972: 31) argues against this sentiment, as he believes that anything that is reproduced or is a copy of the work cannot be considered unique, as it does not show all the detail contained in the original work, like the texture, colours or any traces of the artist's style. Art is seen as producing something unique. Davis' (2020:1) statement that art education evolved from utilitarian to creative expression, making art for personal development, can have similar notions to Berger's statement. Both Berger (1972: 31) and Davis (2020:1) believed that formal skills need to implement formal elements and conceptual skills in creating artwork, which is original, creative, and possess elements of 'handiwork' and expressiveness. As a society, we are more focused on the expression of ourselves. Through art, one does not need a voice, but the artwork can become the artist's/learner's voice. Giving rise to the aspect of creative expression in art as its focus is on the individual person-self.

¹⁹ CBT refers to any technology, which requires hardware, software and a mini processing unit, available on computer or mobile devices (Schindler 2017).

Furthermore, art education is based on creative expression, emphasizing self-importance within art (Wallings & Davis 2020: 1). Artists and art learners generally produce artworks based on how they perceive the world. This approach is still offered in the current South African curriculum, encouraging the learners²⁰ to respond to the world in a meaningful way. The CAPS curriculum (2011: 8 & 2020: 32) encourages the development of the learners' intellect and their ideas, increasing their creative capabilities within visual and physical experiences using materials and technology to develop their ideas. Through facilitating learning, the educator helps to guide the learners in new mediums and techniques, making sure that the learners do the necessary research and work to help them grow.

In 2020, during my first year as a beginner educator, I started to learn the different aspects of being an educator, such as how every educator has a unique method of teaching and what their focus is within art education. Through observing my mentor educator, I noticed how she changed and adapted her views of art throughout the years that I have known her. This was visible in the way she began focusing more on conceptual development rather than formal aspects. This was the case when she taught me when I was still at school. Her focus has changed from formal skills to conceptual development. I assume that this change can be attributed to changes in the curriculum, or she just found an approach that works best for her or her learners. During the time I spent with her, as a student educator, I noticed that she took a step back from how she used to teach. Now, she only provides guidance if the learner struggles with something specific, but otherwise, she had the learner complete tasks, like their PAT, without her influence. As mentioned above, this links back to the constructivist approach, where the learner becomes the facilitator of learning, with little guidance from the educator. Take note that when I studied under her when I was in school, the CAPS curriculum was not used. It seems that the new curriculum and its request for constructivist learning resulted in this educator's change in teaching.

²⁰ The term 'learners' here could be replaced with the term 'students'. Since my study is focused on secondary high school learners, I have opted to use the term 'learners'.

The CAPS (2011 & 2020) documents provide guidelines for educators in Basic Education, guiding them in what the curriculum expects in the respective subjects. The CAPS (2011 & 2020) document encourages educators to teach using a constructivist approach, as mentioned in Chapter 1. This means that, sometimes, other learning theories with the potential to improve not only art itself but also other subjects, are disregarded.²¹ Within art education, the constructivist manner of teaching can divide an educator's focus between either conceptual ideas or formalistic skills. In the rest of this chapter, different learning theories, constructivist and humanistic approaches are defined by exploring the theorists and the research fundamentals that follow their learning theories. Exploring the work of a constructivist theorist, Jean Piaget (1974), and comparing it to Abraham Maslow's (1943) Humanistic approach, I determine which approach is most effective within an online environment. First, I explore the constructivist learning theory, researched and introduced by Jean Piaget (1974), a Swiss psychologist, as this is the theory that is encouraged by the curriculum. Thereafter, I explore alternative means of teaching the Visual Arts. As the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in online methods that brought about change in the learning theories, I believe that it provided the learners with more freedom regarding their learning, resulting in them becoming their own facilitators of learning. Abraham Maslow (1943), an American psychologist, introduced the Humanistic approach, a theory that, in the context of this study, is used to explore the impact that the online environment has on a learner's development. By discussing and analysing these learning theories (Constructivism and Humanism), I intend to reveal how these learning theories can influence the formal and conceptual skills of the learners differently within Visual Arts in an online environment. Unlike the constructivist approach where the learning sources are surrounding the environment of the learner, the humanistic approach focuses on the learner's authority (becoming their own facilitator of learning) (Hare 2019: 1). Another American psychologist, Carl Rogers (1966), introduced Experimental Learning, which was based on Maslow's work in *Hierarchy of Needs* (1943), which posits that humans are motivated by a certain goal. I am evaluating the shift between the constructivist and humanistic approaches, by considering how moving from face-to-face

²¹ Approaches to the theory of learning are Cognitivism, Constructivism, Behaviourism and Humanism, as unpacked in Chapter 1. I infer, however, that the CAPS focus mainly on Constructivism.

teaching to online teaching has influenced learners, and exploring what effects online learning and traditional learning have on Visual Arts learners' artistic skill (formal and conceptual) development. The face-to-face teaching and learning environment can reveal that the educator can limit the learner's growth, where the learner can choose their skills as they become their own facilitator. In this case, the learner decides which skill, formal or conceptual, they want to focus on, ensuring that the educator is only assisting in the learner's growth, rather than facilitating it (Hare 2019: 1). The main purpose of assistant learning is that it assists with facilitating learning, meaning that the learners take control of their learning processes, as the educator only supports the learners' short-comings or struggles, in addition to providing resources for the learners' studies.

2.5 Learning Theories

In the book *New Look*, Jerome Bruner (1992) introduces a series of experiments that resulted in Bruner finding that prior knowledge can influence sensation. Patricia Greenfield (1990: 327) describes from her early experiments that people perceive the world in the sense of a purpose and not objective. They (Greenfield & Savage-Rumbaugh 1990: 540) clarifies this by providing an example: a person can perceive a coin by its physics but is also affected by the knowledge that the coin has value. Even though a complex understanding of certain information was developed, it never explained the concept of how higher thinking emerges (Efland 2002: 14). This indicates that this Behaviourist form of learning was not adequate to explain how prior knowledge can create new forms of learning. Efland (2002: 15) indicates that Behaviourism describes possible behaviours that were brought on by the learners' environmental stimuli but never accounted for the individual's experience of the conscious.²² Behaviourism refers to the learning of a child through interaction with the environment (Graham 2000: 22). I am exploring different learning theories in this section of the literature review to reveal what influences these skills have on the cognitive abilities of learners within the different Visual Arts spaces. The 'traditional' space presents face-to-face learning where the educator takes charge of the learner's development within the guidelines prescribed by the

²² Due to the limited scope of this study, I will not delve into the multiple theories surrounding the conscious and unconscious. For further research consider Jung's writings on the collective unconscious.

curriculum. This traditional learning space is considered in opposition to the online space, where the learners take charge of their learning and the educator merely assists the learners.

Behaviourist teaching refers to a 'mimetic' activity, where learners repeat or mimic the new information that was presented to them. The behaviour is then either rewarded or punished to attain the required behaviour (Jacobs *et al* 2016: 41). Experimental teaching, on the other hand, allows learners to experience real-life challenges (Jacobs *et al* 2016: 42). Constructivist teaching requires learners to transform or reshape information. Based on their own lives, background, and beliefs, the learners should be assisted by the educators to construct knowledge that is meaningful and useful to their own lives (Jacobs *et al* 2016: 42). Behaviourist teaching indicates that the educator influences the skills they want learners to learn, whereas Constructivist teaching progressed, allowing the learners to become the facilitator, but still with some guidance from the educator. Recent years have shown that educators started having less influence on the learners' learning, yet at a certain point within their studies, the learners still require the educator to guide and aid them. This shows that artistic skills development can still be influenced by the educator in the constructivist paradigm of teaching. One should also consider that the inclusion of technology in art education, as discussed in more depth in the next section of this chapter, created distance between the educator and learner in the teaching and learning process. As the learners have limited guidance or supervision from the educators, they can be at home doing work or playing games, as no one is directly there to punish or reward them for working or playing, respectively. This observation was revealed during the lockdown, where I as a student educator added all my sources online for the learners to use for their assignments and homework, but by the time they had to come back to school, it was not surprising to see that most of them were negligent in their work. On the contrary, they expected that I, as the educator, needed to facilitate their learning and assist them with developing and gaining new knowledge. Referring to Maslow's Humanistic approach of Self-Actualization, the learners must do their work and take responsibility for their own learning. However, considering the pandemic, it is indicative that learners cannot overnight become their own facilitators, instead it is a process. COVID-19 overnight changed things, but neither the educators nor the learners were ready for these sudden

changes. One might also need to consider that all these learners were experiencing trauma. Many of them might have lost loved ones during this time, or have become very ill.

When referring to constructivist teaching, it is best to consult the research of Jean Piaget (1974), as explored in *Teaching-learning dynamics*, edited by Jacobs (2016). This research introduces Piaget's notions of schema, as also already mentioned in Chapter 1.²³ Piaget's notions of schema posit that learning content is divided and constructed within 'assimilation' and 'accommodation', indicating that two things can occur when a person interacts with ideas or experiences. Either the new experience is integrated into existing knowledge, added to their existing schema, called assimilation, or the existing schema has to adapt to accommodate new ideas or experiences, called accommodation (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe 2016: 4). Flavell (1996) in *Psychological Science*, indicates that prior knowledge is altered by new knowledge, resulting in understanding or cognitive development. Assimilation refers to an existing schema, which provides meaning to a new experience (Flavell, 1996: 200), like where the learner notices similarities among objects. Accommodation is a process of altering ideas that do not fit into the existing schema, modifying or changing ideas or experiences of existing thoughts (Flavell, 1996: 200). This understanding reveals that constructivist teaching is moving away from traditional teaching, since, as stated before, the learner becomes his/her facilitator of learning, indicating that the learner will then construct their new knowledge and skill. Using this approach within the online environment allows the learner to take charge of their learning process.

The world is filled with a variety of details we perceive around us, including people, objects, and events. The world is not something humankind creates, but through our senses, we perceive and process the world. This influences our prior knowledge, what we select to look at, and how we perceive; this has an impact on our knowledge development. Most of our knowledge is developed within our mental state,²⁴ what or

²³A schema is a central structure, which is a systematised array of behaviours or thoughts that an individual is forming. These schema result in ideas, understanding and creating new information.

²⁴ Mental conditioning refers to someone's train of thought: What they observe and their understanding of the phenomenon.

whether we perceive depends on our state of perceptual awareness. Jerome Bruner (1957: 25) states that our perception of certain information can influence our expectations, needs, and habits, meaning that new information and understanding can change our way of thinking or doing things. In *Ways of Seeing* (1972: 10), Berger (1972: 10) states that seeing starts before words, a child needs to see and recognise before he/she speaks. An image is a sight that has been reproduced and detached from the place and time where it first made its appearance – frozen in time. Even photographers' images are not mechanically recorded on the camera, it is something where the photographer selects an image to capture, out of a thousand other places to do so, yet, the photographer chose a specific image. The photographer's way of seeing is reflected in what he/she chose to capture. For the painter, the way of seeing is reconstructed by the mark that he/she makes on the canvas or paper. The artist presents an image depending on the way they see it (Berger 1972: 10). Yet, the way people perceive the image is affected by a whole series of assumptions of art. Assumptions such as beauty, taste, civilization, form, status, genius, and truth. As stated before, art is unique, as everything the artist does is for a reason: the colour he/she chose, the texture of the brush or pencil, and even the subject/object that was chosen by the artist. Even in art observation, perceiving and analysing are key fundamentals for visual literature. Learners must research a topic/ art material or method to help them develop their artistic understanding and develop their unique styles. Whether it is from Self-Actualization or guidance from an educator, the educator must understand that learners are unique and have their artistic styles. Whether these styles focus on conceptual or formal skills, the educator must help them grow and develop the learners' artistic identities. According to David Perkins (1994: 12), the way the human mind perceives the environment is quite effective, for it allows us to scan our environment within an instant, giving us a general idea of the land. In Perkins's (1994) study, he refers to "experimental intelligence", which is defined as learning from experience. Most learners experience experimental intelligence through hands-on learning, which means learning by doing, instead of just listening to the information the educator is presenting (Perkins 1994: 13-14). But these skills, knowledge, and experiences are acquired outside the traditional classroom setting. This may include self-learning, research, and field trips. To make sense of what they have read, learned, and

experienced and link it to their daily lives, learners create meaning with this information. This is called reflective intelligence (Perkins 1994: 15). By looking at art we can shift between two bits of intelligence. Through observation, our perception of these two bits of intelligence shifts. Details can be discovered from previous encounters or prior knowledge, by choosing where to look, learn, or understand something and create meaning within it, where situations make us search for something (Efland 2002: 18). Efland (2002: 18) noticed that reflective intelligence gave rise to concepts and ideas through the notion of perception itself. Perception itself became an object for thought, in becoming this arose the concept of higher thinking.²⁵ This means that Visual Arts learners must be placed in such a setting that they can learn through doing. Whether they are at home or school, they must experience painting, drawing, or even analysing artworks. This process will allow them to develop their artistic skills, in creating artworks more advanced than they previously could complete.

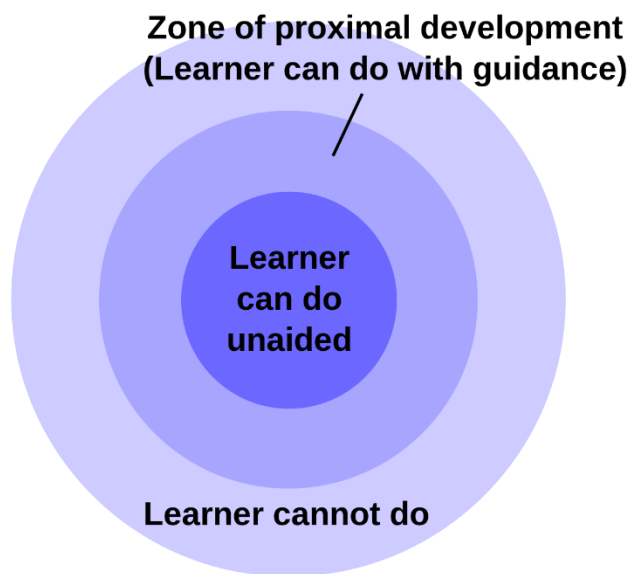


Figure 3: Zone of Proximal development (Jacobs *et al* 2016: 5).

Lev Vygotsky (1978), a theorist and one of the forerunners in cognitive development theories, explores ways to enhance creative thinking. Developing Vygotsky's Zone of

²⁵ The term 'perception' refers to arising awareness using the senses. Believing the mental state can change its way of thinking through the shift changes of perception, thus producing higher ways of thinking and perceiving in more detail.

Proximal Development (ZPD) to enhance the learners' learning by making them their facilitator of learning. In this instance, the educator will still be needed to support the learner, as there are a few things learners cannot do on their own (refer to figure 3). Some information is too difficult to be understood by the learner on their own but can be grasped through an educator's guidance and assistance. Scaffolding as a teaching method is often used to help develop the learners' cognitive abilities, making sure they understand the work (Jacobs *et al* 2016: 5).

Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding refers to educators changing the level of support following the needs of the learners at that given time. Educators should be reminded that each learner is unique, and the guidance of an educator helps develop the unique individual's abilities. This theory could be linked to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), see figure 2 on page 10. This helps educators and learners effectively achieve their goals, guiding the learners in making sure they understand the work.²⁶ This process ensures educators that the result will assist learners in achieving new skills and developing of knowledge. The taxonomy is divided into different levels of thinking, from basic knowledge to remembering, where learners can recall a fact or concept (related to Behaviourism), moving up to 'creating' the new work (Rohwer & Sloane, 1994: 79-80). This links back to the notion that Visual Arts learners first need to understand art before they can develop their unique artworks through self-learning and the guidance of the educator. These notions can help develop the learner's artistic skills and understanding of visual literacy.²⁷

Through Landsberg, Krüger & Nel (2015: 244) the ZPD process (introduced in Chapter 1) refers to the learner studying and observing certain information that is presented to them by the educator. At first, they still trying to determine and understand the information, however, with assistance from the educator, the learner will start to understand what to do with the information and start applying the information to their daily experience

²⁶ Benjamin Bloom (1956), together with Max Englehart, Edwards Furst, Walter Hill and David Krathwohl, published a framework in categorising educational goals for educators. Educators can use this taxonomy to help create educational objectives.

²⁷ For a deeper understanding of visual literacy in the South African classroom, I refer the reader to Human's text 'Visual culture literacies: seeing is be[lie]ving. Creating visual arguments through multimodal and multiliteracies pedagogy' (2019).

(Landsberg *et al* 2015: 244). Therefore, the educator is guiding learners to understand the difficult work and challenges that were taught to them (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 244). For this process to be successful, classroom activities should be based on and applicable to the actual world. The Socio-cultural theory, developed by Vygotsky (1978), holds that the “social environment [is] a facilitator of learning and development” (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 274). Learning takes place on two levels: interaction with others and integration with the individual's mental structure. Social interactions are crucial to the construction of knowledge. The educator needs to consider what knowledge and skill will be the most appropriate to the actual world. The educator needs to remember what skill (formal or conceptual) will be the most effective for the learner within the artistic society. Or rather the educator must bear in mind what skill will be best suited for the learner.

A Constructivist teaching approach refers to the guidance that educators provide for their learners within a teaching environment (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 242). However, educators are taking a step back and are allowing learners to facilitate their learning and find their information. Constructivists are moving away from traditional teaching toward facilitating learning (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 242), which is based on learner-centric education instructions and the independent learning of a learner. Effective learning is based on understandably producing information, moving along towards independent learning, where the educators stand back and let the learners apply the knowledge that they have obtained towards solving problems, related to real-life or authentic problems, which the educator has provided (Jacobs *et al* 2016:36). I believe that online learning, discussed in more depth in the next section, can result in a constructive development where the learners must facilitate their independent learning. Constructivists believe that learners construct their knowledge²⁸ by comparing their existing knowledge with their newly encountered knowledge; apply previous information or experiences within the new given information to produce understanding (Freire 1972: 46). Constructivists reject the notion that a learner does not have their knowledge; they believe that the children are creatures with their unique individual thinking (Landsberg *et al* 2015: 243).

²⁸ Their understanding and experience of the world.

The rise of these Constructivist and Humanistic theories was the dawn of a new artistic movement known as Modernism. The Modernist movement is not just a series of art genres but comprises various cultural fields such as architecture, music, dance, and art. Here, the focus is on art movements and their rejection of traditional ways of thinking. Clement Greenberg (2017) elaborated on the theory of Modernism in his work *Avant-Garde and Kitsch* (1961), explaining that the work became more vivid, where audiences were forced to reflect upon what they were experiencing, shocking and alienating them in the process: Rejecting the past and pursuing a new innovative form of art, creating their identities by turning to themselves and focusing on the self, using their artwork as a personal expression (Wolcott 1996: 72). In Modernism, form, colour, and line became more emphasised as the gaze turned away from aesthetic experience towards the formal qualities of art. The Postmodern era rose as a rebel movement against Modernism, for Modernism focused on idealism and reason. Postmodernism, a late 20th-century movement, was born out of scepticism and suspicion of reason (Foster 1983: 1). In Postmodernism, artists encouraged individuals' experiences and interpretations, stepping away from abstract principles (Foster 1983: 129). Postmodernism has evolved past Modernism, as are its theories of art and criticism (Wolcott 1996: 72). These theorists and critics became rather serious, criticising both culture and society. Modernism enclosed itself within its artwork, whereas Postmodernism seeks to be understood in a broader context, a dialogue between artwork and society (Wolcott 1996: 72). With the introduction of technology, new art mediums were discovered, such as Pop art, Installation art, Video art and Conceptual art; all these art styles and forms fall under Postmodernism art. Presenting this movement is to attempt to present a message or meaning rather than considering aesthetic qualities (Foster 1985: 130). Furthermore, Foster (1985: 131) states that Postmodernism is concerned with the "interconnections of power and knowledge" and not the use of artistic mediums. Essentially, this idea relates to the belief that artworks have become minimalistic, focusing more on conceptual than technical aspects.

As the approach to teaching and learning in art education is changing, many art educators are starting to question what should be taught, as they are starting to acknowledge the cognitive abilities within art (Wolcott 1996: 73). The focus is thus on what the learners can learn about and from art, and how this is connected to their own lives, which refers to the

DBAE, considering that the work of art should hold meaning for the learner. This makes it possible for learners to create artworks that incorporate both formal and conceptual skills. Therefore, DBAE helps develop the learners' ability to interpret artworks at a more refined and thought-provoking level, indicating that DBAE is a more effective modification in education than Postmodernism in art. However, the existing systems and practices in art education are fixed in contradiction and often appear to waver between the art theories of Modernism and Postmodernism (Wolcott 1996: 73).

However, there are still many art educators that use the Modernist approach to teaching art. In many cases, the inspiration of abstract expressionism, for example, is still used and dominates the content of art, used in the classroom (Parks 1989: 11). The reason this content is widely used is because of the success rate within the foundation of the modernist theories as it provides an understanding of art. Within this foundation, learners are asked to describe the formal elements within art as well as discuss how this work makes them "feel" (Wolcott 1996: 74). Furthermore, in the multitude of South African schools, practical assessments are instructed to present work that is structured around the notion of line, shape, value, and colour (the art elements and design principles). Within the art movement of Postmodernism, for most work discussed in the curriculum, is based on contemporary work, which is complex and puzzling to interpret. The viewer, by observing contemporary art, must have obtained a broader understanding and experience of other art theories and movements. Therefore, changing the approach to art is necessary for the learners to explore a diverse variety of art techniques and be able to interpret and understand the work.

2.6 Critique of the curriculum

In her article, *Considerations for a 21st-century Art & Culture Curriculum* (2007), Olivia Gude states that the basic elements of art and principles of design do not motivate learners to create art. Gude (2007: 6) believes that the main topics of the curriculum ought to stimulate the learner's learning. This modernist structure towards learning could be considered insufficient, as this quality-of-art curriculum does not inspire and contribute toward the betterment of learners' education. She explains that the curriculum itself

should house an aesthetic and cultural structure. Doing so, could present the learners with new ideas, and help them to make sense of the artworks that are associated with both traditional and contemporary art movements.

For Gude (2007: 7) art education involves a postmodernist approach, specifically in contemporary art and critical theory, as it presents a unique foundation for the quality of art curriculum or presents an understanding of a diversity of art. Critical theory is a society-oriented theory that aims to delve deeper into the understanding of societal norms to reveal assumptions that people make about a society that might prevent them from a full and true understanding of how the world should work (Crossman 2019: 1). Critical theory critiques the role of domination and barriers to freedom, this includes factors such as capitalism, mass-produced culture, and even feminism.²⁹ For Gude (2007), a committed art education would present a worthy study, which houses day-to-day conceptual structures for the Visual Arts curriculum. Like Wolcott (1996), Gude (2007: 6) believed that art education is too limited as it refers to the technical experience, rather than the conceptual structure. For modernist artists create artworks that house the elements of art, the principle of design, and the aesthetic experience, disregarding contemporary work for its critical thinking, understanding of artwork, and concepts embedded within the work (Gude 2007: 7). The modernist theory also broadens learners' capabilities of thinking and inspires meaningful ways of making, producing, and analysing art. Therefore, critical theory and modernist theory reflect that art education should consist of artwork that is easily determined and understood by society, and through which the message behind the artwork is not difficult to understand and which is aesthetically appealing for the viewer to look at. In this sense, Gude's (2007: 7) argument is that the curriculum surrounding Visual Arts and what is taught in school should consider a more comprehensive framework of planning. Gude (2007: 7) offers the *Principle of Possibilities* as a checklist for art educators to determine whether the curriculum provides some range of important experience for the learners. According to Gude (2007:8)), the art curriculum is built around the notion of over-constricts, as the curriculum only guide learners on what is right. However, Gude (2007: 8) is of the conviction that the art environment needs to be built

²⁹ Feminism is a belief that women should be treated equally. Feminism rose due Western tradition, which restricted the rights of women (Crossman 2019: 1).

on the learners' self-experience, where the educator creates an assignment brief that links to social issues, which the learners can understand and engage with. Furthermore, Gude (2007: 9) argues that a good curriculum understands the meaning of artworks in terms of aesthetic, social and historical context. This means that the educator does not only present work from historical context, but understands that art is evolving in contemporary times, which reflects the educators' understanding of art by introducing the latest developments and trends in various cultures in art and how the learner can benefit from this information and incorporate it in their studies.

Similar to my own experience, Gude (2007: 12), experienced that many art educators only evaluate work that is realistically portrayed. As such, many educators will criticise an expressionistic artwork, with a possibly wonderful conceptual notion, merely because it is poorly drawn (or created). This argument applies to the CAPS curriculum, especially the rubric that is provided for Visual Arts educators as a guideline on how to critique and rate the artwork of their Visual Arts learners. Furthermore, the CAPS (2011: 12-14 & 2020: 32) documents already established guidelines for educators to follow and implement in their classrooms, as a means to enhance teaching within the classroom. These art educators face a dilemma on creating a 'hands-on' project, with topics and themes surrounding contemporary notions that the learners can relate to, rather than continuing teaching outdated paradigms. Furthermore, as stated previously, art is evolving, therefore, the learners and educators continuously needs to consider contemporary as well as traditional art in their practices (Gude 2007: 12). Some art studios, like the Spiral Workshop,³⁰ have an introductory lesson within their course wherein learners are given several hours to play around and create different artworks, using the Surrealists movement, for example, as a reference (Brotchie 1995: 49).

The Surrealist art movement can be defined as an art movement differing from realism and abstraction. This concept will be complicated for learners at first (Gude 2007: 8). However, understanding the abstract nature of the work, the thought process behind its creation, and the meaning embedded within the work, can result in learners discovering

³⁰ The Spiral Workshop is a University of Illinois art program, where art students and art educators work together to manifest new styles of art education teaching. Each new spiral introduces the learners to a new relatable idea, which they use to make new fresh artworks (Gude 2021: 1).

a new experimental attitude toward their art (Gude 2007: 8). Creating new work that they are not used to producing since they have learned to immerse themselves in the process of making and interacting with new images and ideas, helped learners to develop new ways of approaching their creative works. This process takes the postmodern theory to heart, focusing on the conceptual structure within the work, making sure the learners explore and experiment with the new media pedagogy (Gude 2007: 8). Since classes were presented online during the Covid-19 pandemic, Grade 10 Visual Art learners had a challenging time due to their inexperience and limited understanding of the PAT. However, over the year, they will better understand what is expected, creating better ideas and creative works of art.

2.7 COVID-19 and the Curriculum

Berger's Visual Arts program began with a radio series, *Art in Everyday Life* (1925), which then progressed into a television program, *Meaning in Art* (1950) (White 2004: 56). These educational programs were used to promote art and develop young artists' skills with poor economic status, to afford proper educational institutes in teaching them to develop their artistic skills. Despite the century gap, this information is still pertinent today, if not more relevant and precise. Since even before the Covid-19 pandemic, art is often displayed online. Similarly, using online platforms as an educational media that can be shared with the learners, such as for example YouTube channels, is the easiest way to present tutorials on how to create artwork.. In addition, streaming applications (Netflix, Hooq, iFlix applications, etc.) are creating educational media, such as documentaries, which can be developed and support the specific educational field the learner is studying, in new ways (Undiana 2020: 196). Even though the United States of America is a well-developed country and South Africa is still developing, the information provided by Undiana (2020) from America, dating three years back can serve as guidance for a country like South Africa, especially within the current education system. By showing what online measurements are effective to educate the learners, whether it is educational media or online lessons, a developed country such as America can show a lot of success, which a country such as South Africa can refer to. Connecting this idea with the implementation of online learning during the national lockdown, as educators could have

presented online learning through online educational media, such as YouTube, that could show how to draw or even Visual Tours. This would create a visual reference for learners of certain architectural buildings.

Technological changes and the evolution of art education throughout the 19th and 20th centuries within schools worldwide, resulted in new ways of teaching (Davis & Walling 2020: 1). Blackboards changed to computers, tablets, and PowerPoint slides are now presented on a white screen (Davis & Walling 2020: 1). Some countries, including South Africa, started applying online learning within the curriculum, through the use of Moodle, Remind, Blackboard, and or other learning management systems, before COVID-19 (Heng *et al* 2021: 3). However, the implementation and integration of these platforms are not without its limitations as South Africa is still a developing country and there are still many challenges in implementing online learning within the South Africa educational system.

Danielson *et al* (2008: 79) state that learning methods are indicators of how educators present information and how the learners obtain this information. Several different methods of education exist in this context, such as traditional learning, e-learning, blended learning, mobile learning, and personalized learning, as explained in Chapter 1. Yet, what will mostly be focused on in this study is e-learning, traditional learning, and blended learning. Nonetheless, Chickering and Gamson (1987: 3-7) suggest that learners should be engaged constructively, through debates, discussions, writing, and reading. Hence, it depends on how the educator implements these approaches; for example, even in an e-learning or blended learning environment, one could have debates, discussions, or reading and writing exercises. Here, the learners can participate in, and provide, constructive criticism that will lead to self-reflection, and in so doing, improve their artistic skills and allow them to gain insight into how others view their work, especially from the perspectives of other learners.

The national lockdown resulted in the forced use of online teaching and learning methods, where the educators consequently become more distant from the learners' learning processes, thus distancing themselves from traditional teaching- and learning. This

sudden transition from traditional learning to online learning has posed numerous challenges for educators and learners alike (Heng & Sol 2021: 3).

That some learners and/or schools did not have access to these online curricular lessons meant that some learners and schools were losing important educational lessons during the national lockdown (Zubane et al 2022: 7). In some instances, Visual Art learners had to carry out the assignments without any or much guidance/ explanations. This change was even harder on Grade 10 Visual Art learners, who are new to the subject and curriculum and are not aware of what is expected from them, especially in terms of project-based tasks. Educators, on the other hand had to deal with new Grade 10 learners, facing the challenge of communicating and getting them familiar with the theory and assignments.

According to Bigelow, Christensen, and Karp (2000: 20), the implementation of the curriculum normally happens in stages. The resistance³¹ that usually follows to implement a new curriculum within a certain classroom helps guide the educator to his/her goal. The first stage occurs when the educator analyses the problem and makes small changes. Secondly, these changes are carried out in the classroom. Thirdly and lastly, the learners learn from the implementation of the program and apply it to their daily routines outside of school (Jacobs *et al*/2016: 122). What was learned inside the classroom is thus applied in a real-life situation outside the classroom and school setting. The implementation of the abridged version of the CAPS (2020) document, is an example of an implementation of a new curriculum. The abridged version changed a few key guidelines for the educator and the learners during the pandemic to make the workload less for the learners, during the difficult times of online learning. CAPS (2020) introduced an abridged version of the document to address the pandemic's impact on the education system. This abridged document reduced educator and learner workloads, allowing curriculum work to be completed within short and challenging timeframes.

³¹ This refers to the lack of training, too much workload as well as a lack of resources experienced by the learners and educators alike. This notion links back to e-learning during the national lockdown, where not all learners had access to all the resources that were required.

2.8 Advantages and disadvantages of change

During and post-COVID-19, many educators were and still are plagued with challenges that resulted from the pandemic, raising concerns about art education and the learners studying art (Reimers 2020: 2). The educators' approach to reforming the curriculum changed as new ways of teaching ensure(d) the continuation of teaching. As stated in Chapter 1, teaching continued via online platforms, as educators had to learn new ways of continuing teaching, which made it difficult to ensure that the learners are taught holistically. However, as stated previously, the CAPS curriculum created an abridged version, still used during the post-COVID crises, that reduced the teaching content, to minimise the anxiety and stress level of educators and learners alike. The intention is, I believe, to ensure that the educators provide and complete an all-inclusive study within the classroom, developing both skills (formal and conceptual) of the learners to secure and establish a quality learning environment in the Visual Arts (Reimers 2020: 4).

Most learners from South Africa could not access these online curriculum lessons, as there is a digital divide between rural and urban schools, which means technology devices, internet access and money for data were limited for most South African rural households (Zubane *et al* 2022: 6). Sayef Bakari from the University of Tunis El Manar in her work *Why is South Africa Still a Developing Country?* (2017), argues that South Africa is a third-world country, meaning that the country is economically and financially unstable, concluding that it cannot be expected that all schools in the country have access to modern technological comforts, like computers or WIFI (Bakari 2017: 1). Educators, as well, had to start presenting online, where work has been done in class, now had to be changed virtually, with virtual classes. Online learning did present certain positive improvement to the traditional sense of teaching, not all favoured this manner of teaching.

While Julian (cited in Stokrocki 2007: 1368) believes that educators need to be present during the process of learning, this was not always possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, the detail of work may vary from learner to learner, some learners may present work that is up to standard, but without guidance and motivation from the educator, some work may be presented below standard or even be incomplete. Even though the sources date more than five years back, these notions are still applicable

during the 21st century, especially during national lockdown. According to Microsoft (cited in Zubane et al 2022: 10), e-Learning enables learners to improve problem solving skills and empowers the educator to impart knowledge effectively such as virtual tours, extra resource documents and/or academical videos. In addition, online learning eliminates all barriers associated with the traditional classroom setting. Barriers, such as overcrowded classrooms, lead to lack of attention and poor-quality education (Zubane et al 2022: 10). However, Maslow's (1943) notion of Self-Actualization revealed that when the learner becomes their own facilitator of learning it means that the learner will be able to do self-study. This expectation, however, can lead to poor results from some learners if they are not motivated to be engaged with their studies (Hare 2019: 1). Furthermore, the challenges of online learning still persist, as some learners still lack resources such as laptops, tablets, phones and/or internet access (Zubane et al 2022: 10)

This means that those disadvantaged schools that do not have access to modern technology have to rely on 'traditional' teaching methods. In this case, during the pandemic, teaching face-to-face was not possible. Third-world countries do not all have the luxury of having modern technology in every household, which makes art education complicated when learners are forced to work from home.

2.9 Conclusion

To understand how to create the assessing criteria to analyse the PATS, Chapter 2 examined the terms formal and conceptual skills. Furthermore, the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document explains that learners must follow a constructivist approach to construct their knowledge. According to Piaget (1974), the learner facilitates their own knowledge, by becoming the facilitator of learning. Educators, nevertheless, expected that learners would do more than facilitate their own work during the national lockdown. The learners had to demonstrate self-discipline to complete their sourcebooks accurately. According to Abraham Maslow (1943), learners must create their own goals in achieving Self-Actualization to meet their PATs. Consequently, a number of learning theories and teaching approaches were considered in this chapter.

In addition, the national lockdown caused new developments in the ways that educators teach, such as online learning methods. Douglas (2004), Stokrocki (2007) and Zubane *et al* (2022) stated that technology could aid learners' development by sharing online resources or hosting virtual tours, providing infinite visual information that learners can use to improve their studies. Literature on online learning and technology in the classroom were therefor also considered.

To conclude, Chapter 2 considered how the national lockdown changed teaching, from a face-to-face environment to an online environment, considering the role of the CAPS curriculum and how learners had to complete their work with self-discipline and minimal guidance from their educators. Online learning also introduced numerous ways in which technology could be incorporated within the classroom to help develop the learners' studies. Overall, this chapter referred to literature that provides a better understanding of what elements to foreground when elaborating on the methods used to collect and analyse data for this study in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

According to Rosalie Politsky in her 1988 article, *A Comparative Analysis of Interpretive Strategies in Contemporary Art Theory And its Implications for Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE)*, the relationship between art and education must be aesthetic, which means that Visual Arts learners should focus more on formal skills to create something objectively beautiful instead of focusing on conceptual skills, of which the purpose is to have people think abstractly about the creative drive the artist employs to express their ideas (Politsky 1988: 30). This study follows a qualitative research approach, while simultaneously integrating both primary and secondary sources. Qualitative research requires data collection using interviews, questionnaires, and recordings made within documents and artefacts (Gohlam 2019: 112). Visual Arts Educators and learners are this study's primary data sources. These include interviews held with the educators, as well as the PAT artworks (Topic 1: The Reflection and Rationale from the sourcebook and Topic 2: the final artwork) of the learners. Secondary sources include documents, journal articles, and online resources that have been examined, analysed and integrated throughout this study. Furthermore, qualitative research is concerned with the human experience, which is exactly what my study focuses on as well. This chapter discusses the research methods used to achieve the aims and objectives of this study and concludes with the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study.

3.2. Research aim

Educators and learners resorted to online learning methods after the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to change how we teach and learn. There was little time to follow any proper curriculum development processes in rural areas of South Africa due to the lack of technology (Zubane et al 2022: 6). In turn, the study analyzes how the online environment affected both learners' conceptual and formal art-making skills development as a result of e-learning for Visual Arts educators. This study aims to determine whether formal competency has shifted to conceptual competency. The impact of the online environment

or educators' experiences in the Visual Arts may be responsible for this. This study aims to determine how artistic skills (formal or conceptual) have been implemented through online learning environments, either through the educator's influence or the learner's self-discipline. Secondly, the study wishes to understand what skills Visual Arts teachers would like their students to develop online instead of what they learned during the Covid-19 outbreak. As well as comparing online and traditional classrooms, the research demonstrates the influence of the online environment on learners.

3.3 Research question

This study seeks to gain insights into the following questions (a) how do Grade 10 Visual Arts educators in public schools implement or approach the teaching of formal skills as opposed to conceptual development within an online environment, (b) how does an online environment influence the learners' formal and conceptual skills development compared to traditional learning, i.e., face-to-face learning and (c) why do educators and learners favour certain skills of art within an online learning environment? Taking note that question (b) and (c) are the sub-research questions and (a) is the primary focus.

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 Paradigm

A paradigm is a “body of beliefs, values, laws and practices which governs the community of practitioners” (Carrol 1997: 171). The interpretivist paradigm focuses on the participants' experiences and give them a voice. This study is based on the interpretation and understanding of the participants' experiences within a certain culture or organisation, to construct meaning (Medina & Taylor 2013: 9). An interpretivist paradigm comprises a humanistic approach derived from 1970, of which the aim was to understand a culture or organisation from the inside (Medina & Taylor 2013: 4). This means to ‘stand in their shoes’, to understand the ‘other’, through their values, beliefs and experiences. This process relates to interaction with the ‘other’ within a culture or organisation which the researcher is studying. Within this study, the ‘other’ refers to the Visual Arts educator. Thus, the interpretive paradigm helped/ guided me to build an understanding of the social

and real-world experiences of educators and learners within the classroom, school and community.

Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm engages educators as reflective participants, by developing an understanding of how learners approach their work, by constantly asking questions in developing the individual rather than the group of learners as one being (Palmer 1998). A deeper understanding is derived by exploring broader ideas of social, political, historical and economic forces that shape the school curriculum and the system, in which the educators are immersed (Medina & Taylor 2013: 5). The interpretive paradigm is essential for me, the researcher, to understand the educators thought process, in wanting to adopt more student-centred teaching and learning, such as the constructivist approach, where the learners become their own facilitators, doing their own research and experiments to improve their artistic skills (Medina & Taylor 2013: 6). This self-discipline has a big impact on the online environment, where the learners are responsible in constructing their own knowledge and skills, whether it is formal or conceptual. The learners develop their understanding about art, through experience and continuous reading on artists throughout the ages.

John Dewey's theory of inquiry is investigated in his text *Experience and Nature* (1925), in which he clearly explains inquiry-based research. The learner's role in the learning process is emphasised in this theory to help understand how the educator and the learner can support the goal of making the learners their own facilitators of learning. However, the national lockdown forced learners to become their own facilitators of learning, with little to no guidance from their educators. With Dewey's (1925) learning process, the learner starts to think, develop and build on their own knowledge, which can build on their cognitive abilities to be more creative with their work and create their conceptual ideas within the artworks. Rather than the educator explaining everything that the learners need to know, the learners are encouraged to explore the material on their own, have discussions, and share ideas. In terms of learners' achievements, the power of their questions should help drive the research, the writing, and the presentation of their assignments. It should help motivate them to become experts in their self-described fields. While developing their unique ideas, learners will also develop a sense of

achievement as they become 'experts' in their fields. The more they reach these goals, the more confident they will become, allowing them to further develop this skill later in life. In doing so, the learner builds their 'Self-Actualisation' notions by becoming more responsible and driven to obtain more knowledge through experience (Hare 2019: 1). The learners can only get these experiences by frequently asking questions, seeking answers and reflecting on their findings with third parties. In the subject of Visual Arts, the curriculum expects that all learners to build and develop their formal and conceptual skills through practice of their abilities and study of Visual Culture (Topic 3).

Inquiry-based methods emphasise the notion that learners have a higher aptitude for developing their skills by *doing* rather than just by *hearing* (Gholam 2019: 112). According to Dewey (1934), all inquiry-based data originates from life - the environment in which humans find themselves, or wherein they uncover new inspiration based on their experiences, products, materials, and ideas within individuals' worlds. Therefore, inquiry-based research focuses on the individual's concerns, interests and values. Its function is to develop possibilities or suggestions for a problem within the social action (Haradhan 2018: 14). This research aims to gain insight into the schools (that was selected for the study)' work and experiences (Tong et al., 2012). As a result of the national lockdown, the learners used materials found within their home environment and resources available from their educators or the internet to facilitate their learning during this study (Gohlam 2019: 112). Inquiry-based learning highlights the concept that the learners need to challenge their problems head-on (Gohlam 2019: 113).

The above described theoretical background is important to understand the methods that I have chosen to complete the data collection and analyses processes. Through art-based research methods to analyse the PATs (Topic 1: The Reflection and Rationale from the sourcebook and Topic 2: the final artwork) of selected Grade 10 learners, I intend to identify which skills the Visual Arts educators mainly focus on in an online environment.

3.4.2 The qualitative approach

Qualitative research is a form of social action that makes sense of an individual's experience by understanding the interpretation behind it. It does not aim to explain a cause-and-effect relationship but rather aims to provide insight into understanding the social reality of an individual (Haradhan 2018: 9; Fleming & Zegwaard 2018: 208). This approach is inductive and offers the researcher an opportunity to explore how participants see the world, the opportunity to interpret the findings and describe their beliefs, perspectives and experiences (Fleming & Zegwaard 2018: 207;).

Furthermore, qualitative research helps to develop an understanding of how humans understand the social world in which they live and why things are the way they are (Polkinghorne 2005: 137). This approach is flexible and not rigid, and aims to document rich and descriptive accounts by focussing on the narratives of the participants and their lived experiences (Fleming 2018: 209). Thus, in line with the aim of this research, a qualitative approach is employed, focussing on the unique experiences of the participants and their social reality.

3.4.3 Research methods

In this study I carefully chose specific educators and schools to participate, as discussed below in section 3.4.3.1. I briefly consider the effects of language diversity and economic status on the artistic skills of Visual Arts learners in various schools, considering that language and economic status can result in different outcomes for each learner during the pandemic. For example, someone with poor economic status will struggle more to continue school online than someone who is economically rich and can afford WIFI and personal technology. The study examines schools with different language policies within South Africa, specifically either an Afrikaans or an English medium, or dual medium school. Salmona Madriñan (2014: 300) reflects that languages are important factors in South African education. It came to his attention that most South African learners need to be taught in their second or third languages, whereas Afrikaans- or English-speaking South African learners are generally taught in their home languages. De Wet (2007: 1)

reveals that the value of home language instruction provides ultimate literacy and academic achievement. It improves academic performance and access to education that is understandable. This study does not explore whether different educational languages impact the academic achievements of the Visual Arts learners, instead it considers that different languages taught in schools can provide a wide diverse data set. This is why, this study collected data from three various educational institutes, from English-, Afrikaans- and Dual-medium schools. This selection was done as a means to equally divide the study's data collection between the three major language mediums institutes in South Africa.

Furthermore, Karen Macgregore (2008), a former editor of Times Higher Education, states that the use of online platforms and technology used in educational institutes of South Africa started in 2002. Universities expect students to have access to the internet as well as to find any resources available needed for their subjects. With over 300 000 learners, the University of South Africa (UNISA) is one of the largest institutes using electronic and online platforms (Queiros & de Villiers 2016: 165). In 1998 the University of Pretoria was among the first universities in South Africa to take up e-learning to teach and already implemented long-distance programs (Bagarukayo & Kalema 2015: 172). The University of Pretoria uses the platform UP portal and Blackboard Collaborate, where the students can, for example, apply for ethical clearance for research papers, access their modules' work and even access the library. Yet, these are not the only universities in South Africa to conduct e-learning and long-distance programs; University of Stellenbosch, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of Western Cape, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the University of Johannesburg, and many more educational institutes of South Africa are conducting lessons using online or electronic platforms (Bagarukayo & Kalema 2015: 172-173). So, it is expected that the new young junior educators who have recently graduated from any of these universities that promote e-learning and online platforms, know and understand these electronic platforms. Even though these young, innovative educators are exposed to technology, it does not mean that the older, more experienced educators are left behind. What they may lack in technological experience they can more than make up for in classroom

experience. Their experiences can provide deeper insight on how the subject Visual Arts has been influenced by the online environment due to COVID-19.

The comfort zone of the classroom space has changed into a screen, with limited supervision, within one's own home. This can be a drastic change for the older and more experienced educators, changing from the way they normally taught in the 'traditional' sense to a more online approach, where the educators work from a screen and not face-to-face. Under 'normal' circumstances (i.e. predominantly pre-COVID), the Visual Arts educator needs to establish a space of teaching and learning, where the learners need to be in front of them so that the educator can guide the learners in their studies. With this method, the educator has a sense of how the learners' work will progress and what type of artworks are submitted. This is completely opposite to the 'new' ways of teaching as most educators cannot establish in real time whether learners are participating and completing work as the lesson is presented online. It is my belief that younger Visual Arts educators will not have similar experiences yet, as they do not have any pre-existing experiences to which they can compare the new situations. These educators provide other means and understanding of Visual Arts and online learning. Because experience is a critical component of qualitative research, it must therefore consider that all experiences will vary that are idiographic rather than law-bound (Ronald et al 2007: 26). Ideographical studies imply that each person is unique, each person experiences each sensation differently and derive at a different conclusion (Ronald et al 2007: 26). Since, in this study, each person's experience is different, these different experiences can affect the way the learners create their artworks and what emotions they want to evoke within the viewer. Also, the experience of the Visual Arts educator can affect the learner's knowledge and skill development, as each educator has different experiences and thus different impacts on learners.

Three methods of data collection were used to collect data for this research. namely (1) Interviews, (2) PATs analyses and (3) CAPS document analysis. These three methods were used to determine the impact the online environment had on the learners' formal or conceptual skills. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected Grade 10 Visual Arts educators, PAT assignments were analysed using the art-based Methodology,

and lastly reference to the CAPS (2011 & 2022) were made. All three methods were guided by the interpretive paradigm and each is explained in full below:

3.4.3.1 Interviews

Structured, semi-structured, and unstructured questioning formats were considered for the purpose of this research. Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate format for this research. Semi-structured interviews, informal in nature, provided flexibility for the participants to give more open-minded answers (Jackson *et al* 2007: 25). Informal interviewing can be helpful in building rapport with respondents and in gaining their trust as well as their understanding of a topic, situation, setting, etc., applied to the educational setting. Informal interviews foster 'low pressure' interactions and allow respondents to speak more freely and openly (Medina & Taylor 2013: 4). Through the use of informal interviews, the interpretive researcher conducts a trustworthy and authentic account of the 'other' (Medina & Taylor 2013: 4).

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact the online environment had on the Visual Arts learners' artistic skills, changing the way educators had to teach from traditional to an online environment. The interview will enable the educators to review how they believe the online environment has impacted the learners' ways of learning and the completion of their PATs (Jackson *et al* 2007: 21). In other words, the data obtained from the interviews focus mainly on the educators' experiences and reflections on their own teaching and learning methods, during the use of online lessons. Instead of just expecting a certain number of replies, this data-gathering method relies on the educators' in-depth responses on their understanding of 'traditional' learning and online learning.

The semi-structured interview questions were limited to seven questions. By using a more condensed list of questions, the core elements researched within this study can be uncovered more effectively. The following questions were asked to the Visual Arts educators who were participating in the study.

1. What skill, conceptual or formal, do you believe as a Visual Arts educator, is most important for an upcoming artist/ Visual Arts learner?

2. How did the lockdown affect the Visual Arts learners' artworks?
3. Did you see any change/development when the learners started working from home in comparison to their previous work, from term 1 in 2020 (which was in person) to term 2 (which was online)?
4. What is the biggest factor that influenced online learning?
5. Did you use any online methods to teach the learners during COVID-19?
6. Does online learning have a positive or negative impact on the learners and you, as an educator? Substantiate your answer.
 - a. If online learning has a negative impact, please list examples
 - b. If online learning has a positive impact, please list examples
7. Do you believe that online learning has greater value than that of traditional learning? Why? / Why not?

3.4.3.1.1 Sample

Three teachers of each of the chosen three schools completed the semi-structured interview. Thus, the sample consisted of three educators:

School A

School A is an urban school in the East of Pretoria, serving a middle to higher class community. This school follows the CAPS (2011) and Abridged CAPS (2020) curriculum, as it is a public school. What differentiates this school from the other participating schools is that most of the classes are presented in English, yet most of the learners are multi-cultural. For most of the learners, English is not their home language. English tends to be their second or third language. School A is best known for its prestigious artistic subjects because this school has educators specialising in Visual Arts, Design and Drama from grades 10-12. The school is well equipped with resources and educators to create a creative and nurturing learning environment for the learners in which they can excel. They follow a 10-day timetable cycle. This timetable still makes it possible for lessons to be at least 32 minutes long while being able to complete 9 periods within the timeframe provided to Visual Arts educators each week.

Teacher A is a white female educator in her forties, appointed as the Grade 10-12 Visual Arts educator. She obtained her bachelor's degree in education (B.Ed.) for Visual Arts and has shown great academic results throughout her years in education. This educator also had to improvise with low-priced materials for the learners to use, due to their circumstances at home. Even though this school is situated in a good, stable economic district, it still receives learners from townships, with low economical statuses, to obtain quality education in English.

Learner A1, A2 and Learner A3 are all part of School A and are taught by Teacher A. Learners A1 and A2 are black, Sotho-speaking learners, while Learner A3 is a black, Zulu-speaking learner. All of these learners have diverse cultural backgrounds, with low to average economic statuses. The school had difficulties during the national lockdown, as many of this school's learners are coming from townships and did not have easy access to resources for online learning. The work that the learners of School A did during lockdown, while they were required to participate in online learning, had to be taught from scratch when they returned to school after lockdown was lifted, as the learners were not able to successfully learn all that they needed to when left to facilitate their own learning process.

School B

School B is a departmental institute situated on the boarder of economically stable and unstable districts in the centre of Pretoria. The school serves a multi-cultural group of learners, as it is a double-medium school. Each grade has an English and Afrikaans subject. For most of the learners, either English or Afrikaans is their home language. Provisions are made for a minimum of 30 minutes of Visual Arts, at least 9 times a week for Grades 10-12 learners taught by a Visual Arts educator. This school follows the CAPS curriculum, integrated with the DBE, for a holistic learning approach. But because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school started using a blended learning approach, integrating technology into the learning environment. Applying both 'traditional' learning (such as face-to-face) with online learning (such as Virtual tours, Google Classroom, etc.) to incorporate added resources for the learners to learn from.

Teacher B comes from School B. He is an older, white male educator who has more than 20 years of experience in the field of Visual Arts, holding a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Fine Arts and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) for the (Further Education and Training) FET phase. Teacher B is the Head of Department (HOD) of the department of arts and recently received the teacher of the year award in Gauteng (2021).

Learner B1, B2 and B3 are all part of school B and are taught by Teacher B. However, Teacher B did not teach Grade 10 during 2020. Learner B1 is a Grade 10, white, English learner; Learner B2 is a Grade 10, black, English learner, and Learner B3 is a Grade 10, white, Afrikaans learner at the school. All with diverse multi-cultural backgrounds, with their own economic status, they are taking the same subject of Visual Arts.

School C

School C is an urban school in the East of Pretoria, serving a middle to higher class community. High priority is given to quality education, making sure parents are regularly notified of the happenings in the school and its subjects. Notifying the parents repetitively, through phone class, SMS or a school system than is used for making it easier to communicate with the parents. Integrating and communicating through technology is not something new to them and was easily adopted within the COVID-19 pandemic. Classes are only given in Afrikaans, as this is an Afrikaans school, and most of the learners are Afrikaans speaking. Like School A, School C follows a holistic learning curriculum, the CAPS (2010 & 2020), as it is a public school. The subject Visual Arts is taught within a timeframe of about 32 minutes a day with 9 periods a week, to be used for both practical and theoretical purposes.

Teacher C is a young, white, female educator with a less than five years' experience in the subject. Due to her age and upbringing with technology, it made it easier for her to adapt to the new requirements of blended learning during the pandemic. She obtained both her BA Fine Arts and PGCE in Visual Arts, which shows that she is well educated, with advanced skills that can be taught in class. She teaches Grades 9 to 12, using basic methods to introduce the Grade 10 learners to the subject of Visual Arts, which is highly effective. As I recorded the work produced by the Grade 10's of School C, I was shocked and pleasantly surprised at the amount of preparedness this educator showed. Yet, she

acknowledges that the learners were not on par with what was expected from curriculum and she struggled to get them to complete their PATs.

Learners C1, C2 and C3 are all part of school C and are taught by Teacher C. All three Learners C1, C2 and C3 are white Afrikaans-speaking Grade 10 female learners, all with similar cultural backgrounds, with an average to good economic status. This indicates that these learners should have easy access to the internet and be able to take the subject Visual Arts and be taught from home or an online environment.

This information applies to the learners whose PAT's were analysed.

3.4.3.1.2 Collection

The interview questions was shared via Google Forms, an online platform often time used to conduct interviews. The pre-drafted questions were uploaded to Google Forms and a link was shared with all three participants to complete in their own time. Google Forms was used to record participants' responses, with the benefit of reduced biases as the data was already entered and no transcribing were needed. Thus, these Visual Arts educators answered the questions on a Google Form questionnaire that I have constructed, making it easier to record the answers. Google Forms as opposed to face-to-face interviews (whether in-person or online) offered participants the opportunity to respond to the questions in their own time and alter their answers before submitting them. The answers to these questions are attached in Volume 2, Appendix C.

3.4.3.1.3 Analysis

Responses were downloaded from Google Forms and all were combined in a single document, ordered according to questions. This allowed me to read and re-read the transcription, in order to establish themes. Grouping of questions allowed comparison of responses from the participants to see whether there were any similarities and/or differences between responses and the participants' experiences during COVID-19.

Although this study collected data from interviewing selected Visual Arts educators, it is not the only data that will be collected. The responses of the Visual Arts educators are

checked and compared against two other forms of data sets that are collected within the study. First, a comparison is drawn against the data collected from the project analysis of the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' term 1 and 2 PATs and second, the expectations from the CAPS (2011 & 2020) policy documents for the creation of Topic 1 and Topic 2.

As Ricoeur (1981: 158) stated, even visual images represent social life and even it can be written as text. Taking this notion into account, selected Visual Artworks (Topic 2) from the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners are analysed and interpreted, exploring the artistic skills, both formal and conceptual, that are present within these artworks.

3.4.3.2 PAT analysis

Art-based methods are used in analysing artworks. The term “art-based research” was first introduced in a 1993 educational conference by Elliot Eisner, a pioneer and curriculum theorist in the field of arts (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny 2014: 1). Eisner (1993) theorised that art-based research methods could be used for social and behavioural science, meaning that it could provide a better understanding of the classroom and the human experience within it (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny 2014: 1). This method is used to analyse the PATs created during term 1 and term 2 of 2020, mainly comprising Topic 2, of the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners to reveal what skill they have focused on during the pandemic.

Applied art-based research can be used to understand humans better: in this case, Visual Arts educators and learners, their actions and experiences, which has become a prevalent practice for socially engaged research. Socially engaged research practices can be defined as data established through dialogue, participation and immersive experience (Froggett, Little, Roy, & Whitaker 2011: 7). Art-based research is a systematic interpretation and analysis of the use of artistic processes in the making of art within different methodologies and skills (Wilson 1997: 32). Art-based research is primarily used to understand the work and experiences behind the artwork.

The analysis of art-based research exists to provide understanding, shared beliefs and solutions to the community of artists or in this case Visual Arts educators and learners, making it easier to understand what the learners tried to convey through their artworks

and help understand these above challenges. Although art-based research can result in problem solving or solutions, this study is not used to solve problems, but rather to provide a deeper understanding as to which artistic skills the Visual Arts educators deem worthy with the guidance of the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document (Carrol 1997: 171). This study focuses on formal and conceptual skills development and whether the educator influences these skills, or if the learner developed their own skills during the pandemic crisis.

Both literacy genres (e.g. poems, storytelling and fiction), and visual imagery (e.g. paintings, film and photographs) could be analysed using the art-based method (Knowles & Cole 2008: 29). Another important contribution of this method is that it provides an alternative mode of reasoning, a more metaphorical, inductive and reflective way of thinking (Taylor, Taylor & Luitel 2012: 373). An art-based method may be used to collect or create data, to interpret or analyse it, to present findings, or some combination of these. Sometimes art-based research is used to investigate art making or teaching in or through the arts. In terms of this study, art-based methods help to explore and understand the work of the learners and what they tried to convey. Art-based research uses artistic forms and expressions to explore, understand, represent, and even challenge human experiences (Medina & Taylor 2013: 10).

The art-based research has three main relations: (1) art-based inquiry, (2) art-informed inquiry, and (3) art-informing inquiry. Art-based inquiry is research where the artistic process is used to understand art itself or the art experience by the people who use it; art-informed inquiry refers to the situation where art is used to represent the findings of a study, or to represent a response to a situation studied; art-informing inquiry is research where art is used to evoke responses from an audience to a situation (Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund & Hannes 2017: 9). This study follows an art-based inquiry approach. It researches the artistic process that was used within the art itself to understand the experience or artistic movement of the people that used it (Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund & Hannes 2017: 9). Here, the researcher is actively involved in reflecting on the idea and process of the work that was created. For example, in 2015 Jeanne Gang (an architect) created a police station research project in hopes that it will enhance the social

interrelation of the people of North Lawndale in Chicago (Wang *et al* 2017: 15). The community was requested to actively contribute towards planning the police station for community benefits and public safety, as seen in Figure 4 below. The underlying question for the researcher was: “can the design help rebuild trust?” (Wang *et al* 2017: 15). Similarly, I, as the researcher, need to constantly reflect when analysing not only on the artworks of Grade 10 Visual Arts learners but also the experiences provided by the Visual Arts educators. With this method, I discover authentic and concrete links between theory and practice by reflecting on practical contexts.



Figure 4: Police Station is a self-initiated research project 2015 (Wang *et al* 2017: 15).

The Department of Basic Education’s current FET Visual Arts CAPS document (2011; Abridged Section 4, 2020) focuses on various aspects of art, which are divided into three topics. Topic 1 focuses on the planning and conceptualising of the artwork (CAPS 2011: 15). Topic 2 focuses on the practical skills, the creation, and the finishing of the artwork (CAPS 2011: 15). Topic 3 comprises the theoretical aspects of art, visual literature, and visual culture studies (CAPS 2011: 16).

For this study I mainly focus on Topic 2, the final artworks, in combination with their sourcebooks and Rationales (Topic 1) of these selected learners to reflect whether online learning influences the Visual Arts educators’ focus, as well as the development it has on the learners’ artistic skills, i.e. the formal and conceptual skills. The study refers to some of the sourcebook’s (Topic 1) research, to reflect what the learners tried to convey through their final artwork. In addition, the final artworks represent the core information on what skills the learners tried to apply, in response to the assignment brief the educator created.

Furthermore, the CAPS document is examined in order to establish what the DBE curriculum, expected the learners to complete (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe 2016).

To assess the learners' artworks, I developed criteria that consider both formal and conceptual elements (see table 1, page 76-77), which I designed for this purpose. The assessment criteria helped define what skills are focused on when analysing the Grade 10 Visual Arts PATs created during terms 1 and 2 of 2020.

3.4.3.2.1 Sample

My study aims to reveal what impact the pandemic had on the subject Visual Arts, especially when classes became online. This is achieved by analysing the artworks that selected learners have created during the pandemic. But there must be certain criteria that should be met, when selecting the participating learners for this study. These criteria include that the learners must be new in the subject and be untainted by the ideals of the curriculum and educator. This criterion is based on the idea that the learners are still discovering their limitations within art and presenting artworks that were not influenced by the educator and the curriculum, as it has little influence on the learners' development in these early stages of Visual Arts education. Therefore, Grade 10 Visual Arts learners are the focus of the study, for they are new to the subject and are untouched by the FET phase curriculum outcomes and expectations.

To analyse data obtained from the Visual Arts learners' PAT work, I intend to compare both the first term and second term PATs of the learners.³² This will provide findings of the learners' growth and ideas of influence within the learners' artistic skills by analysing, interpreting and understanding the work. Table 1, shown below, which was created by me, is a table that consists of certain criteria, defining elements found in a conceptual artwork and formal artwork respectively (see table 1, page 76-77). It is, however, difficult to establish criteria for defining these two categories, as conceptual artworks are difficult

³² The PAT analysis that is done is based mostly on Topic 2: the artwork, the final product created from Topic 1, the conceptualisation process. In Topic 1, the learner develops their ideas from the project brief, which is created by the educator and is based on the theme the learner must follow. In order to understand the concept behind the learner's work, the PAT analysis also incorporates some references to Topic 1, namely the Rationale and Reflection.

to define. According to Tony Godfrey, the author of *Conceptual Art* (1998), conceptual work prioritises ideas over technical and material concerns. Similarly, American artist Sol LeWitt (1967) defines conceptual art as art concerned with ideas or concepts, and because of that the work requires a lot of planning beforehand. This does not mean that conceptual art rejects formal skills, even though it can be argued to be the most prominent difference between ‘traditional’ art and conceptual art. However, this notion of how to analyse conceptual work and formal work can be often vague and incomplete. The reason is that not only do formal artworks focus on artistic skills, but some conceptual art also has a formal focal point. For example, Diane Victor or William Kentridge, both exceptional technical South African artists found in the CAPS documents, embed conceptual notions into their work of art.

Dewey (1930: 179) states that within art, the artwork itself is not considered as an object, but rather an example of an experience. Expressions and emotions are contained within colours, tone and even symbols that are used to express the experiences of the artist. Therefore, by analysing the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners’ artworks (Topic 2), exploring the elements and patterns that emerge within their artwork, the skill that they have employed within their work is more easily identifiable (see table 1). By incorporating an Iconographical approach in identifying these elements and patterns used within the Visual Arts learners’ artworks, I reveal whether they favour certain skills. I have analysed the work to identify the use of art elements, context, meaning and intention of the work.

According to the CAPS document (2011: 12), the conceptualising process is defined as a work created by learners who engage in their own experiences of the world through the experimentation of symbols and signs from the extensive visual culture, by adding it to their artworks. Learners have been generating ideas in response to the theme at hand by using certain subject matter and motifs to express themselves through their artworks. I used the CAPS’ (2011: 12) definition of the conceptualising process and the assessment criteria (see table 1) as a guideline in analysing the PATs for certain indications of conceptual skills used. When analysing the formal skills in the PATs, the art elements are used to explore the aesthetic features of the artworks, where the intention behind the work is more decorative. The CAPS document (2011: 13) defines the making of the

artwork as the demonstration by the learner of technical skills using a range of materials, techniques, and creative processes. Analysing the work for the benefit of ‘technical’ features and using the assessment criteria (see table 1) as guidance can help identify the work as favouring formal skills.

Formal Criteria	✓
1. Line & Shape and form:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any dominating lines? <i>What</i> type of line? <i>Where</i> can it be seen? 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a variety or repetition of shape/forms? Balance composition? Harmony? <i>How, where?</i> Does it create visual interest? <i>How?</i> 	
Elaborate	
2. Colour & Tone	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has colour been used? <i>What</i> colours have been used? Are the colours realistic/ abstract / etc. Has colour contrast been used within the artwork? <i>How</i> was it used? 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there tonal differentiation? Has a wide tonal range been used? (broad range of darks, highlights and mid-tones). If so, <i>where</i> and <i>how?</i> 	
Elaborate:	
3. Texture:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any attractive textural qualities within the artwork? <i>What</i> was used to create this texture? <i>Where</i> does it reveal? 	
Elaborate:	
4. Space:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a variety of viewpoints used? Has any unusual view been used? <i>How</i> was it used? Is the artwork self-contained/ close off/ eye contact with the viewer? 	
Elaborate	
5. Craftmanship/Formal Qualities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the artwork show intense compositions, clearly reflecting an understanding and application of design structures, elements and principles? <i>Where</i> and <i>how</i> is it applied in the painting? 	
Elaborate:	

Conceptual Criteria	✓
1. Content, context and meaning:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content: Does the artwork promotes the cultivation of the mental powers (cognitive) for social communication? <i>What</i> is seen in the work? Describe the work and explain what depictions were made. 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Does the artwork communicate an action, narrative or story? If yes, what is the situation that is depicted in the work? Explain the socio-cultural, religious, etc. connotations that can be made. 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context: Did the work focus on the artist's self-interests or what they want to express/accomplish? <i>What</i> situation is depicted in work? Sense of self, identity, pride, expression and accomplishment? 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaning: Do the images convey symbolic value or importance? If yes, <i>how</i> is the symbolic value used, and in <i>what</i> sense does it mean? 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaning: Do the images convey deeper, conceptual themes (i.e., allegory or iconographic elements)? <i>What</i> was the meaning behind the work? 	
Elaborate:	
2. Wider Contexts:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any intention or purpose to work? <i>What</i> is the original meaning or intent (explore the <i>Rationale</i> and <i>Reflection/Artist Statement</i> n of PAT) – decorative, created in response to a design brief and illustrative 	
Elaborate:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did natural events or historical events influence the work? <i>How?</i> 	
Elaborate:	
3. Imaginative Expression:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the learner present visual explorations, forms, and creative, original, and unique solutions? How did the learner present their ideas and visual forms in an inventive manner? 	
Elaborate:	

Table 1: Assessment criteria developed by Clinton Fourie (2020)

3.4.3.2.2 Collection

This data collection was completed after PAT 1 and PAT 2 have been completed by all the selected schools during the year 2020 when the pandemic had the most significant impact on the educational system (Haradhan 2018: 16).

3.4.3.2.3 Analysis

After the PATs were collected, the term 1 PATs were compared to the PATs created during term 2 to aggregate the similarities of specific skills into formal and conceptual skills groups. Data was categorised into themes. The themes explore whether Visual Arts Educators influence the development of the Visual Arts learners' skills, as opposed to how the online environment influences the development of these skills.

When analysing the Visual Arts learners' PAT artworks, I used iconological and iconographical analysis methods. According to Ahmad Abdullah, Yuhanis Ibrahim and Raja Halid (2020), the art scene is organised according to the DBE, who mainly emphasise the use of the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document as a guideline for Visual Arts educators to follow. Using table 1, I followed the steps of an iconographical approach, on the road to identify the art elements used within the work and to reveal the conceptual meaning on which the work is based and finally discovered the iconological meaning embedded in each work. Many popular textbooks, specifically in Western countries, focus on the history of art displayed through a chronological timeline of a specific style of famous artworks and artists (Abdullah *et al* 2020: 590). However, many of these artists do not have a direct influence on their socio-cultural context, where instead the environment and the society in which the artists lived influenced the meaning of the work and how it was perceived and understood (Abdullah *et al* 2020: 590). The artists focus on incorporating certain styles and techniques that influenced each style and art movement throughout the timeline, which the learner can incorporate in their PAT artworks, rather than expressing environmental- or socio-political issues. Furthermore, there are also discriminating concerns about what the learner might express when given the chance to express such issues. The Visual Arts courses in high schools focus more on the external aspect of artworks, such as detail, lines, colours, main subject as well as the visual background

(Abdullah *et al* 2020: 592). Opposite to this notion, Erwin Panofsky, a German historian, provided theoretical tools for explaining iconographical approaches. He indicated that focus is on the content, meaning, symbols and themes in Visual Arts (Panofsky 1955). His approach explains why certain images and illustrations are used by revealing the aspects of meaning in the works of art (Abdullah *et al* 2020: 593).

Iconographical analysis is looking at an image and writing its story. It helps to identify the subject matter. The iconographical matter is interested in the form or style of the work, exploring what art elements are used, including descriptive analyses of the styles and techniques used within the artwork (Kilroy-Ewbank 2020: 1). There are steps to follow in the iconographic approach. Panofsky (1955) described the following steps that need to be followed: first, pre-iconographical (focusing on the subject matter), second, the convention and precedent (iconography) and thirdly, uncovering the intrinsic meaning (iconological). Step 1 is to identify the pure forms, as in, what one sees; for this step one needs to provide an objective description of the work by referring to the formal art elements present; step 2 involves finding the theories or concepts that described what you are seeing, and step 3 is an extension of the iconographic method by starting to look at iconological methods, i.e. ascribing meaning to the work and depicted symbols and images.³³ This is where the researcher starts to categorise the artwork within its specific time, location and culture (Kilroy-Ewbank 2020: 1). In *Art as an Experience* (1934), Dewey (1934: 119) describes that artworks consist of aesthetically pleasing elements, which means that the artwork possesses some of the formal art elements³⁴ and principles of design.³⁵ This was considered when exploring the work of the Visual Arts learners, to identify whether they focus on formal skills. As for conceptual skills, most artists disregard artworks that consist of aesthetical elements and focus rather on the expression, the message/idea they want to communicate, limiting the handmade skills and focusing on

³³ Iconographical analysis is an approach used to study the content and meaning behind visuals. The iconological analysis is a method of interpretation of cultural history and the history of the Visual Arts (Erwin 2010: 1).

³⁴ Art elements are the basic ingredients of an artwork or design; they are line, tone, texture, shape, form, space and colour (Davis 2020: 1).

³⁵ Design principles are how an artist or designer chooses to arrange and manipulate the art elements to create a composition and visual message, for example balance, rhythm and movement (Davis 2020: 1).

the concept behind the work, the motifs and meanings that the artist tries to express (Dewey 1934: 119). This approach to analysing visual artworks and even visual culture is still relevant in a contemporary classroom.

Collecting data and analysing it is universally a similar process; one must recognise similar themes that emerge with the data, identify key ideas and compare it to the materials that have been obtained through literature (Haradhan 2018: 16). When all the data has been collected, the next step is to compare and see if there are any similar patterns that can be identified from the data (Atkison & Hammersley 1998). In addition, Rolling (2010: 104) explains that each individual experience is different:

There is no set of criteria for judging the artistic quality of a work of art-based research, just as there is no one paradigm for the beauty of a work of art, for some, the beauty of a work of art is in the aesthetics of its forms and mastery of techniques, for others, it is in the authenticity and expressiveness of voice, and for still others, in the incisiveness of its social critique.

Even though each Visual Arts educator follows the same curriculum, what they believe the beauty of art is can differ. The same goes for Visual Arts learners; they can be taught by the same Visual Arts educator, but whether and how they are influenced by that educator, or whether their belief is derived from their own imagination, everyone has a unique idea as to what the beauty of art is. Art-based inquiry is grounded on the art practice rather than on the science (Barone 2006: 5). My approach in analysing the PAT artworks are based on these principles.

Elisabeth Schallekens (2007: 73) argues that conceptual art strives for cognitive rather than aesthetic value to convey a semantic representation through a vehicular medium. In other words, the cognitive value of an artwork means it improves or increases our understanding of a topic, concept, or event. As Schallekens (2007: 73) notes, conceptual art assumes aesthetics and can detract from or divest art of its potential cognitive value in such a way as to render cognitive and aesthetic values nearly mutually exclusive. Philosophical circles have long sought to separate aesthetics from cognition. The author of *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790), Immanuel Kant, makes a clear distinction

between aesthetic and logical judgements in the book's very first paragraph. However, conceptual art has pushed questions such as whether aesthetic value and cognitive value are mutually exclusive, as rigorously and explicitly as few other movements have. Conceptual artists make things very complicated for themselves by claiming that the only legitimate form of artistic value is cognitive value.

There is no doubt that conceptual art can have cognitive value - many other kinds of art strive to have cognitive value above and beyond aesthetically pleasing value. We would all agree that a great deal of what makes art rewarding is precision: it provides a sense of understanding. Considering this, it can be difficult to distinguish between aesthetics and conceptual artworks; however, a conceptual artwork is best understood as the reasoning behind the work, i.e., the interpretation and the perception conveyed to the viewer. Accordingly, formal criteria are proposed to recognise that aesthetic qualities are related to good craftsmanship and formal elements in a structured and meaningful manner. Conceptual art differs from formal art due to its concept. On the other hand, conceptual art also has an aesthetic quality, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish from formal art. However, the fact remains that conceptual art is based on ideas and logic.

The purpose of the Assessment Criteria (see Table 1) is a guideline to help analyse the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' artwork, to identify the skills used within the work of art. The Assessment Criteria were created by me to consider both formal and conceptual skills to reflect what skills were most emphasised by the learners when they created their artworks. Table 1: Assessment Criteria is divided into two topics when analysing the artwork:

(1). Formal skills – The term “formal skills”, in this study, referred to the use of formal art elements and the function of aesthetics features, a style that Grade 7-9 learners understand and use to create their artworks. Formal art elements and design principles were taught extensively in the senior phase (GR 7 – 9), which are the features the learners will mostly apply in their artworks. For this part of the analysis I consider the formal art elements used in the PAT artworks; furthermore, I consider whether the learner did research on an artist throughout the ages and see whether they used or explored the artist's movement within their work. All in all, the work must contain certain characteristics

of artistic styles being used to make the work more aesthetic to the viewers' eyes, as well as contain evidence of work that has been influenced by the artist's artwork throughout the ages.

(2). Conceptual skills - in this part the artwork is analysed based on the wider context, exploring notions of deeper conceptual themes, such as social, political or religious themes. I am investigating deeper content and meaning within the work, which houses a purpose of confrontation (inflecting the artist's view on to the viewer) and communication (reflecting the artist's response to the conceptual theme on to the viewer). I took all these elements into consideration when analysing the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' artworks to identify the conceptual skills used within the artwork.

As mentioned before, the assessment criteria were used to analyse the Grade 10 Visual Arts PATs from each school. The educator from each of the three respective educational institutes (i.e. high schools) chose a work from a high, middle and low achieving learner they wanted to participate in the study. This means that a total of 12 learners' work (PAT 1 (created in term 1) and PAT 2 (created in term 2) from 2020) was compared and analysed, to establish the impact of COVID-19 on the skills development through online learning methods, specifically considering the artistic skills, formal or conceptual, developed during the lockdown. The data analysed from the schools reflect how many learners focused on certain artistic skills respectively. These findings show which skills are used during the pandemic, and are discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

The Formal criteria are based on the basic ingredients used to make an artwork, which also resulted in the criteria being meek and easy to follow. The conceptual criteria focus on three sections; (1) Content, which refers to a work's subject matter, i.e., its meaning behind the work; (2) Context, specific to the artwork, context consists of all of the things that might have influenced the artwork or the artist, but which do not actually form part of the artwork. Contextual information can deepen and/or improve our understanding of an artwork; (3) The meaning, which is related to a linguistic extension of the way in which the work is painted, exploring what the artist tried to convey through his/her art. This criterion included revealed any symbolic subject matter added to the work that conveyed deeper meaning to the work of art. In addition, the (Topic 1) Reflection (Artist Statement)

and Rationale are explored and applied to the conceptual criteria to establish meaning behind the artworks that the learners have created, which can then be applied to the criteria and make sure the answers reflected in the criteria are not solely based on the researcher's (my) investigation but also the intentions of the learner, in what she/he tried to convey to the viewer.

Take note that the assessment criteria table provides answers of 'yes' and 'no'. This makes it easier to follow what skills the learner focused on in their PAT artworks. Table 1 was created to establish if the Visual Arts learner follows a conceptual- or formal approach when creating an artwork. It is important to note that, given the nature of Visual Arts as a subject, not all answers need to be a 'yes', as the subject matter is very subjective. As explained in Chapter 1, the CAPS (2011: 9) document indicates that the subject Visual Arts consist out of two elements; the concept behind the artwork and the handiwork used to create an aesthetically pleasing work of art. Conceptual and formal skills are used when creating artwork, with either limited use of one or a focus on both skills.

Taking this into account, the responses of 'yes' should be in the majority on the table to establish which artistic skill was favoured by the learner. Therefore, I will arrive at an answer on what skill (conceptual or formal) the learners or educators are focusing on, by completing Table 1 during the analysis. To reveal these notions, I first have to analyse the formal art elements, tabulating them under each subheading placed within the table, and understand the meaning of each artwork. Analysing three learners' works taught by the same educator, will reveal certain patterns and preferences taught by the Visual Arts educator. It will be up to the Visual Arts educator to provide the learner's information, which he or she deems appropriate for this study. Considering the requirements and restrictions of the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act, the learners' and educators' information will stay anonymous throughout the study, as already stated in Chapter 1. The educator will not share personal information without the learners having given their express consent for the educator to do so.

Contemporary theory in art is one of the most complex and perplexing theories used to define what interpretation is. It can get confusing with all the debate on contemporary theory (Politsky 1988: 32). Politsky (1988: 32) notes that contemporary theory is

confusing to understand, as it is constantly changing, because of the phenomena that occur within contemporary art and how modern society perceives it. There is a drastic change in the conceptual understanding of artworks, because of the influence that human nature has on contemporary art (Politksy 1988: 33). Human cultures are constantly changing due to social, economic, political and environmental variables that are constantly shifting over time. Marantz (1988: 259) indicates the implications these contemporary art discourses have on art education, specifically DBAE, as it affects the movement of art and its interpretation thereof. As stated, it is difficult to interpret and analyse these artworks. Eagleton (1983: 212) asserts that the interpretation of art differs from individual to individual due to their different values, beliefs and experiences.

Seeking a method that can help make sense of the Visual Arts learners' conceptual skills, while analysing their artworks is therefore vital. Thus, I explore a method that is called content analysis, which refers to conducting textual analysis that involves comparing, contrasting and categorising sets of data to test a theory (Ronald *et al* 2007: 24). Essentially, qualitative content analysis can be explained as interpreting, theorising and making sense of data by breaking it into segments and categorising and comparing it to one another to see if there is anything relatable (Gubrium & Holsten 1997). Therefore, I compare the Visual Arts assignment brief of PAT 1 and the assignment brief of PAT 2 to the respective PAT assignments. Understanding the brief and what was expected from the learners, and by comparing it to the final product of the learners' work, I establish whether there is anything relatable. Therefore, this method is helping to identify what was expected from the Visual Arts learners and if their PATs followed the assignment brief. I am using this method to make sense of the meaning behind the learners' works. The educator's influence on the learner and the skills they will 'purposefully' apply within their artwork; If the learner applies the theme to their assignment, that reflects a small portion of the educators' influence

To conclude, criterion sampling can be useful for identifying and understanding cases that are information rich. Criterion sampling can be useful for identifying cases from a standardised questionnaire that might be useful for follow-up, such as the semi-structured interview. This criterion involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion

of importance, such as whether the learner focused more on conceptual or formal skills. The criteria are divided into two sections to make it easier to determine under which category the artwork falls. The criteria pose specific questions under each sub-heading, which help guide the researcher (me) to know what needs to be investigated further within the specific case. In addition, this can tell the researcher (i.e. me) whether the learner added an element of the formal/conceptual skill or not. At the end, when all sub-headings have been answered, I, then calculate the probability of combining the formal and conceptual criteria to determine which skills are reflected most. I divided the usage on what element was focused on within this work by adding up both the total of formal and conceptual and dividing each one separately against the total. Hence, if the total of the formal criterion were 8 (formal element) and the conceptual criterion was 3 (conceptual element) added together equals a total of 11. Then $8/11$ (formal elements divided by the total) provides the percentage of formal elements used within the artwork, whereas $3/11$ of the conceptual elements are used within the artwork. Therefore, 73% of the work is based on the use of formal elements and 27% is focused on the conceptual element. Therefore, this assessment criterion sampling can provide an important qualitative component to quantitative data, which can determine the focus the learner has focused on within the artwork.

3.4.3.3 CAPS document analysis

3.4.3.3.1 Collection

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) refers to a document for each subject taught in South African schools (De Villiers 2018: 7). The CAPS (2011 & 2020) documents specify to the educators what must be taught and assessed within the classroom for each subject from Grade R to 12. Furthermore, with the CAPS document and other existing research documents used within this study are public available and is used as a form of data collection within this study.

3.4.3.3.2 Analysis

Malan (2015: 8) states that the CAPS curriculum is referred to as a guideline or outline of the content that must be presented by the educator for each term throughout the year. This study focuses solely on Grade 10 – 12 Visual Arts CAPS (2011 & 2020), which are analysed in terms of the outcome the document expects from the educators (and learners). George Geahigan (1979: 3), who is an associate professor of Art and Design at Purdue University in America, theorised a model of the curriculum with art education as educational metacriticism, which attempts to explain criticisms and aesthetics and how it should be used within the educational setting. In this section, the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document is critically analysed, to explore what the CAPS (2011 & 2020) seeks from the educator to implement in the classroom. Based on this study, the focus is mostly on Topic 1: the conceptualising process and Topic 2: making of the artwork and what criteria the learners need to follow in making, managing and presenting the sourcebook and artwork (CAPS 2011: 8-9, 12 -13)

The Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) program was developed, emphasising art criticism, aesthetics, and critical reflection disciplines. Geahigan (1980: 56) further states, similar to the DBAE content of instructions, that these disciplines dealt with are based on the value of art, the framework within which the artwork created, and the processes and techniques for creating art. Geahigan (1980: 56) theorises that the DBAE's goal is to develop the learners' capabilities and abilities in a way to understand and appreciate art, as well as to respond with their own art, by creating artworks. Universal art school curriculum and its pedagogical instruction address the DBAE approach, which is believed by most art educationists in Western countries to be the most effective method of teaching and learning art (Mannathoko 2016: 19). Visual Arts educators are expected to implement what they learnt in order to promote DBAE and hence make art education rich in all aspects of learning (Mannathoko 2016: 19). DBAE is still being implemented in the Visual Arts classroom, where it is suggested that both formal and conceptual skills are required to produce an effective artwork (Mannathoko 2016: 19). Geahigan (1980: 56-57) stated that the learners need to understand broad "Visual Arts" and "Fine Arts" sources, from "ancient up until contemporary times", as ancient times focused on aesthetic work,

whereas contemporary art focuses generally more on the idea behind the work. As it is stated within the CAPS (2011: 12), the document strongly suggests that the creation of the sourcebook, Topic 1, must be linked to that of the Visual Culture Studies, which signify that the work must be linked to the artworks and artists that were taught in class (Topic 3). These artists are amongst others from historical periods to a more contemporary period of Pop Art, Surrealism and Abstraction and beyond (Baber 2017: 1). Hence, the subject Visual Arts, incorporate studies from both formal and conceptual artists in the classroom, which the learners can learn from and incorporate into their PATS artworks. Therefore, it can be concluded that Geahigan (1980) believed that both conceptual and formal elements are equally important when introducing the DBAE concept to the Art curriculum. This importance can be seen in how the CAPS (2011: 39) and Abridged version (CAPS 2020: 32) creates an equal focus on both conceptualisation process and making of artwork, which consist out of both formal and conceptual skills, through the allocated marks for both Topic 1 and Topic 2 being equally weighted. Hence, it is believed that the Visual Arts educators must consider both aspects equally when teaching, and not only teach one of these elements. Whether it is online or face-to-face, the educator must follow the CAPS document's guidelines with the additional instructions from what the DBAE expects from the educator to provide an effective teaching classroom.

While the DBAE models theoretically have different focal points, they are essentially similar in the critical content areas from which they draw their disciplinary knowledge and skills. These are listed under the DBAE as Art History, Art Criticism, Production and Aesthetics (Mannathoko 2016: 14). The four disciplinary content areas are critical in the development of fundamental knowledge and skills in the art curriculum. Production entails that learners apply the art elements and principles of design while at the same time drawing a critical eye from aesthetics. Learners explore a variety of media in different ways. They also ask philosophical questions in the process, as well as draw ideas from historical contexts. Therefore, the Visual Arts educator needs to be reminded that certain "traditional" methods are important to be presented even within the online environment (Mannathoko 2016: 14). Thus, the educator must consider the DABE curricular models within their teaching and adapt these methods to their own traditional teaching or within the online environment accordingly. Within this study it needs to be considered that this

is the way Visual Arts educators normally present their classes, consisting of both conceptual and formal elements. When analysing the artwork and during interviews, there needs to be a constant reminder of the effect the online environment had on the way the educator had to teach and the outcomes of the learners PAT assignments.

3.5 Methodology limitations

Although it is difficult to measure the validity of qualitative research, Qualitative research focus on trustworthiness, whether it be through credibility, transferability or dependability (Ronald *et al* 2007: 26). When conducting this research, the researcher must do member-checking to analyse the trustworthiness of the work. Specifically, member-checking assists in validating the research findings (Ronald *et al* 2007: 26). Member-checking refers to assessing the validity and trustworthiness of the participants, by conducting semi-structured interviews in asking questions relevant to the study as well as the subject. Constantly testing the educators' understanding of the pandemic and the online environment by applying methods such as paraphrasing and summarising what they said/ the answers they have provided and re-presenting these to the educators for confirmation/ validation of their responses. Some of these educators are experienced in their subjects, with years of teaching experience under their belts. They know what the CAPS, the school and they themselves expect from themselves as educators and their learners and how to go about to achieving the expected outcomes. Thus, these educators are able to reflect truthfully during interviews about the pandemic and their subject, for they already know what is expected from the learners' growth. They should also be able to determine whether the learners are lacking during the lockdown with ease. Although there are limitations to the study as the study depends on the integrity of the educator, as the study relies on the Visual Arts educators' credibility and willingness to be as truthful as possible. This fact is limiting the possible liability of the data, not knowing whether the educators are deceitful or truthful.

The data is gathered from few individual Visual Arts educators, so it is difficult to generate this information for a larger population. Information and data collected for this study are solely based on a few public schools in one suburb, within the South African context. This

does not even touch on the 1% of the estimated 6000 high schools in the country, each with their own limitations and barriers (Schools4sa 2021: 1). Some of these limitations include schools that are located in townships that do not have the resources to provide online learning to their learners, and some schools are limited to what they can teach to their learners, often not being able to completely comply with what the CAPS document requires. Some parents or guardians do not have the money to buy school supplies or even the art supplies that are required for the Visual Arts subject, and this does not even touch on the fact that a lot of these South African families do not have access to internet to do research or gather extra information (Du Toit 2008: 67-69). In addition, Visual Arts is often considered a 'luxury' subject, and because of the costs of art materials, many schools do not offer Visual Arts. This means that this study only focusses on collecting and generating information from a small sample size, which means that the sample size might be insufficient and/or limited, which can threaten the validity and generalizability of the studies' results (Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe & Young 2018: 13-15).

Furthermore, this study is dependent on my own experience, where the analysis of the Visual Arts learners' PATs is evaluated by my personal experiences and understandings of the work, whereas other researchers may arrive at different conclusions (Haradhan 2018: 21).

Another limitation that should be considered is that my own experience might result in a biased opinion. Reflective data can often be undermined in a written report during the process of collecting data, due to the fact that researchers seek to enforce their own opinion, rather than objectively considering the facts, or results, of the research. This can affect the results of the findings, without the reader being aware of the researcher's bias (Wiener-Levy and Popper-Giyeon 2013: 2177). This is why I created table 1, the assessment criteria, to make sure the work is analysed as fair as possible. Using sub-headings with questions to help guide me in concentrating on each work as equally and fair as possible.

The reflective data highlights the researcher's own experiences within the research process, with the purpose of refining the value of the research. Throughout the years, a researcher's identity, origin, gender and experience has been considered a factor of

influencing the research topic, field work, data analysis and presentation (Wiener-Levy and Popper-Giyeon 2013: 2180). A lecturer from Cardiff University, Theophilus Gokah (2006: 61) claims, based on his own experience, that researchers can tend to be “naïve” when they feel confronted by the realities of the field work, and that it may threaten their research. Similar to Gokah, Simon Borg (2001: 156), a Professor at TESOL, states that emotions are an irrefutable part of a researcher’s field work and research itself.

In my opinion, emotions and limited experience can result in a one-sided view of certain artworks, resulting in a lack of understanding or appreciation of the skills used to create it. As formal skills are easier to analyse in exploring the artistic focus of a work, it is possible that I favour certain aspects of an artwork over those used in another, resulting in an opinion that is not fair nor justified.

Reviewing an artwork based solely on one’s own opinion can harm the development and artistic mindset of a learner. This can be seen in the 2019 incident involving the matriculant learner Gary Louw from Grantleigh College in KwaZulu Natal. His work was criticised and judged as being a satanic piece. Instead, his work was commenting on consumerism in a South African society (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Gary Louw Grade 12 artwork, *Natus Ex Fascino Mortem*, 2019.

Graphite on paper, size unknown. (Nair 2019: 1).

This incident reveals that conceptual art can often be difficult to view and understand, as the aim of the artwork is to comment on particular issues by emphasising the negative aspects of it. Certain aspects of conceptual art can expose the negative impact of certain social paradigms, which can result in an audience getting offended by the piece (Politksy 1988: 33), as seen in Louw's work.³⁶ As Abdullah *et al* (2020: 590) states, the subject of a visual artwork focuses more on the external aspects thereof, meaning the formal art elements, to present work that houses formal skills over conceptual skills. It is this approach that provides a better understanding of how to collect data when analysing the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' PATs, considering what to look at. To avoid any sense of bias, I created a criterion table that helps me remain objective and fair. This criterion table helps me to analyse each learner's PAT individually and to separate the formal skills from the conceptual to determine which skills the learner favoured during their PAT. In addition, I compare the interviews of the educators to that of the learners' PAT analyses to further improve the credibility the study's findings.

Throughout this study, new teaching methods that developed as a result of COVID-19 were considered. The pandemic resulted in a radical change within classrooms, where classes that were normally taught face-to-face (traditional setting) were now forced to be taught online. My study considers that not all schools are able to implement these new teaching methods, due to the economic issues within the South African context. Instead, these online methods have to be systematically integrated within a classroom, making sure each learner has access to technology and the internet, providing equal opportunities for all the learners. However, lockdown resulted in a lot of restrictions and limitations that were perhaps unforeseen. These restrictions meant the closure of schools, and loss of jobs, where adults had to work from home and their children attended school largely via their own study, or lessons online using a computer. The national lockdown prohibited any type of public gatherings, such as schools, festivals, businesses, malls and religious gatherings. This meant that people could not leave their homes, the only time they could do so, was if someone was an essential worker or needed to purchase

³⁶ The included example above is an excellent example that shows that conceptual works often depend on the formal art elements to make the work a success. The work, as seen in Figure 6 above, shows an incorporation of both conceptual and formal skills.

essential goods. Online learning was the only option to get in touch with the learners without being around them. The access to internet and a know-how of the technological tools might have hindered some learners to fully participate in the online lessons, which in turn could have affected their skills development and thus the results of this study.

As stated in Chapter 1, technology has infinite potential for evaluating learners' understanding of a subject's content. Even though during lockdown technology was favoured and used within teaching, not all learners had access to online teaching. While a limitation, the situation still provided new insights regarding teaching. South Africa is a third world country, which means that not all learners have access to the internet, or to the technology required to gain access to online teaching and learning. The same can be said about the schools in the country; not all of them have the necessary infrastructure to keep up with the modern schooling system. My study recognises that not all schools were able to implement this new method towards an online learning environment within the restrictions and time constraints surrounding the pandemic and lockdown regulations. My study is also based on the belief that within the South African context, not all learners might benefit from an online environment, because of the economic status of South Africa, and that not all schools and learners have the money for technological advances. Instead, this method of teaching should be integrated gradually within the classroom, to make sure each learner gets the same equal opportunity towards learning. However, within this study the educator can still have an influence on the learner's artistic skills development.

As technology can have its effect on a learner, so can an educator. For one, the educator is the facilitator of learning. The learner is his/her own facilitator to learning, but for the learner to be their own facilitator, they still need to do their own learning and have self-discipline (Efland 2002: 8). Furthermore, assessing these methods can be unreliable as every learner is unique. Although the educator does provide a criterion, the learner's assessment can be limited. As every learner is unique, their understanding, thinking and experience is different from each learner and therefore can influence the effectiveness of the criteria (Efland 2002: 10). This means the project brief as designed by the educator influences the outcomes of the learners. In other words, depending on what the educator

wants, certain skills will be emphasised and favoured, which means it is not the learners' choice, but rather a directive from the educator.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The trustworthiness and authenticity of the interpretive paradigm is debated by different researchers. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) the criteria for trustworthiness are credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. First, credibility considers whether the researcher underwent enough research in the field of study. Did the researcher check his/her interpretation with other researchers? Second, dependability asks whether the researcher conducted open-ended inquiry? Third, transferability considers whether there is enough descriptive research within the study, that the reader can compare to their own social life? And last, confirmability, can the research data be tracked to their source? These authenticity criteria make sure that the research focused on the concerns with ethics, which includes fairness, educative, catalytic and tactical principles (Josselson 2007).³⁷

There are many possible dilemmas and concerns between researcher and participants when conducting qualitative research. Aspects such as respect for privacy, open and honest interactions and avoiding misrepresentations need to be taken into consideration. Sometimes the researcher and participant may disagree and cause problems, but to minimise these problems there are some concerns that need to be considered; anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi & Cheraghi, 2014: 1). To protect the identity of the educators in my study, their identity will stay anonymous, they are referred to as School A = Teacher A + Learner A1, learner A2 and learner A3, School B = Teacher B and Learner B1, B2 and B3, School C = Teacher C and Learner C1, C2 and C3. The school's identity will remain anonymous as well. Before any data sampling commenced, a consent form was signed by every schools' principal, educator, learner and learner's parent or guardian. This way I was

³⁷ Fairness – was the research conducted fairly?

Educative – did the participants and reader benefit from this research?

Catalytic – did the participants benefit by identifying the problems of their social world?

Tactical – Did the researcher empower and improve the social situation of the participants (Josselson 2007).

making sure that the ethical challenges are considered in the starting phases of the research.

According to Richard and Schwart (2002: 135), 'confidentiality' refers to all personal information that needs to stay private from the viewer. In this study the personal information of participants' (schools, educators, learners) will not be touched, except for the case that the occupation will be revealed, i.e. whether the participant is a learner or educator (Bahramnezhad *et al* 2014: 1). I am also providing an overview of their 'situatedness' and context, so that the reader has a better understanding of their circumstances as well as how this might influence their PATs.

The informed consent is an important part of ethics when collecting the data. The informed consent form must specify how the data will be collected and how it will be used (Dahloger, Hoeyer and Lynoe 2005: 1741). It is important for the educator and learner to know that their data will be used in revealing what artistic skill (conceptual or formal) are focused on in an online environment. The consent form further needs to indicate a brief summary of what the research is about as well as an explanation on how the research will be collected and used. The document also needs to indicate that the study is conducted relying on semi-structured interviews to be used, providing the educator's understanding and experiences between online teaching and 'traditional' teaching, and what influence it has on the learner. After the interview, a descriptive analysis is conducted on the learners' artworks in distinguishing what skill was emphasised. The forms indicate that the results will show that by comparing the educator's response to that of the learners' PAT data analyses, whether there is a similarity between these two samples. Clarification is the key in the consent form, making sure that it is understandable for the participant, in knowing what is going to happen and what their role is going to be about (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden 2001: 93). Participants were also made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any point, without any repercussions. They were also informed that they would not receive any remuneration for their participation in the study. All participants willingly signed their informed consent forms (please see attached Appendix D, page 206)..

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 provided an outline of the research methodologies used throughout this study and includes the research questions. It further contains an explanation of the interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative method, both of which are incorporated within this study. In this chapter the data, analysis and findings are presented and discussed based on the data collected through analyses, interviews and the review of literature. The discussion and findings in this chapter connects to the research questions and literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

In this study, I explore the use of online learning within the subject Visual Arts and how it affected Visual Arts learners' artistic skills. I investigate both formal and conceptual skills development, and I am attentive to see whether there were any changes before and during the pandemic when comparing the use of traditional learning versus online learning. Furthermore, I have included interviews with selected Visual Arts educators, to gauge their opinion on the effect of online learning within the classroom during the national lockdown of South Africa, especially when considering the learners' artistic skills. I took note of each participant's background in term of qualifications, years in the teaching field and the economic status of the town in which their school is situated, as these elements can influence the choices the Visual Arts educators make during difficult times such as the national lockdown. Considering this, I discovered that the Visual Arts evolved during the pandemic in ways that was not foreseen which can help to improve learner knowledge and understanding, if used properly.

Throughout this chapter, I carefully observed and distinguished formal skills from conceptual skills to obtain a greater understanding when analysing the Grade 10 Visual Arts PATs (Topic 1-the Rationale and Reflection; and 2- the artwork), to determine what skill was explored during the pandemic when lessons were done online. This turned out

to be more difficult than anticipated, however, the definition for formal and conceptual art developed as follows:

- formal is defined as containing elements of aesthetics
- formal usually relies on craftsmanship, rather than developing an idea
- formal art is fine arts (painting, drawing, weaving, sculpting and so on)
- formal elements generally rely on the presence of the art elements and design principles
- conceptual art generally (not always) disregards the craftsmanship and rather focuses on the idea
- conceptual art is originated and created by the ideals and identity of the artists, making it unique
- Conceptual art softens the elements of aesthetics, such as formal elements and design principle

Teaching Visual Arts during the pandemic challenged the educators to use alternative methods of teaching and learning, namely technology. Developing from face-to-face learning means that a more distance mode of teaching was required.

4.2 Data analysis and interpretation

4.2.1 PAT description

In this section have analysed each work according to the table 1 (see Chapter 3 page 81 – 83) and criteria that I have developed, and that these detailed analyses are in Appendix A. What follows here is an objective overview/ summarised description of each work. Each PAT (specifically Topic 2) has been individually analysed based on criteria that was created and applied to evaluate and differentiate between formal and conceptual skills. Due to the space limitations of this study, the full analyses have been attached in Appendix A. The criteria were specifically formulated, as discussed in Chapter 3 and displayed in Table 1, focusing on each artistic skill, which the CAPS document (2011: 38-39 & 2020: 32) guides the Visual Arts educator to follow within the classroom, when learners are engaged with Topic 1: the conceptualising process and Topic 2: the making of the artwork. In Chapter 3, the formal criteria were discussed as to focus on the creation

of aesthetic artworks, which contain good craftsmanship in developing the works of art. The conceptual criteria are based on the cognitive development of the artwork, in other words, the concept/idea behind the artwork. The criteria explore what the learners tried to voice through the artworks to the viewers. As discussed in Chapter 3, I determined the criteria based on analysing the iconological elements, by examining any deeper meaning embedded within the artwork through any attached symbolic imagery (Erwin 2010: 1). Thus, both criterions explore specific skills and discover which skills are mainly focused on in the artwork. Appendix A comprising the detailed analyses of all the selected PATs in this study reflects each learner's PAT 1 and PAT 2 analyses. Each PAT has been individually analysed exploring both formal and conceptual elements, to determine the skill that was focused on. Furthermore, these qualitative criteria then combine the results of both analyses and are then measured through a quantitative approach to determine the focused skill from each PAT.

School A, Learner A1: PAT 1

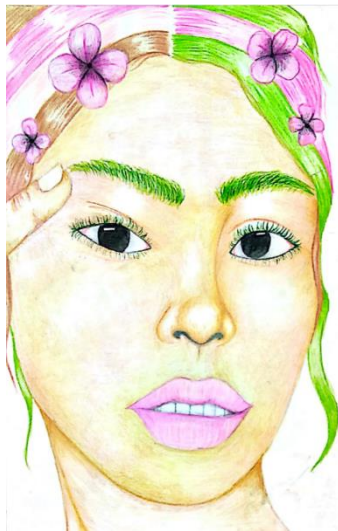


Figure 6: School A, Learner A1, *Untitled*, 2020. Colour Pencil, 29.7 x 42 cm.

This learner created a self-portrait of what I believe to be herself. The portrait, as seen in Figure 6, is not centred, making it an asymmetrically balanced work. One can see that her head is tilted away from the viewer, although her eyes are making direct contact with any person viewing the artwork. On the left-hand side of the artwork, one can notice a finger resting just above the left eye. This seems to create the impression that the person is posing. I believe that this participant, Learner A1, took a 'selfie', most probably on her

phone, and used it as a reference for her final work. Even though she used a photo of herself as a reference, the colours that were used carried a deeper symbolic meaning. By this I mean that the colours of pink and green were used in her hair, eyebrows and lips. There also seems to be four purple flowers hovering over the head of the portrait. I can assume that the use of colour and the flower in the hair are used for symbolic reasons.

Learner A1: PAT 1: Findings

The results of PAT 1's analysis, as discussed in Appendix A, pages 1-5, show the following:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria are formal. This means the artwork comprised 100% formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
3/5	½	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

5 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means that the artwork comprised 56% of conceptual elements.

As discussed in Chapter 3, subheading 3.4.3.2.3 (page 74), the formula works as follow; (1) I add up the total marks for the formal criteria and the total marks for the conceptual together to get the grand total. This means that if the formal criteria total was 8 for the learner's artwork and for the conceptual criteria the learner got 3 marks, then these marks will be added up to get a grand total of 11 marks. (2) the formal criteria marks will be then divided against the grand total to provide the percentage of formal art elements used within the work, similar method used for the conceptual criteria. For example, the grand total was 11 and the formal elements were 8, this means $8/11$ provides a percentage of 73% and for the formal $3/11$ equals to 27%, therefore, based on the formula, the learner focused more on formal elements than on conceptual elements. Hence, this formula is

used to understand the skill the learner focused on to incorporate within his/her own artwork.

Based on the data that was analysed for School A, Learner A1, PAT 1 (Topic 2, the artwork), the learner focuses more on formal than on conceptual elements in their work, with a criterion of 7/12 for formal and 5/12 for conceptual. That makes a percentage of 58.33% formal and 41.66%, which is almost a 60/40 division between these elements. This reveals that the learner created Topic 2 with the focus on formal elements, such as aesthetic qualities, instead of on the conceptual qualities within the work.

The information from the Formal Criteria (See Appendix A, page 1), shows that the formal elements such as line, shape, tone, colour, and textures were used within the work. The formal elements were used to create an artwork that is visually pleasing, through creating a portrait with more depths using line and tone; creating a work that feels naturalistic through the use of the organic shapes within the work; and to create a work to show the gentle and beautiful reflection of a woman through the use of the green, purple and pink colours as well as the use of the soft smooth textures. Overall, for a learner just starting Visual Arts in Grade 10, this shows the consideration she took to create a message for the viewer as well as making an artwork that considers the formal art elements. The message conveyed was easy to read, but no deeper meaning was apparent during the analysis of the artwork.

The information from the conceptual work explores the cognitive level, by analysing the artwork and establishing whether these elements were used to convey a concept/idea, which can make the artwork more visually interesting. This means that if the elements were used in such detail or hidden meaning, it represented a message that the viewer could easily understand. For this Grade 10 learner, stated in the Rationale (Topic 1, the sourcebook) that they wanted to focus on the use of formal skills to make the artwork seem more realistic and aesthetical than focusing on the concept. This learner also focused on the use of conceptual skills, as she took the use of colour and texture into consideration when she wanted to convey her own personal feelings towards the viewer. Personal feelings here include those depicting women as strong, noble, lovable and gentle beings. Smooth textures to encourage the gentleness of the female within the

artwork were used as a sign to create a realistic type of artwork. Learner A1 also used a variety of colours to inspire the different meaning/symbolism that they wanted to impose on the viewer, to make it easier for the viewer to understand what the learner wanted to convey. According to Learner A1's Reflection (Topic 1, the sourcebook), the learner believed that the message, "on how delicate and beautiful women are" was delivered successfully. The learner did consider each element and the message carried out through each work and how the viewer will respond to it, making it easy enough for the viewer to analyse and understand the idea behind it. Therefore, the work can easily be seen as considering both elements (formal and conceptual) and creating an artwork that is aesthetic *and* contains a meaning behind it.

School A, Learner A1: PAT 2



Figure 7: School A., Learner A1, *The Girl in Japan*, 2020. Colour Pencil, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Learner A1's final PAT work (PAT 2) is based on an illustrative depiction of a lightbulb. Placed within this lightbulb are what seems to be waves closing in on a sunset in the

background and placed in the foreground is a portrait of a female staring into the distance away from the viewer. The waves in the background are drawn from a vibrant and bright palette of the colour blue, but the learner also uses other vibrant colours such as green, brown, orange and purple. These vibrant colours, incorporated into the final, are created with the intention to showcase the reflection from the sun onto the waves. The waves also contain repetitive contour lines with the purpose of creating rhythm and movement in the waves. In contrast to the vibrant background, the foreground, housing the portrait of a female, is made as a greyscale drawing (see Figure 7).

Learner A1: PAT 2: Findings

The analysis of Learner A1's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 5-10) shows the following:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprised 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	2/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprised 89% of conceptual elements.

Based on the data that was analysed in depth in Appendix A the learner focuses on both formal elements and conceptual elements, with a ratio of 45/55. The artwork reflects 7/14 for the use of formal elements and 7/14 for the use of conceptual elements. Thus, the results indicate a 50% for the focus on formal elements and 40% for conceptual elements.

As I analysed the artwork and read through Learner A1's intention and reflection (Topic 1, the sourcebook), it became apparent that this learner has started to build her own style in art. Both PAT 1 and PAT 2 (Topic 2, the artwork) comprised the same elements, similar

artistic styles, and symbolic references in both works. Styles such as (1) the use of colour to symbolise or represent the use of emotion and expression; (2) the use of line to create either texture or the outline of the portraits to create a sense of depth; and (3) by using small objects to house iconographical elements such as the flower in sourcebook 1 that symbolised beauty and fertility, and in sourcebook 2, the use of the waves and rising sun to symbolise the culture of Japan within the learner's work. The only difference between these two artworks is the use of space, where PAT 1 disregards the use of negative space, PAT 2 takes it into account and even leaves a few conceptual elements within the background. Taking the lockdown into account, the learner created fruitful work, without always having the educator with him/her. The learner had to Self-Actualise in order to complete these two PATs and to create a visually interesting work that communicates the personal feelings/expressions of the learner towards the viewer (Hare 2019: 1). Learner A is a Grade 10 Visual Arts learner, who has just started her career in art, with little influence from the educator (due to lockdown). The learner has created an artwork that considers both the formal and conceptual elements, to create an artwork that houses aesthetic elements as well as consider conceptual factors, to get the learner's message across to the viewer.

School A, Learner A2: PAT 1

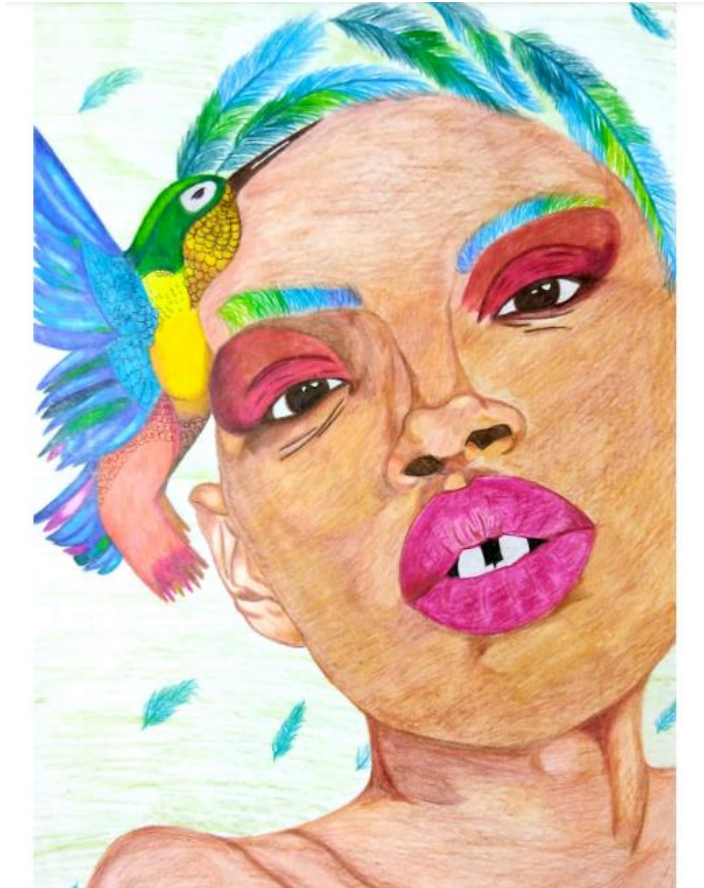


Figure 8: School A, Learner A2, *Bird genetics*, 2020. Colour Pencil, 29.7 x 42 cm.

The first PAT (Topic 2, the artwork) of Learner A2 from school A is based on a portrait of a woman. Rather than being symmetrical, where the portrait would be in the middle, Learner B decided to make this an asymmetrical portrait, by drawing the portrait on the right side of the paper (see Figure 8). The eyes of the woman in the portrait are looking directly at the viewer, but with the head tilted, it is almost as if the eyes are looking down onto the viewer. As for the hair, it is not one's typical or natural hair that one is born with, the hair has been replaced by feathers of blue and green. These feathers are very bright, which is in contrast to the darker umber colours of the female portrait, where the bright colour attracts the viewer's gaze towards the feathers upon viewing the work. The female in the portrait is wearing makeup, such as the eyelids covered with dark umber red and the lips with dark pink, yet as stated before, the feathers as hair are still catching the viewer's eyes. To the left of the portrait, there is a hummingbird hovering/flying in front of

the face. As the viewer (before reading Topic 1, the Rationale and Reflection), I can only guess that the humming bird symbolises freedom or beauty. No background has been added except for the feathers falling or floating in the background . The way that the woman is looking down onto the viewer, with feathers as hair (almost as if she is wearing a crown), and the hummingbird next to the female, gives an impression of the woman being a deity or a woman with power.

Learner A2: PAT 1: Findings

The analysis of Learner A2's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 10-16) indicates:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/6	½	0/1
Yes	Yes	No

5 out of 9 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 56% of conceptual elements.

Based on this data that was analysed, see Appendix A for detailed analysis, the learner focuses little more on the formal elements than on the conceptual elements. This means that 5/12 (41.6%) of the work is based on conceptual factors, whereas 7/12 (58.3%) of the work comprised out of the formal elements in the artwork. Thus, reflecting that Learner A2 focused more on formal skills than that of conceptual.

As I read through the learner's Rationale and Reflection (Topic 1, the sourcebook), it become apparent that the conceptual factor of this work was limited. The message from the artwork, explained by the learner, states that it focuses on the harmony of humans

and animals, living in peace. However, due to some technical aspects, such as the facial expressions of both the woman and hummingbird (e.g., as the learner stated in the Rationale that the hummingbird and woman noticed one another, however, it seems as if the woman is looking directly at the viewer and not at the hummingbird). This shows that the intentions of the learner were not executed accurately.

It seems as if Learner A2's potential was limited in applying both formal and conceptual elements in their own work. As explained in Appendix A (page 10-16), the work contains some technical and conceptual issues, which could have been attended to with guidance from the educator. I believe this oversight can be due to the learner not having much guidance from the Visual Arts educator from the school, because of the national lockdown restrictions. The learner, therefore, had to Self-Actualise, with limited help whatsoever (Hare 2019: 1). The educator could have assisted the learner in strengthening the meaning behind the work such as, for example, elaborate on the universal meaning of the bird and how it is represented, specifically when a human is transforming into one. There is so much more significance to the iconological meaning behind the learner's work than what they realise or have depicted. Learner A2 states in his Rationale that this work is about the harmony between animals and humans, it can also be read as the freedom that humankind wants to achieve, i.e. to be as free as a bird (hence the transformation) and to believe that through this process comes joy and happiness from this outcome (the representation of the hummingbird). This notion, unfortunately, however, does not come across clearly.

School A, Learner A2: PAT 2



Figure 9: School A, Learner A2, *Untitled*, 2020. Colour Pencil, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Learner A2 's second artwork (Topic 2) is placed in a lightbulb (see Figure 9), similar to that of Learner A1 . It seems that the second PAT from school A is based on the learners' dreams that should be drawn within a globe/ lightbulb. This final work by Learner A2 contains a variety of vibrant colours. It seems that this is the unique style that the learner has become comfortable with when considering both their PAT 1 and PAT 2. In this work there is a wheatfield that fades in the distance, where the sun is setting. One gets the impression that the sun is going down by the use of warm colours, such as yellow, orange, red, pink and purple, and transending into a cold darker time, such as night time. In the sky where one would expect the moon, one can observe the earth globe instead. However, this earth seems as if it is dry due the continents being only brown. There seems

to be no greenery. Attached to this earth globe is a swing that is tangled with wheat and sitting on this swing, is the focuspoint of this artwork - a girl with a blue Sunday dress and no shoes. It seems as if the girl is staring off to something to the left, away from the viewer. Jumping or floating over the head of this female are four sheep with numbers on it, as if someone is counting them to fall asleep. The sheep are static in comparison to sheep that are jumping. These sheep feel more as if they are floating, as their legs are not bent or conveying any impression of movement .

Learner A2: PAT 2: Findings

Learner A2's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 16-23) analysis shows:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	½	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 67% of conceptual elements.

I found that learners tend to focus more on formal elements than conceptual elements based on the analysed data so far. Comparing the percentage of formal elements to conceptual elements, 7/13 were formal elements compared to 6/13 were conceptual elements. The ratio of formal elements in the work was thus 53.8% and conceptual aspects 46.1%, indicating a slight emphasis on formal characteristics. Some exciting findings became evident after analysing the second learner from School A's work.

Based on the previous PAT 1's work, a similar outcome has been achieved within PAT 2's final work, which is to say that both works focus far more on the formal element than the conceptual element. This means that the learner focuses to improve the drawing skills, rather than improving on the conceptual factors. This observation was confirmed, as the learner even states this in the Rationale (Topic 1, the sourcebook).

Comparing Learner 2's PAT 1 and PAT 2 reveals some differences between them: (1) PAT 2 has far more conceptually perceived symbols than PAT 1, yet the learner seems to limit the ideas of each work. This reflects the notion that the learner focuses more on technical skills; (2) the only reason PAT 2's conceptual factors received a low mark, even though the work contains high use of symbolic imagery and illustrations, is that Learner A2 did not attach a Reflection. As such, it is difficult to say what the learner's intentions were (most of the conceptual criteria are based on the learners' purpose and the success associated with it) since most of the symbolic meanings are interpreted by my understanding, not by the learner's; and (3) PAT 1 incorporates far more formal elements, hence technical skills, as it shows the potential of Learner A2, whereas PAT 2's final indicates that work was done drastically, eliminating much detail from work.

PAT 1 and PAT 2 contain similar aspects, such as (1) the drastic and fluid use of hatching and cross-hatching lines to create a sense of visual interest and emotion within the work. They show the learner's unique understanding of drawing techniques; (2) the use of vibrant colours in both positions; however, it seems as if PAT 2 focuses on portraying significant meaning using colour; (3) the use of symbolism, such as animal imagery to represent an idea/message towards the viewer.

Considering all these aspects, the results reveal that the learner understands what is expected in the sourcebook. Learner A2 completed both sourcebooks according to the CAPS (2011: 38-39) requirements, creating a sourcebook with all necessary information (Topic 1: the conceptualization process). The learner used what is called Self-Actualization in pushing herself into meeting the criteria with no to minimal guidance from the educator during the national lockdown in South Africa (Hare 2019: 1). This resulted in the learner creating work based more on aesthetics rather than the conceptual factors

within the work, which shows the impact that the lockdown had on the learner's expected work-based criteria.

School A, Learner A3: PAT 1



Figure 10: School A, Learner A3, *Fierce Souls*, Mixed Media, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Learner A3 from school A's work is based on a portrait of a woman and an eagle (see Figure 10). It seems that the theme for PAT 1 was based on *Double Exposure*, which means that the learners had to combine a human portrait to anything such as, animals, objects or nature itself. This is seen in Learner A1's use of flowers (nature) in the hair, as well as Learner A2's inclusion of a hummingbird and feathers. The PAT ,created by Learner A3, is titled *Fierce Souls*, indicating that the work is based on creating a fearless personality. *Fierce Souls* is an asymmetrically balanced artwork. Even though the work is divided into half, the image of the eagle takes up to the most space, making the artwork asymmetrical in nature. The human figure on the left is created in greyscale, except for certain features, such as the eyes and mouth. These two elements are created in colour to stand out; (1) the eyes of both the eagle and the female portrait are in yellow. This possibly represents that the female is as brave as the eagle; (2) the lips of the female and the beak of the eagle are also in colour, although these two features are presenting the natural colour of each specie respectively. Both the eagle, and the female's facial features seem to embody a focused mindset, since both are looking directly at the viewer,

with stern expressions. The background (negative space) is dark, with no image whatsoever, which can imply that the focus point should only be on those two figures.

Learner A3: PAT 1: Findings

The analysis of Learner A3's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 23-29) shows:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
5/5	2/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

8 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 100% of conceptual elements.

The work's results show that the learner focused almost equally on formal and conceptual skills. First, by looking at the percentage of formal against conceptual, based on the criteria, formal elements comprise 7/15 and the conceptual factors 8/15, making the ratio of formal 46.66% and conceptual 53.33%, which indicates the work focused slightly more on the conceptual elements than the formal. In the end, the analysis of School A's learners' work revealed some exciting factors.

The learner tried to focus on both aesthetic qualities and the visual message of the work (Topic 2, the artwork). A work with recognizable qualities makes it easily understandable to the viewer and helps them understand what they are looking at. The drawing of the eagle and the woman is almost photo-realistic. Through the use of formal elements, Learner A3 created a work that is visually stimulating and easily recognizable. Creating a grey-scale image with contrasting bright colours embedded into some objects within the

artwork creates an image that explores both formal and conceptual elements. Even the subject matter chosen by the learner was made to send a message to the viewer. A statement that explores bravery and fearlessness was included in the learner's Rationale (Topic 1, the sourcebook). The tonal values and variations of the work are used to the advantage of the theme. Explicit use of tonal value is evident, especially in the background created with a focus on shadow. This was to create awareness and focus on the two figures, as well as work with the notion that when the sun sets, people tend to get scared; however, in contrast to this is the iconographical image of an eagle, which usually symbolises bravery. However, this may not have been intentional and could be me reading too much into the message.

Most of the work was executed on the standard as expected from the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document, with the creation of Topic 1 and Topic 2. During the national lockdown and with limited guidance from their Visual Arts educator, the learner completed the work expected of them and passed the PAT. Therefore, the learner achieved Self-Actualization by taking responsibility for making a PAT that effectively uses formal elements and being aware of the message that should be conveyed to the viewer.

School A, Learner A3: PAT 2



Figure 11: School A, Learner A3, *Life in a lightbulb*, Mixed Media, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Learner A3's PAT 2 (Topic 2, the artwork) is based on the theme, *Life in a Lightbulb*. This work refers to the tree of life, discernible through the image of a tree that is starting to grow from the heart. Even though the work is based on the learner's love for art and biology, the learner also states that the piece explores the beauty of life, which can also be linked to the tree of life.

Like the work of the previous learner, this work is placed within a globe, and the scenes portrayed in the artwork are illustrative work based on a tree evolving out of a heart. The lightbulb is drawn very lightly and is transparent, where the viewer can see what is happening inside the globe. Contained within the lightbulb is a tree, which is drawn almost realistically, but the leaves growing out of the tree are semiotic and unreal. The leaves

almost seem like grass growing from the tree, which is an uncommon image. Furthermore, the tree evolves from a heart, and the heart is enormous compared to a real-life tree. The heart is as big as a tree, which can emphasise the importance of life. It is almost as if the tree and the heart are becoming one as it seems the tree is morphing into the heart (see Figure 11).

Learner A3: PAT 2: Findings

Learner A3's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 29-35) analysis indicates:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	½	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 89% of conceptual elements.

In Learner A3's artwork (Topic 2, the artwork), it was easy to understand what was being conveyed to the viewer. The work was based on aesthetic qualities, making the imagery easily recognisable to the viewer. The formal elements, such as the line, colour and tone, created an image based on a real-life photo, revealing that the learner's work was mainly based on formal aspects. However, symbolic values were used by using organic shapes such as a tree and a heart. Every subject matter was associated with a significant meaning; the tree, for instance, stood for growth and life, and the heart, a symbol of life and love. Together these symbolic values created a combined meaning of the learner's interest in the love of two subjects in school, Visual Arts and Biology. Learner A3

combined these aspects to create a sense of the growth of a human being by acquiring a 'pure' heart (see Appendix A, page 29 - 35). This notion alone showed that the learner produced an artwork that contained not only formal elements but also conceptual elements.

The results show that the learner focused more on formal than on conceptual skills. Based on the criteria, formal elements are represented by 7/13 and conceptual elements by 6/13. This results in a rate of formal 53.84% and conceptual 46.15%, which indicates most of the work focused on the formal elements.

Coming to the end of analysing School A's learners' work revealed some exciting findings within their work. For instance, for their term 2 PAT, the learners received the theme of 'life in a lightbulb', which focused on the individual's self-interests, and the learner's dreams. The Visual Arts educator played a significant role in a learners' conceptual development. Educators created criteria that required learners to focus on their interests rather than any social or historical movement, limiting the conceptual aspects of the requirements. The lightbulb, which holds conceptual elements within the criteria I created, such as space, could not be factored in because it was the educator's idea and influence within the requirements and not something that the learners came up with by themselves. Study results thus far demonstrate that the Visual Arts educators significantly impact formal and conceptual skills development and learning factors.

Another finding, repeated throughout the analysis of all three learners' work, shows that PAT 2 focused more on the formal than on the conceptual elements; however, this is not only due to the educator's influence but also because of the learners' input. After reading through all three learners' Reflections and Rationales (Topic 1, sourcebooks), I realised that these learners' actual focus is more on formal skills than conceptual. These learners clearly state that they want to focus on creating realistic artworks or that they want to focus on specific formal skills such as colour, shading or even line. However, it is difficult to determine whether it is Self-Actualization or the influence of the Visual Arts educator to create work that the educators themselves favour (Hare 2019: 1).

School B, Learner B1: PAT 1



Figure 12: School B Learner B1, *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

The PAT 1 work seems as if it is based on an Expressionist style (Topic 2, the artwork). This work, as seen in Figure 12, is painted in a monochromatic style, where only blue tints and shades were used to express tonal values. The facial features of the figure in the portrait are best described as upset, with hollow, dark eyes and mouth. The colour itself seems to suit this figure's emotion of sadness. Floating in both corners of the canvas, which is taking up most of the space over the head of the portrait, are two white flowers, which seem to hold their own symbolism. Overall, this work is based on the use of emotion using colour and the way the figure expresses emotion.

Learner B1's artwork is somewhat different from School A's learners' works. This could be due to the educator or the learners themselves, but this is speculation and I have to analyse all the learners' PAT's before establishing if the statement holds true. What

comes across directly is that Learner B's work contains a lot of artistic information, where the learner has clearly done a lot of detailed studies on the theme on which the work is based in the visual diary of the learner. This comes across where the learner has taken more than two pages in their visual diary/ sourcebook to do studies on colour and pencil techniques, which gives a small indication that formal elements are the focus of this work. The final of the artwork, however, shows that the work is created in a conceptual manner.

Learner B1: PAT 1: Findings

The analysis of Learner B1's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 35-42) shows that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	2/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 89% of conceptual elements.

This PAT alone shows significant differences compared to School A learners' PATs. Another factor revealed itself to influence the learner's Self-Actualization of the PAT. It has been a reoccurrence from School A to even School B; the assignment brief itself. The expectations and criteria stipulated in the assignment briefs appear to influence the choice of skills that the learners focus on. However, this can still be argued to be the influence of the Visual Arts educator, as the educator established the assignment brief. The CAPS (2011: 38-39 & 41) guides the educators in designing assignment briefs to introduce the Grade 10 learners to the subject Visual Arts. This also helps the educators

to determine the learners' artistic skills. Therefore, this could be a sub-category under the factor of the educator's effect on the learner. Providing the assignment brief to learners has an impact on how the learners present the given theme. Suppose the Visual Arts educator dedicated a theme to portraits. In that case, the learner will create an artwork focusing more on the formal elements due to the minimal conceptual elements needed to create a portrait. In contrast, suppose the theme is based on feelings. In that case, there are significant possibilities that conceptual aspects can be incorporated, including line, colour, and even form, since many elements can convey emotions.

In the analysis of School A's PATs, it became clear that PAT 1 was based more on formal skills than PAT 2. This is because the learners had to draw an artwork containing a portrait. This resulted in all three learners working more on drawing techniques than developing their conceptual skills. However, this does not mean that the learners ignored conceptual factors; these are still there. However, formal elements were more emphasised than conceptual ones. As for PAT 2, the theme was 'life in a light bulb', where the learners had to think outside the box to create a way to express their interest(s) to the viewer. They had to attach symbolic imagery to make it understandable for the viewer and to show what they were expressing. The data collected showed that conceptual elements have increased within the second PAT. This is because these learners considered the context and meaning they wanted to express and how they wanted it to come across to the viewer.

PAT work has significantly changed from School A to School B. Learners presented more drawings and experiments with the medium and techniques. In the assignment brief, the learners were instructed to apply symbolic values to communicate meaning and context to the viewer in an understandable manner. Since this was the first PAT I had analysed from School B, I had to collect data from other PATs before establishing whether this finding was accurate. As it turns out, and as will be revealed throughout the sections that follow, I was correct in finding that framing the assignment briefs influenced how the learners created their works.

The data collected from Learner B1 shows that the learner's focus was close to 50/50 on the formal and conceptual elements. The formal and conceptual elements comprise 7/14

(50%), giving the criteria an equal weighting of 50/50. Due to the theme being based on 'Feelings', Learner B1 removed most of the aesthetic elements within the work so that the artwork could contain the raw emotion of sorrow and sadness. They used symbolic imagery, such as flowers, connected to the funeral, with a sad undertone within the artwork. The learner explored Fauvist characteristics within the artwork, including using colour to express emotion and even the rough visible brushstrokes. Take note that Fauvist artists started to remove natural elements and that Fauvism was the first movement to move into the abstract (Zelazko 2022: 1)

School B, Learner B1: PAT 2



Figure 13: School B, Learner B1, *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Based on the second PAT (Topic 2, the artwork) of Learner B1, a unique expressionist artistic style becomes evident, since the learner is somewhat of an expressionist in the work that is created within both PATs. In this scene of the PAT 2 work, the learner did not blend the paint and used a technique called Impasto, where a layer of thick paint is placed over another (see Figure 13). Continuing with the painting technique, the learner even used short, broad, visible brushstrokes. The scene plays off in what appears to be a hospital where the foreground shows one black doctor or nurse gazing directly at the

viewer. There are two beds with monitors, perhaps for the nurse to look at the patient's vitals, but only one of the beds are visible. A patient is difficult to identify in one of the beds, and the other bed obscured by the doctor/nurse in the foreground. The curtains are closed, and the second nurse/doctor peeks through the curtain as if looking at something. The third nurse/doctor is tending to a patient that is obscured by the doctor in the foreground.

Most of the colour in this work is blue, yellow, and brown, each one having its own symbolic meaning. The most prominent colour, blue, can indicate anxiety and sadness, based on the evidence shown in the visual diary. This reveals the feelings of the learner, perhaps scared and sad about someone close to them in the hospital. The identities of the doctors and nurses are anonymous, due to the headband and masks disguising most of their faces, except for their eyes. The masks that the doctors/nurses are wearing can indicate that they are in an operating room, or that they are in a location where deadly diseases can spread, such as COVID-19. The masks themselves reminds the viewer of COVID-19 and that these nurses and doctors are at the forefront of the battle against the virus. This painting of the learner carries a lot of implied emotion.

Learner B1: PAT 2: Findings

The analysis of Learner B1's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 42 51) indicates that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprised 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
5/5	2/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

8 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprised 89% of conceptual elements.

The data collected from learner B1's second PAT shows that the learner's focus was 45/55 on the formal and conceptual elements, respectively. Based on the formal aspects 7/15, the percentage of work focused is 46.66% and based on the conceptual elements 8/15, the rate is 53.33%.

Both PATs created by this learner reflect on the theme of death. The learner used the colour blue as a significant signifier in both PATs to express negative emotions, revealing that the learner experienced sadness or loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first PAT shows the raw emotion experienced by someone who went to a funeral to say goodbye to a deceased person. The second PAT shows a hospital scene during the pandemic, where people were mainly treated for the disease. In this PAT, the learner expressed sadness by using the colour blue. Both PATs expressed the learner's emotion, as both themes contain the word "Feelings", indicating that the Visual Arts educator expected the learner to tell their motifs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, both paintings feature sad and isolated elements that can suggest the learner has lost a loved one, or they can represent a universal link among all those who witnessed or experienced loss.

One distinction between the PATs is the artistic movements on which the learner based their work. In PAT 1, the learner expressed an interest in exploring the movement Fauvism, known for expressing emotions. The learner incorporated symbolic elements such as flowers and colour, similar characteristics and symbols evident in the Fauvist art movement. PAT 2, in contrast to PAT 1, explored Post-Impressionist artists. The learner was encouraged to use artistic direction based on the assigned theme, which contained the name "Vincent Van Gogh". Van Gogh was a Post-Impressionist artist famous for connecting his desires and beliefs within his work. The learner used characteristics of this movement by disregarding the colour black and using the technical style Impasto, which created broken textures using the paintbrush, resulting in distorted figures. A second aspect both paintings share is distortion, caused mainly by remembering something that happened or expressing raw emotion. It is difficult to determine which one is true, as the learner did not specify precisely why distortion and anonymous figures were favoured.

The following differences can be observed between School A's and School B's paintings thus far: (1) the medium used differs between the schools: learners from school A seem to prefer pencil, while School B's learners prefer painting. From what I can establish, this is merely an observation and can only be affirmed through further data analysis of the other learners from School B's works. (2) Based on the themes, emotions were mostly explored by School B, whereas School A focused more on technical aspects. Both PATs from School A differed, one exploring the learners' dreams and the other examining the links between nature and humans. This resulted in each learner from School A creating a different PAT.

However, what this reveals is the influence of the Visual Arts educator on their learners. Firstly, each educator is different in what they explore and what skills they favour. School A's educator is more focused on formal than conceptual skill development, whereas school B, so far, shows a balance between conceptual and formal skills development. In contrast, the learner (Learner B1) seems to abandon aesthetic elements like details, perspective, and natural colour to express himself or herself more through symbolism, specific imagery, or coloured lines.

School B, Learner B2: PAT 1



Figure 14: School B, Learner B2, *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

The PAT 1 (Topic 2, the artwork) painting of Learner B2 is a portrait of a black woman staring squarely at the viewer. The topic given to the learners in the project brief is 'Feelings', which can be construed as happiness depicted in this work based on the girl's facial expression. The artwork's background has been painted purple, making it appear flat and lacking any indication of perspective (see Figure 14). The colour of the female's garment, which is blue, is on the figure's right, almost blending into the background. The colours utilised in this piece, as described by the learner in their Rationale (Topic 1, the sourcebook), indicates several emotions, with blue possibly signifying peace, serenity, and stability, while purple represents bravery and spirituality based on what the learner provided in the Rationale. When combined with the colours in the artwork, the smile intends to communicate a sense of joy to the viewer.

As with the prior learner from School B, a similar method applies to the media, which is painting. However, for their final project, School A largely used colour pencils. This demonstrates how educators impact learners' work based on their choices for various mediums and criteria. Despite the lack of shaded areas, there is enough information to distinguish between shallow and deep depths in the painting. The picture is based on a learner in Grade 10 studying the fundamentals of painting and portraiture, which is expected from each educator to teach at the beginning upon receiving Grade 10 learners.

Learner B2: PAT 1: Findings

Learner B2's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 51-56) analysis indicates that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
½	2/2	1/1	0/1	0/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

4 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 57% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
1/5	½	0/1
No	Yes	No

2 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 22% of conceptual elements.

Based on the data collected from learner B2, 67% of learner B2's skills were formal, and 33% were conceptual. Using the formula $4/6$ for the formal criteria and $2/6$ for the conceptual criteria, we can surmise what percentage of the learner's attention was put into the painting, respectively. This is the first learner where a big and clear divide between the formal and conceptual elements in their work is observable.

This PAT, as already established, was based on the 'feelings' of the learner, who expressed feelings of happiness. In this case, the educator significantly influenced the

learner's skills development. The Visual Arts educator created a brief based on the term 'feelings', which means that the learner had to make a work based on the concept of feelings. However, free will and creativity are significant parts of the subject. Therefore, the learner could choose which emotions to express within the work and how. The learner defines the term happiness in the research as experiencing positive feelings, feelings such as joy and fulfilment (Topic 1, the sourcebook specifically The Research). The learner pasted a picture of Yue Minjun's artwork, a famous Chinese contemporary artist who drew himself laughing hysterically (Appendix B, Figure B2.1.11, page 159). Not only does the painting depict happiness, but it also shows the artist wearing a mask, concealing his true feelings of helplessness. Using a similar notion, Learner B2 created a painting with a faint hint of joy. While the eyes of the figure seem emotionless, the face bears a smile, almost emphasizing that the learner is wearing a mask. However, the learner did not add any Rationale or Reflection (Topic 1, the sourcebook), which meant that the whole analysis of the PAT is based on self-investigation. This means that the learner's intention did not always come through clearly. My analysis of the portrait wearing a mask is based entirely on my research and interpretation. In addition to all the other process drawings found within the sourcebook, the learner focused more on happiness than any other deeper hidden meaning.

This artwork shares similarities with the previous Learner B1's painting in that it exhibits elements of the French Fauvist art movement. Through brushstrokes and the use of pure colour, the work expresses emotion. In addition, the painting has no depth whatsoever. Compared to the previous Learner B1's painting, Learner B2 may have focused more on formal skills than conceptual skills, while Learner B1 created a painting that featured concepts and formal elements. Even though the learner created a PAT based on the assignment brief provided by the educator, the work indicates the educator had limited influence on the learner's final artwork. This is due to the learner's choice of a visual message the learner wanted to express. Although the learner chose the emotions the work is based on, it is unclear why happiness was determined.

Regarding the educator's guidance, the final artwork fails to convey the intended message. Due to not knowing the learner's intentions, it is difficult to determine whether

he or she succeeded or not. This is because there are many questions regarding why the learner chose to illustrate specific elements. A smile does not inherently convey happiness; therefore, it is difficult to suggest that the work expresses happiness. Furthermore, the painting looks like an ordinary portrait.

School B, Learner B2: PAT 2



Figure 15: School B, Learner B2, *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic on canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

School B's PAT 2s (Topic 2, the artwork) are based on the feelings of Vincent van Gogh with regards to COVID-19. Using the term 'feelings', the educator introduced the concept of the learner creating artwork based on their personal experiences with the pandemic. This learner's painting shows a female wearing a mask gazing out of an open window (see Figure 15). The image outside the window shows a tree without leaves, symbolising Autumn, or Winter. Green is the colour of the cover (mask) that the figure is wearing, which can represent some symbolic meaning of jealousy. The figure may be jealous of being stuck inside, as the figure is gazing outside, through the window. A connotation established here is to the national lockdown, where everyone had to stay indoors over a long period of time, to limit the contact with other people. The clothing and the background in this painting have an impasto effect. It is possible that the learning process was

influenced by the project topic of Van Gogh's feelings, which led to the learner to using the Impasto technique. The Impasto technique, as explained previously, is a Post-Impressionistic movement technique where an artist applies thick layers of paint over one another directly from the paint tube. Vincent van Gogh used this technique to distort subjects and express his emotions. This technique is precisely what the topic is based on, which explains why the learners from this school are utilizing this technique in their artworks.

However, this artwork is difficult to analyse due to the learner not attaching any Rationale, Reflection or Research to the PAT (Topic 1, the sourcebook). Hence, the work is based on my analysis alone (see analysis in Appendix A, page 1 and Appendix B, page 118, which makes it difficult to precisely determine what the intentions and meaning behind the learner's painting were. Thus, the painting can be analysed inaccurately during the process of analysing and determining the notions behind the learner's work.

Learner B2: PAT 2: Findings

Analysis of Learner B2's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 57-63) shows:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
5/5	½	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

8 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 100% of conceptual elements.

Observations from learner B2 indicate that the drawing is close to 47/53 on both formal and conceptual elements. Regarding the formal elements of 7/15, 46.66% of the work is concentrated there. Based on 8/15, the conceptual elements contribute to 53.33%, referring that the PAT ratio is close to a dividing of 50% focus on both skills.

As already discussed, the PAT is based on the educator's brief, 'Vincent van Gogh's feelings about COVID-19', which, as already established, shows the educator's influence on the PAT. In addition, the theme embodies the educator's desire for what the educator wants to see the learner achieve within their PATs. This requires the learner to produce artwork that prioritises the following elements of COVID-19; (1) "Feelings"; School B focused solely on the idea of 'feelings' in both PAT 1 and PAT 2, indicating that the educator explored the learners' individuality to express their feelings and desires. (2) the educator based this theme on the feelings of COVID-19 and wanted the learners to express their thoughts on the pandemic. However, this theme was distinct from PAT 1, where the theme was only focused on the learner's feelings. This suggests that the learners were free to choose what the work would be based on. Further, this PAT 2 indicated that the educator had enhanced control over what the learner creates. Also, most people experienced negative feelings about the pandemic. Therefore, it is not surprising that all the learners from School B would have made an artwork based on negative feelings. (3) "Vincent van Gogh" is a famous master painter well-known for using impasto techniques involving layering paint to express the artist's emotions. Hence, the educator deliberately used this artist's name to force the learner to experiment with the Impasto technique and apply other traits of Van Gogh within their artworks.

School B, Learner B3: PAT 1

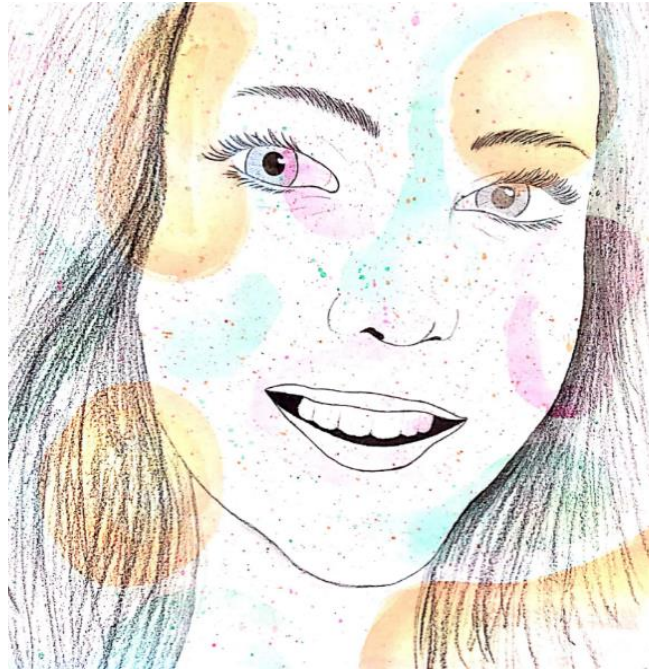


Figure 16: School B Learner B3, *Untitled*, 2020. Mixed media, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Like Learner B2's portrait, this PAT reveals that Learner B3 also created a drawing based on a female smiling and gazing directly at the viewer (Topic 2, the artwork). Differing from Learner B2, Learner B3's picture is based on a close-up shot, which means the figure takes over much of the space. Moreover, the figure is not rigid and upright, as seen in the previous learner's portrait, and this portrait is more dynamic by adding an angle to the facial features. In addition, Learner B3 displayed a mixed-media portrait in pencil and watercolour rather than painting. Considering the medium, it helped shed light on whether the educator influenced the learner's choice of medium. Similar mediums are repetitively used by different learners, which can reflect that the educator might impact the medium applied on the assignment.

A close-up of the female figure's face is illustrated in this portrait using an angle, seen in Figure 16. This portrait contains various watercolour splatter patterns and organic circular paintings. Furthermore, the smile applied to the portrait indicates that the figure is happy. In response to the educator's brief, the learner created an artwork based on the topic 'Feelings'.

Learner B3: PAT 1: Findings

The analysis of Learner B3's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 64-70) indicates that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	0/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

6 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 89% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	½	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprised 78% of conceptual elements.

Observations from learner B3's PAT 1 artwork indicate that the painting is close to a 45/55 ratio in terms of both formal and conceptual elements. Regarding the formal elements of 6/13, the concentration of work is 46.1%, while the conceptual elements are based on 7/13, making it 53.8%,

The PAT was developed based on the 'Feelings' of the learner, who expressed feelings of happiness. In this case, it appears that the educator significantly influenced the learners' development of skills. In communicating happiness, the learner could convey several common ideas based on their concept of happiness. Based on the Rationale, the learner defines happiness in the confines of both negative and positive feelings (Topic 1, the sourcebook). Feelings such as joy and fulfilment or a "fake" emotion-based on people wearing a mask to suggest they are happy when they are not (see Appendix B page 166). Not only does the painting depict happiness, but it also shows the figure in the painting wearing a mask, concealing his true feelings of helplessness. This notion is linked to Learner B2, who also created a portrait centred on happiness.

This artwork shares similarities with the previous Learners' B1 and B2 paintings. It demonstrates elements of the French Fauvist art movement through brushstrokes and the use of pure colour applied to the work to express emotion. In addition, the painting has no depth, similar to the previous learner's work. Learner B3, however, used a subtler colour to convey certain emotions than the earlier learners' works. Learner B3 created a work based on a Fauvist trait; however, the trait was not correctly applied to be considered Fauvist in nature. A prominent characteristic of Fauvism is the use of bold, vibrant, almost acidic colours juxtaposed in an unusual manner, and the use of intuitive, highly gestural painting techniques. Learner B3 used a subtle rather than a vivid colour to express certain emotions. Despite the colour change, the fact is that all these learners created artworks based on Fauvist traits to express feelings. The findings suggest that the Visual Arts educator influenced learners' choice of research and application within the PAT. But at the same time, the educator also had a limited impact; this may be due to the educator not being present to help guide the learners, which meant that the learners had to complete their PATs by themselves. In this case, the learner chose a visual message they wanted to convey. Although the learner decides the emotions the work will be based on, it is unclear why the learner determined happiness.

In summary, the PATs created by Learners B2 and B3 suggest that their educators influenced their conceptual factors to convey a particular emotion through their artworks. It is possible that these learners worked together or that the assignment brief influenced them to create such work. Similar artistic movements inspired all three learners' artworks from School B.

School B, Learner B3: PAT 2



Figure 17: School B Learner B3, *Untitled*, 2020. Pencil on paper, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Among school B's learners, Learner B3's artwork (Topic 2, the artwork) was the most emotional. Even a viewer without art knowledge can understand the negative emotion of sadness or distress conveyed by the drawing. In this drawing, a woman sits on her knees, covered by a blanket except for her head, shoulders, arms, feet, and knees, which are visible (see Figure 17). Hands and hair cover the face of the figure, which indicate that the person is agonising or crying over something. Most of the background is relatively dark, except for certain parts with tinted highlights (take note that the manner in which the work was photographed caused most of the dark toned background reflected as a light tinted background, which is inaccurate to the real picture). This whole artwork, through my analysis in Appendix A (page 67-70), emphasises raw emotion, primarily negative emotions.

Based on the topic ‘Vincent's Feelings of COVID-19’, the artwork had to reflect a similar style to Vincent Van Gogh. However, I first noticed that the artwork was drawn in pencil and was a grey-scale design. It is interesting because the PAT has to do with Vincent van Gogh, but the drawing does not reflect characteristics generally found in Van Gogh's works. In the case of this Post-Impressionist artist, this movement centres on expressing emotion through vivid colours and rough brushstrokes. Known as a Post-Impressionist artist, he also omitted the colour black because he believed it was not a spiritual colour. Therefore, it is interesting that the learner used the medium pencil to create a style like that of Vincent van Gogh; (1) there are no colours present in the artwork, except for the tears to suggest emphasis. The learner used pencil techniques, such as hatching, fading and stippling, to depict brushstrokes similar to Post-Impressionist paintings. (2) This drawing is primarily monochrome, unlike the Post-Impressionists, who usually chose a colour to express their ideas.

Learner B3: PAT 2: Findings

The analysis of Learner B3's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 71-77) shows that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	2/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 78% of conceptual elements.

Observations from learner B3's PAT 2 indicate that the painting is close to 50/50 on both formal and conceptual elements. Regarding the formal elements of 7/14, the

concentration of work is 50%, while the conceptual elements are based on 7/14, making it 50%.

Both PATs reflect on the theme of 'Feelings'. The learner also used the colour blue as a significant part of both PATs to express what I believe are positive emotions. In the first PAT, an archaic smile is applied to the portraiture to show the raw emotion of happiness. Such a smile generally indicates a person is alive and happy. Despite this, it is difficult to claim that the learner succeeded in expressing joy. This is for two reasons, (1) the portrait felt ambiguous, with the lifeless eyes contradicting the smile, which almost seems as if the person is wearing a mask, as the smile is concealing the person's sadness. (2) The painting also seemed like a traditional portrait, staring directly toward the viewer, with no actual conceptual meaning. The second PAT shows what one believes to be the learner's home. Without a Rationale or Reflection, it is difficult to determine the meaning behind the painting, which also reduces the requirements that are expected in Topic 1, the sourcebook, in developing the creative idea behind Topic 2, the artwork. The female figure contains an unusual viewpoint, as the figure is painted flat and with eyes closed; however, in contrast to the dull tone of the figure is the three-dimensional creation of the window frame, which presents the element of perspective. The background creates a sense of coldness, with a lonely, leafless tree and a bird flying away in the distance. These iconographical images can hold contextual meanings concerning the learner's experience with the pandemic. In times of lockdowns, learners can either express the safety of their homes or feel trapped there. It is difficult to determine what the learner's exact intentions were. Both PATs expressed the learner's emotion, as both themes contain the word "Feelings", indicating that the Visual Arts educator expected the learner to tell their motifs. Both of these paintings (PAT 1 and 2) depict sad and isolated elements - which may mean the learner has lost someone dear to him or her or may represent a universal link to all who witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic or experienced loss.

It is distinctive about PATs that the learner chooses the artistic movement upon which he/she bases his/her work. In PAT 1, the learner expressed interest in exploring the movement Fauvism, known for expressing emotions. The learner used symbolic elements such as colour and flat dimensions within the painting to represent their feelings. Although

PAT 2 focused on Post-Impressionist artists, the Visual Arts educator compelled learners to apply the artistic movement because the theme contained the word "Vincent Van Gogh". Van Gogh was a Post-Impressionist artist who was famous for connecting his desires and beliefs with his work. The learner used characteristics of the Post-Impressionist movement by disregarding the colour black and focusing on the formal element Impasto. This broken texture through the paintbrush resulted in distorted figures. The distortion in both paintings results from recollections of an event or expressing raw emotions. It is difficult to determine which one is true, as the learner did not specify precisely why distortion and anonymous figures were favoured. Nevertheless, there is one recurrent element: the influence of the Visual Arts educator.

Generally, PAT 1 and PAT 2 express the learner's emotions in response to the educator's assignment brief. According to the findings of both PATs, the educator has more influence on the learner than first assumed. What came to be is that both Learners B1 and B2 show similar expressions of feelings; (1) through the application of brushstrokes in PAT 2, which is dedicated to the late Post-Impressionist artist Vincent Van Gogh. Applying a painting technique called Impasto within PAT 2 showcases these learners' obligation to follow the assignment brief. As stated previously, the assignment brief asks learners to express their feelings about the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing on Vincent Van Gogh as inspiration. (2) The use of colour to signify a specific emotional notion of what the learner feels, such as green or blue, which denotes fear or jealousy. (3) the use of iconographic imagery, such as masks, refers to COVID-19, which is universally associated with the pandemic. As stated earlier, the previous school primarily used colour pencils as the medium. Despite that, when I analysed School B, I noticed that paint was the primary medium employed. Therefore, these significant elements reveal the educator's impact on the learners' creation of their PATs.

However, my findings also revealed that the educator is not the only influence in determining which skills the learners' favour in their PATs. Based on my analyses of both PATs of Learner B3, it became apparent that this learner's PAT is not complete. Neither of this learners' PATs included a Rationale or reflection on what the learner tried to convey. As a result, when exploring both PATs, it becomes difficult to tell what the learner

was trying to communicate or if the learner successfully expressed their ideas. This may be due to the learner's attempt to express the work in his/her terms without much guidance from the educator. In analysing both paintings, the reader must understand that the meaning derived from the images originated from my understanding of them and not entirely from the learner's intent.

In addition, this artwork shares similarities with the previous Learners' (B1 and B2) paintings. All three learners demonstrate elements of the Post-Impressionist art movement through the painting technique called 'Impasto' and the removal of the colour black. Learner B3, however, used a subtler grey to convey certain emotions, contrasting the other learners' natural use of colour. Although Learner B3 created a work still based on Vincent van Gogh's traits by expressing feelings and using rough and expressive lines in conveying depressive feelings, the work cannot be considered as Post-Impressionist in nature, as the learner used tinted black that the Post-Impressionists would have typically avoided because it is not spiritually expressive (Zelazko 2022: 1). Despite the colour change, the fact is that all these learners created artworks based on Post-Impressionist traits to express feelings. The findings suggest that the Visual Arts educator influenced learners' choice of research and application within the PAT.

Consequently, the findings in the PATs by Learners B1, B2 and B3 suggest that their educator influenced their conceptual skills development in conveying a particular emotion. There are similarities between these learners' works, which could indicate they are working together or that the assignment brief influenced the learners to create similar work. All three of School B's learners' outcomes used similar artistic movements. Although the educator is not present in this case, it still shows that the educator can guide learners to create work that the educator wants to see.

School C, Learner C1: PAT 1



Figure 18: School C Learner C1, *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic on Canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

PAT 1 of Learner C1 from School C revealed that the PAT could also be about feelings, as many portraits reflect emotions such as joy, sadness, and anger. Observing the final artwork (Topic 2), we see that there are three different portraits depicted throughout the work, suggesting that this PAT puts emphasis on portraits and emotions (see Figure 18). In addition, a hummingbird is placed in the left corner of the painting, symbolising something to do with the artwork's theme. The theme is based on 'Expressions', which encourages the learner to create work based on feelings or emotions, therefore, what the learner incorporated within this assignment.

The first portrait standing out in the left bottom corner is painted in a realistic manner and colour, in contrast to the other two portraits painted in black and white. This portrait stares into the far as if she, the female in the portrait, is thinking about something. Furthermore, the facial features suggest that the female in the portrait is longing for something. Also, please take note the learner used random figures from the internet, as established by

looking at their visual diary/ sourcebook, and which is also stated in the Rationale (Topic 1). However, the learner does not say why they used random figures, not her own. On the contrary, the learner noted that a portrait of the learner would not be possible, as the learner did not want to display one. However, the assignment brief was open to the learners, thus, she could have done any type of artwork without containing portraits.

The second portrait is in the right-hand corner, showcasing a small square with a black and white portrait depicted in it. This portrait contrasts with the colour portrait for two reasons; firstly, the figure is painted in black and white, and secondly, the figure looks directly towards the viewer, in contrast to the colour portrait in which the figure is looking into the distance. The third and last portrait is slightly different from the first two portraits, as this portrait is almost unrecognisable as a human face. The portrait is painted in black and white and in a semi-abstract style that differs from the rest of the work. The Visual Arts educator at School C noted that the learner did not use the time effectively enough to complete her artwork, which resulted in her struggling to paint the portraits. This indicates that the style was not chosen purposefully, but perhaps left somewhat incomplete as the learners ran out of time.

Learner C1: PAT 1: Findings

Learner C1's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 77-84) analysis shows that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
2/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	½	0/1
Yes	Yes	No

5 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 67% of conceptual elements.

The analysis of Learner C1's PAT 1 indicates that the work focuses more on formal elements than conceptual elements. 7/12 of the criteria focus on the formal elements, making the concentration of work 58.33% formal. The conceptual elements constitute 41.66% (5/12 of the criteria being conceptual). The value of the conceptual elements may be a little higher than it should be because of my interpretation.

Learner C1 focused more on formal elements than on conceptual, based not only on the findings of the data collected but also on what the learner stated within the Rationale. While completing the PAT, the learner attempted to paint realistically based on the information presented in the Brainstorm, Rationale, and Research sections (Topic 1, the sourcebook). These topics in the learner's sourcebook explored ideas or research related to realistic paintings by artists. Furthermore, the learner did not focus on conceptual meanings as the learner did not discuss any concepts or opinions based on what they wanted to accomplish through the PAT, 'Expressions'. I have subjectively interpreted the conceptual messages conveyed by the learner to the viewer, and it may not have been what the learner meant to say.

Additionally, it can be speculated that the Visual Arts educator is responsible for the learner's emphasis on formal skills rather than conceptual development for two reasons: (1) when a learner enrolls in Visual Arts for the first time, specifically a grade 10 learner, the educator teaches the learner basic formal skills, such as painting and drawing, which are presented as activities in class to develop essential skills. It is only later that a Visual Arts learner will learn about conceptual skills and expressing specific notions. As the Visual Arts educator gradually introduces new items into the PAT throughout the first year, the learner continually learns more about what is expected within the PAT. (2) In the brief, the educator emphasised the term 'Expressions' to have the learner understand how to create different facial expressions rather than express a personal interest, which resulted in all these portraits being included within the final piece of work.

Although the learner used specific formal elements to create this work, I believe the learner also intended a conceptual message. Through various inclusions of colour, such as the monochromatic colour of grey, the learner may have been trying to express a sense of recollection or negativity. In addition, the hummingbird that was also incorporated was unusual, a subject matter rarely seen within the theme 'Expressions'. One will usually expect someone to experiment with various facial features to see how different facial expressions express multiple emotions. The hummingbird symbolises joy, in this case, the hummingbird represented longing, due to the way the bird is applied within the artwork, in a manner of gazing into the distance and flying towards something (maybe longing for happiness and joy). Therefore, it can be surmised that the learner incorporated these formal elements to convey a particular notion to the viewer.

Due to a lack of time management, the learner did not complete the task to the level it should have been completed. It is imperative for a Visual Arts learner when doing Self-Actualization that the learner manages time efficiently and completes the work on time. Self-Actualization means that Learner C1 had to take responsibility and do most of their work at home without assistance from an educator (Hare 2019). Whether it was homework or the result of the pandemic, the learner still had to follow the educator's guidelines.

Based on the findings, I propose that the Visual Arts educator strongly influences what the learners will create and focus on, even if they are absent. This finding is primarily the result of the assignment brief developed by the educator, who expects specific results from the learner. A Visual Arts educator is more concerned with formal skills when teaching the first-time Visual Arts learners. Therefore, they can teach these learners new fundamental skills in drawing or painting, depending on what the educator wants to accomplish (in line with what is expected in the CAPS). However, the learner must take responsibility for completing the PAT. Responsibility is met by completing the PAT in the learner's own time, which means the learner will most likely be alone doing their PAT. It does not matter whether the pandemic caused this, or whether the learner did not have the time at school to do it. It is more likely that the learner will create an artwork without the educator's presence, which can lead to the learner developing a painting that the

educator does not desire. As a result, the educator will encourage the learner to alter the artwork to something that the educator wants.

School C, Learner C1: PAT 2

Learner C1's second task relates to the theme 'Out of Africa,' where the learners had to create an artwork inspired by the cultures or traditions of the African continent. Reflecting on what the learner researched, the learner's work focused on the *Voortrekkers*. Voortrekkers were Dutch-speaking settlers in South Africa who emigrated eastward as part of the Great Trek, which is rooted in one of the rich histories of South Africa.³⁸



Figure 19: School C Learner C1, *Untitled*, 2020. Acrylic on Canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

³⁸ The history of the Voortrekker is not as simple as I indicate here, but for the purpose of this study it suffices to know that the Voortrekkers are descendants of the Dutch settler in South Africa.

In the Brainstorm (Topic 1, the sourcebook) section of their visual diary/ sourcebook, the learner describes the final project as related to people she knows who were a part of her childhood in South Africa (See Appendix B, page 180). I found that most of the learners incorporated portraits as the subject matter for this PAT assignment. Like the previous PAT, where the learner utilised portraits to incorporate ‘Expressions’, this time, the learner used a portrait for the theme ‘Out of Africa’. In contrast to the previous PAT, the learner only used one portrait in the final, whereas the prior PAT had multiple portraits.

The learner explained that they would use brown to create tonal variations instead; they chose a soft pastel blue as the background to emphasise the portrait (see Figure 19). Based on the portrait the learner used, it is possible to infer that it is someone close to her, as stated previously. Along with the casting of shadows along the face, which the learner expressed interest in, there is also a focus on imagery symbolising the cultures of South Africa, such as the protea (the protea is the national plant of South Africa). Furthermore, there also appear to be Chinese symbols, a tree branch or rock art. Rock art is the most likely origin of South African art because it is one of the oldest art forms in the world.

Learner C1: PAT 2: Findings

Analysis of Learner C1’s PAT 2 (Appendix A page 84-91) indicates:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
½	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 86% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
2/5	½	0/1
No	Yes	No

3 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 33% of conceptual elements.

The PAT analysis of Learner C1 suggests the painting clearly emphasised formal over conceptual elements. Regarding the formal elements of 6/9, which indicates that the work focus is 66.66% on formal skills. Whereas, the conceptual elements make up 33.33% of PAT completion, while formal skills contribute primarily to the PAT. The learner's intended message may differ from what is conveyed in the conceptual element analysis, which is based on my own interpretation of the work

As a result of the data collection findings and the learner's statement in the PAT, I concluded that the learner paid more attention to the formal elements than the conceptual ones. In the PAT, the learner attempted to paint realistically using the information presented in the Brainstorm, Rationale, and Research sections of the sourcebook (Topic 1, the sourcebook). Topics covered in these sections included ideas about realistic paintings. Furthermore, the learner did not discuss concepts or opinions based on what the learner wanted to accomplish through the PAT, 'Out of Africa'. According to my subjective interpretation, the conceptual messages conveyed by the learner to the viewer may not have been what the learner intended. Although the learner stated that multiple topics would integrate *Voortrekkers* in the Rationale and Brainstorm, when studying the portrait, no reference is made to the concept of *Voortrekkers*. Instead, the final artwork depicts a portrait of a woman without any apparent connections to *Voortrekker* elements or symbols.

The learner's emphasis on formal skills, despite conceptual development, may be the result of the Visual Arts educator for one reason: the learner wants to progress with formal skills, much like the learner wanted to do well on his first PAT by finishing it on time and learning from it. In the Rationale, the learner explained that tone is the element that will be highlighted in the final artwork. The learner demonstrates this in the final, in which the shadows cast by the portrait are accentuated, indicating where the light sources are located. Additionally, the learner intended to paint realistically in the PAT and use the previous PAT to reflect their goals for their first year in the Visual Arts subject. The learner also chose what they wanted to focus on, not what the educator wanted. Because the

educator designed an assignment brief based on the theme 'Out of Africa', the learner was challenged to create an artwork that communicated an idea while being easy to understand. The painting, as explained previously, seems mostly like everyday portraiture without any specific meaning; the only reason for suspecting a message is the Rationale in which the learner explains the painting (Appendix B page 193). Moreover, the learner explained that the painting would feature a shadow of a protea, which is the national flower of South Africa. However, after examining the shadow, I concluded that it was a scar or tree branch, not a protea. This implied that the conceptual elements representing South African cultures did not manifest themselves. Because of this, I concluded this work relies on the Self-Actualization of the learner with little guidance from the educator.

School C, Learner C2: PAT 1

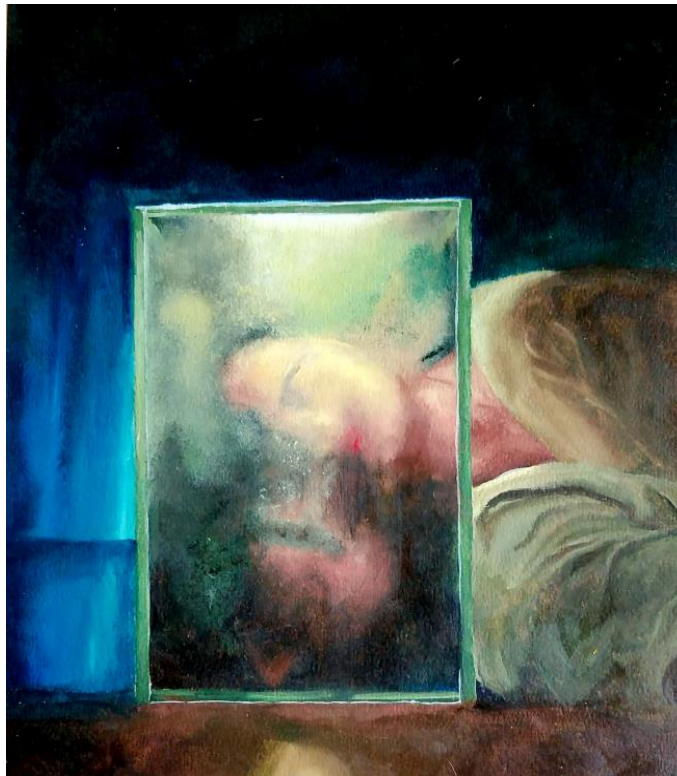


Figure 20: School C, Learner C2, *Untitled*, 2020. Oil on Canvas, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Similar to PAT 1 by Learner C1, this PAT also shows that the educator's assignment brief impacted the drawing of sketches by both learners. In keeping with the theme of 'Expressions', both learners were expected to study and draw illustrations of facial expressions, precisely what they have done thus far (Topic 2, the artwork). The medium

of choice for both learners was painting. Yet, Learner C1 used acrylic, and Learner C2 used oil. However, in both learners' Rationales, the learners wanted to use acrylic, oil, or watercolour paint, suggesting that the educator most probably demonstrated all three mediums in class (or at least exposed them to these mediums through their teaching materials) because both learners repeated these techniques in their portfolios (see Appendix B, page 186). The Visual Arts educator of School C appears to have some influence on the learners since she taught them about the different painting techniques and could have predicted that these learners would draw/paint using these mediums.

The learner nevertheless crafted an exciting composition for the final (see Figure 20). As one would expect from the theme, 'Expressions', usually one would see facial features expressing certain emotions; however, the learner used distorted faces with almost no recognition of what emotions the figures are portraying. In addition to the exciting composition, instead of an upright figure looking directly at the viewer, two figures are lying down on top of one another, in a horizontal landscape, and it appears as if they are looking through a sheet of glass towards the camera. It is apparent from the painting that the learner has put a lot of thought and effort into this art piece.

The learner used sombre colours as if they wanted to use a dark tone. However, the emphasis is placed on the glass in the middle of the scene in a lighter shade to stand out more from the background. Based on the figures' positions on what appears to be a wooden floor, the background suggests the lower part of a bed. In general, what is evident is an intriguing application of the paint with many symbolic elements to convey a message, such as a glass in the centre with distorted facial features reflected in it. This indicates that the work does not only focus on formal and technical skills, but also contains elements of the conceptual.

Learner C2: PAT 1: Findings

The analysis of Learner C2's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 91-97) shows:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities

½	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprised 86% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	1/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprised 67% of conceptual elements.

According to the PAT sourcebook for Learner C2, the painting created for their PAT2 focused more on formal elements than on conceptual ones. Regarding the formal elements of 6/12, the concentration of work is 50%. As the conceptual elements are based on 6/12, the PAT equals 50% of each element.

The findings show evidence that the Visual Arts educator significantly impacted learners. It is evident from the findings that educators can change learners' behaviour in a few ways; (1) the use of the medium has yet to be established. So far, oil, acrylic, and watercolour paint have been repeated in all three PATs of School C discussed so far, suggesting that the educator demonstrated the basics of these mediums in class, influencing the learners' final artwork as to what medium they will use. (2) The assignment brief instructs the learner several times on what to create and what message to convey to the viewer. In PAT 1, the topic was 'Expressions', where the learners were expected to create artworks based on their understanding of the concept. I also found that these learners had one thing in common through all three PATs, which needs to be proven true: their formal techniques. As stated in Learner C1's and Learner C2's Rationales, both were trying to improve their processes by painting "realistically", which means accurately capturing the elements of a scene (see Appendix B). These elements, such as colour, tone, subjects and even space, must be represented on the canvas as a replica of what the artist perceives in front of them, which is difficult and time-consuming. These learners from School C want to create an aesthetic painting with a lot of effort and time placed on

the formal elements. Thus, these learners are not adding conceptual values to their artwork without accurate guidance from the Visual Arts educator. Moreover, it could be argued that Visual Arts educators help learners improve not only formal skills but also their creativity by thinking outside the box. In addition, they can add a message to their artwork. Additionally, the Visual Arts educator teaches them essential artistic skills, in line with what the CAPS (2011: 39-41 & 2020: 32) documents expect to be taught.

Regarding the theme 'Expressions,' Learner C2 created a painting that was not only aesthetic in application but also contained a message about what the learner wanted to express. The learner contemplated what effect colour would have on the overall message and the application of the glass in contrasting colours to emphasise the item's significance. Furthermore, the learner added these highlighted colours to the glass so that the viewer would focus on this subject matter because of the message the learner wants to convey. Additionally, the learner applied aesthetic elements to painting these figures accurately but also in a romantic manner by painting textures to mimic real-world textures and layer the female and male figures on top of each other in an artistic way. The learner was creative in how he thought of every detail that would affect the viewer in understanding the message.

School C, Learner C2: PAT 2



Figure 21: School C Learner C2, *Untitled*, 2020. Mixed Media, 29.7 x 42 cm.

Learner C2, PAT 2 deals with the idea that people tend to wear a mask to hide their true intentions. Using the theme 'Out of Africa', the learner explored and incorporated the cultures of Africa into their work, concentrating on cultures that incorporate masks into their traditions, ceremonies, and rituals. In contrast to the previous work, the learner experimented with mixed media, which resulted in a different medium. In the previous artwork, the participant explicitly stated that they would primarily focus on watercolours, oil paintings, and acrylics. In this artwork, however, the mediums were approached differently, through mixed media, by combining watercolour and pencil.

The learner mentioned that the face in their work, as seen in Figure 22, is repeated throughout the artwork, indicating duality (Topic 2, the artwork). However, the right-side

figure seems slightly different from the other two figures, and the difference in the figures could be intentional in the message the learner wants to convey.

The learner incorporated blue and red hues into the artwork to symbolise their message. Blue is used for the middle portrait figure, whereas red is used for the right and left portrait figures. The learner highlighted a central figure as if they wanted to emphasise it. The figures are stacked on top of each other, creating a crowded composition. The figures appear transparent as the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth can still be seen even when other statistics are placed over them. Yet, all three figures are looking directly at the viewer, even though the figures' postures are positioned differently.

Learner C2: PAT 2: Findings

The analysis of Learner C2's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 97-103) indicates:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
1/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprised 86% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	1/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprised 67% of conceptual elements.

From Learner C2 PAT 2's analysis, it appears that the painting emphasised formal elements more than conceptual ones. Regarding the formal elements of 6/12, the concentration of work is 50%. In this case, the PAT equals 50% of each conceptual element.

Visual Arts educators have a great deal of influence over learners' conceptual themes and the medium the learners will use. School A focused on colour pencils; School B focused on paint, and School C also on colour. Schools B and C did not follow through with their notion of what medium to use as learner B3 from School B, and learner C2 from School C applied mediums that they did not repeatedly use from School B and C. In contrast, School A's learners primarily used colour pencils to draw their artworks. Even if not all learners incorporated similar mediums as others, this still shows the significant influence the educator has on a learner's formal skills. Moreover, it is expected for Visual Arts educators to teach these learners new skills. As a result, the Visual Arts educator can expect that learners will be able to choose from the mediums they have been trained in and practised.

On the other hand, conceptual notions suggest a significant influence on the part of the educator. The educator creates an assignment brief with a theme that these learners should follow and incorporate into their work. Specifically, the learner needs to develop conceptual notions through this work and convey them to the viewer. Schools A, B, and C show that learners followed the theme from the educators' assignment briefs respectively. Learner C2 incorporates a study of a Northern African tribe due to the theme of expecting these learners to create artwork based on elements from Africa. As with the previous PAT 1, the message behind this artwork addresses the idea that people wear masks.

The learner incorporated conceptual skills along with formal skills into the artwork. In addition to incorporating these skills, the work also shows improvement as the learner did numerous studies on the Northern African tribe, Dogon. Furthermore, the learner integrated the research information into the artwork to convey the message the learner wanted to express about duality. A Dogon believes that people tend to house more than one being within themselves. Regarding the learner, he changed the ideas from spiritual to more behavioural, suggesting that people differ depending on their relationship with a specific person. In other words, they tend to wear masks around people to deceive them about who they are or to suit a personality that others will approve of. To illustrate these

ideas, the learner used a repetitive portrait of how the same person can be portrayed with different hairstyles and postures (Topic 1, the sourcebook).

Furthermore, the learner used colours to express the significance of the central figure, which can suggest that this is a unique person and that the other two figures are the personalities this person tends to incorporate. In addition, these colours are the colours of the traditional attire of the Dogon tribe. Overall, the learner conducted extended research to integrate the conceptual ideas into what was part of PAT 2 to meet the criteria established by the educator.

School C, Learner C3: PAT 1



Figure 22: School C Learner C3, *Untitled*, 2020. Oil Paint, 29.7 x 42 cm.

This painting by Learner C3 is an oil painting, like that of Learner C1 and C2, who also painted their PAT 1s in oil. The learner created a close-up view of a female portrait, taking over most of the space (see Figure 22). As stated by the learner in their Rationale (Topic 1, the sourcebook), the female figure is intended to make a funny face (see Appendix B, page 190). This portrait of the undead also appears to be created for several reasons: (1) the skin is grey-ish as if the person has lost their body heat. (2) The finger that the portrait uses to taunt the viewer has lost all skin and muscles; only the skeleton of a finger

remains. (3) The figure has no pupil or iris in the eyes; only the sclera is visible, representing a corpse (Topic 2, the artwork). Moreover, it is challenging to suggest that the portrait is looking at the viewer; however, how the female is positioned and taunting the viewer can imply that the portrait is staring at the viewer.

The brushstrokes are visible within the work, and in some sections, the learner intentionally applied a rougher brushstroke to make the work more visually appealing. In addition to the rough brushstrokes, the learner also applied darker tones to the face and lighter tones around it, accentuating facial features. Moreover, the theme of PAT 1 is 'Expressions'; therefore, the Visual Arts educator would have expected that the learner would want to focus more on facial or emotional expressions than anything else. The assignment brief was mostly an open brief, which means that these learners could have created any artwork based on their own interpretations.

Learner C3: PAT 1: Findings

Learner C3's PAT 1 (Appendix A page 103-110) analysis shows that:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
1/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 86% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
4/5	½	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

6 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 67% of conceptual elements.

In the artwork created by Learner C3, both formal and conceptual elements were prominent. There is a 50% concentration of work in the formal elements of 6/12 and 50% conceptual elements based on 6/12.

I concluded that the learner focused on both formal and conceptual elements, based not only on the findings of the data collected and analysed but also on what the learner stated within the documentation of their PAT. While completing the PAT, the learner attempted to paint realistically based on the information presented in the Brainstorm, Rationale, and Research sections (Topic 1, the sourcebook). These topics explored ideas or research related to naturalistic paintings by artists. In addition, the learner explored different ways of expressing what he thought the term 'expressions' meant to him. By analysing multiple concepts, the learner could improve conceptual thinking and choose which idea will be best suited to conveying the message. In addition, the learner explained in extensive depth what every element in the artwork represented, which meant that I did not have to analyse the work in detail because most of the information associated with the learner's understanding of the term was present in his research.

Furthermore, it can be speculated that the Visual Arts educator considers both formal and conceptual skills when teaching a first-year learner in Visual Arts, specifically a grade 10 learner. (1) The educator teaches the learner basic formal skills, such as painting and drawing, which are presented as activities in class to develop essential skills. According to my observation of Learners C1 and C2, their educational course content influenced their choice of medium. These PATs were composed of three primary mediums: oil paint, acrylic paint, and watercolour paint. Learner C3's PAT 1 uses oil paint again, with the learner displaying expressive brushstrokes. In the first year, the Visual Arts educator will gradually introduce learners to new mediums. (2) In the brief, the educator emphasised the term 'Expressions' to have the learner understand how to create artworks while portraying different facial expressions while conveying a conceptual message. All three of School C's learners' PATs revealed that most of the artworks the learners created were based on the portraiture subject, which can reflect the precise point of the educator's assignment brief.

Although the learner used specific formal elements to create this work, I believe the learner also intended a conceptual message. Through various methods of colour application, such as the primary colours crimson red, cobalt blue and ochre yellow, the learner may have been trying to express a sense of dull yet exciting visual imagery. The learner replaced black with blue to make the artwork more exciting. Combining these primary colours, he also added a greyish colour to the figure's skin. Thus, the learner could convey the artwork's meaning through the use of formal elements. The learner also incorporated several symbolic elements, such as taunting gestures and a skeleton, which is uncommon in the theme 'Expressions'. As one might expect, a portrait positioned in a traditional sense possesses a sense of beauty with a specific posture of staring directly at the viewer. At the same time, this work taunts the viewer instead. Therefore, it can be implied that the learner incorporated these formal elements in a manner to convey a conceptual notion the learner wanted to get to the viewer, based on the theme 'Expressions'.

School C, Learner C3: PAT 2

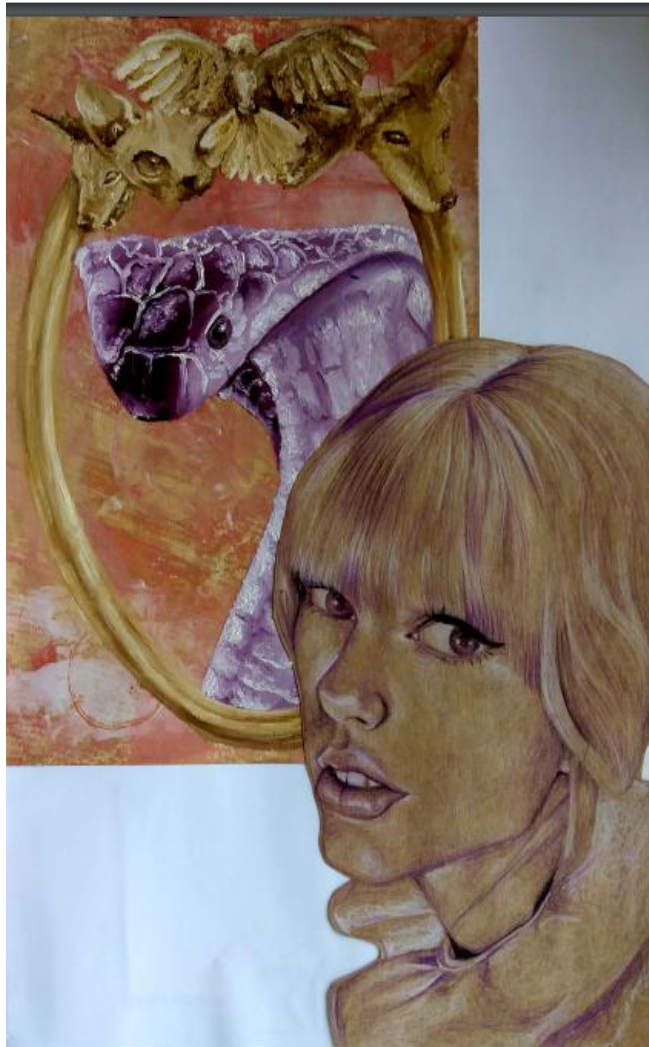


Figure 23: School C Learner C3, *Untitled*, 2020. Oil Paint, 29.7 x 42 cm.

The theme of PAT 2 requires learners to create an artwork which incorporates subjects connected to Africa, such as an African mask, decorative patterns, national animals, etc. Taylor Swift, an American actress who is not associated with Africa, was included in this learner's artwork (see Figure 23). The portrait of Taylor Swift is in front of a mirror that does not reflect an image of Taylor Swift, but a snake. The frame of this mirror depicts carnivores such as a fox, a jackal, and an eagle atop it, suggesting these animals' African origin (Topic 2, the artwork).

In addition, various mediums are used to create the artwork: (1) Taylor Swift's picture is drawn on brown paper with black and white pencils. (2) The snake is painted in black and white oil paint. (3) The mirror frame has gold carnivores, while the background is a burnt orange colour applied with acrylic. According to the learner in their Rationale, it was intentional to apply these different mediums to one artwork, separate each subject from the other, and tell their narrative (Topic 1, the sourcebook).

Combining all these elements into one artwork effectively portray the message the learner wants to convey. Ancient Egyptians admired and emulated animals because of their attractive qualities. Strength, protection, nurturing characteristics, and the ability to ward off predators were among these characteristics. As a result, they depicted their gods and goddesses as animals, with traits that explained their natures. Gold-plated predators/carnivores can be compared to Taylor Swift's behaviour when relying on her as someone that is being worshipped for being a celebrity. A cobra is a symbol of royalty in Egyptian culture and one of the most feared and respected animals, implying Taylor Swift's royal attributes. Thus, the learner conveys the notion that people treat celebrities as royal beings, as if they are worshipping these pop-culture beings.

Learner C3: PAT 2: Findings

The analysis of Learner C3's PAT 2 (Appendix A page 110-117) indicates:

Formal Criteria				
Line, Shape, and form	Colour and Tone	Texture	Space	Craftmanship/Formal Qualities
1/2	2/2	1/1	1/1	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

7 out of 7 criteria for formal. This means the artwork comprises 100% of the formal elements.

Conceptual Criteria		
Content, context and meaning	Wider Contexts	Imaginative Expressions
5/5	2/2	1/1
Yes	Yes	Yes

8 out of 8 criteria for conceptual. This means the artwork comprises 89% of conceptual elements.

The second PAT of Learner C3 presented a combination of formal and conceptual elements. There is a 50% concentration of work in the formal elements of 7/13. Because the conceptual elements are based on 8/13, the PAT almost equals 50% for each component.

I thus conclude that the learner focused on both formal and conceptual elements, based not only on the findings of the data collected but also on what the learner stated within the PAT. While completing the PAT, the learner attempted to paint realistically based on the information presented in the Brainstorm, Rationale, and Research sections (Topic 1, the sourcebook). These topics explored ideas or research related to naturalistic paintings by artists. Further, the learner explored several ways of showing how he believed that people idealised celebrities, who are regarded as royalty. By analysing multiple concepts, the learner could improve conceptual thinking and choose which idea will be best suited to conveying the message. In addition, the learner explained in extensive depth what every element in the artwork represented, which meant that I did not have to analyse the work in detail because most of the information was already presented in the sourcebook. Throughout the PAT, the learner explored one concept, the anthropomorphic attributes of godlike beings. By investigating different ways, the learner depicted the message she is hoping to convey by incorporating these notions within the artwork.

The PAT 2 of Learner C3 revealed the learner's responsibility for completing the PAT and their Self-Actualization in doing research based on what they wanted to communicate to the viewer (Hare 2019: 1). Learner C3 extensively researched the background and beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians and how the learner intends to utilise this information within the artwork. Additionally, Learner C3 incorporated drawing and painting techniques of artists she researched, which reflected the learner's extracurricular activities toward enhancing the learner's formal skills and conceptual understanding. Performing research on ancient civilisations and coming up with more than one idea for portraying the artwork so that the conceptual messages are conveyed to the viewer allows the learner to work on improving

the conceptual elements of the artwork. Therefore, similar approaches to formal skills, like doing additional research and incorporating the artists' styles into the learner's work, signify the learner's responsibility to do research to enhance their skills.

The fact that all the participating educators have adequate means of controlling the learners without being present has been demonstrated numerous times, through multiple PAT analyses, from Schools A, B and C. The learners are expected to follow the brief, especially the theme the assignment brief clarifies, and sometimes even provide examples of other artwork based on similar themes, which can affect the outcome of the learners' artworks. Teaching basic techniques of a specific medium can also change the development of the learners' artworks in addition to the practical lessons taught in class. Choosing the medium is evident throughout the learners' PATs from every school's analysis within the study. The study has revealed that within specific school results, some mediums are repeatedly used by various school learners, reflecting the educator's influence on what medium is covered in class.

4.3 Participant interviews

4.3.1 Formal or Conceptual Skills

Defining the term 'art' has become one of the most complex terminologies to define. The rich history of art and how each country sees art differently, resulted in an ever-changing term called art. The European continent is known as having one of the richest histories in art, but every time period and new art movement, a new term for understanding and defining art developed (Fisher 1993). For John Andrew Fisher (1993: 3), a professor of philosophy, the nature of art is defined by each person viewing an artwork, whether it is an audience, curator, editor, critic, art historian and/or theorist. According to Abijian (2012), a contemporary definition of art is categorised in two parts: formal and conceptual. In chapter 2, the categories of formal and conceptual were explored, analysed and determined in manners to suit this study. Formal was defined by Davis (2020) to possess the terms of 'handiwork', which seems to refer to elements such as good craftsmanship, needs to be original as well as creative. By adding these elements together, one can

create an artwork with the use of formal skills (Davis 2020: 1). Conceptual skills, on the other hand, refer to the basic ideas behind the artwork. In some instances, conceptual art disregards formal elements and good craftsmanship, by creating artwork that is non-traditional and focuses on being avant-garde (MasterClass 2022: 1). With these terms in mind, the following questions were asked to determine whether the Visual Arts educators input was on formal or conceptual skills:

- What skill, conceptual or formal, do you believe, as a Visual Arts educator, is most important for an upcoming artist/ Visual Arts learner?

Teacher A

“To be open to the creative process. To experiment and work outside the box.”

Teacher B

“Formal...mostly. But it is also important to be able to conceptualise.”

Teacher C

“Believe the first step is to develop the learner’s artistic style with regards to basic formal skills. Then slowly improve the creative thinking and thinking outside the box.”

Similar to the answers shown above, all three Visual Arts educators from all three schools revealed similar responses throughout the interviews. Based on the analysis of the PATs and the answers to the question of what educators consider to be more critical in the classroom, formal or conceptual, the answers indicated that educators tend to focus more on formal rather than conceptual learning. Teachers B and C stated that formal skills are the most critical skills as the conceptual can always be developed later on. In addition, Teacher A believes in the experimental process of thinking outside the box, which implies that the learner needs to experiment with mediums and techniques and research other artists and their skills. All Visual Arts learners must complete research in their sourcebooks. based on their PAT projects, to learn new skills and techniques from other artists. Therefore, Teachers A, B and C chose to emphasise formal skills over conceptual skills, as they believed that over time the learners will develop their conceptual processes.

In the end, the focus is more on formal than conceptual skills, which is reflected in the interviews of these educators. The formal aspect is emphasised not only consciously by the educators, but also through the reflection of the PAT assignments of the learners. However, this may be due to how the educators created assignment briefs based on the skills they incorporated into the classroom and their own beliefs. The assignment brief is the closest influence that these educators had during the national lockdown, as seen from the PAT analyses done above. Most PATs reflect on how the assignment brief guided the learners in creating a certain artwork, which houses specific elements, in this case formal elements. The learners rather created aesthetic artworks, however, the conceptual skills are based on the themes that the educators created, hence, the influence the educators have on the learners is emphasised.

In Chapter 1, I discussed that the CAPS (2020) introduced an abridged document version in response to the pandemic and its impact on the educational system. This abridged document reduced the workload for the educators and learners alike, so that many of the curriculum work could be completed within a short and difficult timeframe during lockdown. The lockdown raised various concerns and opinions of hosting an online classroom. During the interview, Teacher A believed that one must be flexible. It depends on the learner, whether they have a better sense of learning than others; therefore, the educator must focus on what is best for the learner and be attentive to the skill with which they are naturally gifted. In addition, during the interview, both Teachers A and B believed that enhancing formal skills will automatically improve conceptual skills, as stated in their responses to question 1 (see Appendix C, page 201).

In summary, educators had similar answers to the interview questions and believed the formal factor is more crucial than conceptual skills development, as formal development can enhance conceptual thinking and skills. All three educators unanimously rated the impact of the pandemic and online learning as unfavourable, since all three educators believe that the subject of Visual Arts requires face-time education. Moreover, not all learners are self-disciplined enough to finish their PATs without the educator's supervision; some might try, while others will take risks. In addition, it resulted in a

decrease in the skills of the learners, thus resulting in a backlog in their knowledge and skills in most subjects at school compared to previous learners.

Furthermore, the conceptual ideas still need development and are not clearly defined, however, this is expected from a Grade 10 learner who is learning about conceptual ideas and expressing oneself. It is easier to learn these formal skills than conceptual skills, as the learners are developing their conceptual processes (Topic 1) and are still processing on how to apply these skills within the artwork (Topic 2). Formal skills can easily be taught to the learners, and they can pick up the skill through practicing on sketches. What also makes the conceptualising process difficult to develop is that it should be based on the learners own personal interests and experiences (CAPS 2011: 16). This means that the educator needs the learner to come up with the creative and innovative manner to express their ideas, but the learner does not always know how to do so. Hence, the DBE/PAT (2020: 7) also expects the educator to facilitate and guide the learner, however, this can result in the educator to enforce his/her own ideals onto the learner. Therefore, it is much more complicated to teach the conceptual aspect than the formal, resulting in the educators focusing more on formal than on conceptual skills development.

4.3.2 The Role of the Educator within an online environment

During the national lockdown, the educators' roles had to change, where at first, they served as a source of e-learning support and a supervisor of the learning process. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the educator changed, since the learners had to rely on online learning. Both educators and learners distanced themselves from a school environment to more of an at home environment. According to Linda Mayasari and Isthifa Kemal (2020: 1554), who interviewed limited Indonesia educators, discovered during the 2020 academic year, that as much as 50% of the educators could effectively complete the syllabus and apply it to the online environment. Even though it is expected that educators must be flexible, and able to evolve and adapt to the changes in education, the findings of Mayasari and Kemal (2020) indicate that the remaining percentage of the educators could not as quickly and effectively adapt to teach within the new environment (Mayasari and Kemal 2020: 1555).

I posed the following question to the educators of the three schools: Did you use any online methods to teach the learners? They responded thusly:

Teacher A

“WhatsApp groups and emails.”

Teacher B

“Google classroom, teams etc.”

Teacher C

“Google Classroom, WhatsApp and emails.”

Through the online environment, the educators had to devise new tactics on how they would deliver information and material. One of the new tactics that the educators devised, was to use WhatsApp groups, however, the challenges remained as educators tried to develop new methods on how the learners could understand the lessons better within the online environment. There were many challenges and limitations to using online media during the pandemic. Even though the information is sent to the recipient, that does not mean that they will read the information, nor to say that they will understand the work, without the educator’s guidance. Based on the study of Mayasari and Kemal (2020: 1555), a total of 100% of these educators replied that they had to implement a method or a strategy of learning in an online environment to make sure the learners received quality education and understand the work that was handed out. The role of the educator as a demonstrator here, is that the educator still uses strategies or methods to deliver online learning even during the COVID-19 outbreak. Learning media is a tool for educators in applying learning. With the media, it makes it easier for educators to deliver material to learners so that it is easier to understand the material (Mayasari and Kemal 2020: 1555). This finding can be linked back to chapter 2, where Burton (2001: 131) noted that Visual Arts educators use visual sources, such as YouTube videos, virtual tours or imagery of artists’ artworks as extra informational resources outside the classroom that help as a tool for the learners to use for studying.

Mayasari and Kemal (2020: 1556) researched the role of educators in the online learning environment and revealed several indicators that affect the role of the educator, namely that they serve as a learning resource, demonstrator, motivator, manager, and evaluator. Their study does not only reveal and develop these indicators, but also the implementation of them. This implementation is as follows: (1) the role of the educator within the online environment is to provide numerous learning resources, namely appropriate books, governmental programmes and videos, linking to the subject being taught; (2) as a demonstrator, the educator helps the learners in the process of understanding, through materials the educators created and facilitated including videos or PowerPoint media to help guide the learners within the learning process; (3) as a motivator, the educator motivates the learners to study and prepare their work, even though the learning is done online. The motivation can vary, some motivation can come in the form of rewards, some educators can speak directly with the learners providing positive feedback, and others go directly to the parents with praises. This links back to the section in chapter 2 that focuses on Jean Piaget (1974) who believed that the learners need to facilitate their own learning, however, that with guidance and motivation from the educator they can produce good results in the end, where the learners complete their PATs; (4) as a manager, the educator ensures that the learners perform as required, providing quality education by ensuring that the learners' skills and understanding are developed efficiently; and, (5) as an evaluator, the educator has the role of providing an evaluation on the understanding and knowledge of the learning material of the learners (Mayasari and Kemal 2020: 1556).

Furthermore, reflecting on the findings obtained from these PAT analyses, I discovered that, even though the educator's role has changed from a traditional classroom perspective to a more online approach, that does not change the impact that the educator has on these learners and their refined PATs (Mayasari and Kemal 2020: 1556). What is evident is that even though the educators are not physically with the learners, the mode of teaching and influence is still strong even with the physical distance between them (Hare 2019: 1). What was concluded from the findings of the analyses of the PATs is that the assignment briefs and the themes written on it, has a major impact on the learner's resulting PAT.

An assignment brief explains the task that the learners are required to do for the assessment and how the educator would like the learners to do it. Hence, attaching the theme and criteria influences the learner in creating work with criteria in mind that will allow them to obtain adequate marks. For example, when the assignment brief reflects a theme on Vincent van Gogh's emotions, then it is expected that the learner will be creating an artwork containing a similar Post-Impressionist style, similar to that of Van Gogh's. The same is true, for example when using a theme of Ancient Symbols, which expects the learner to do similar work to that of Ancient Egyptians. Therefore, the educators still have a role to play in the online environment and can still impact the learners through the assignment brief and the specific requirement layout within the brief. In addition, the educators can share extra information via videos or blogs, which explain certain artistic skills on how to paint or draw that can develop the formal skills of the learner, clearly influencing the methods and styles the learners then consequently use.

Furthermore, the *Visual Art Guidelines For Practical Assessment Tasks* (2020: 7) states that the role of the educator is to facilitate and guide the process of conceptualisation in the sourcebook. The Visual Arts educators are expected to guide the creative process from start to finish; try to guide learners to come up with their own solutions, rather than imposing the educator's ideas on them. It is the duty of the educator to help the learner to find his/her own creative voice; thus, leading them to individual and innovative approaches/solutions. It is, therefore, apparent that the educator has the role to create aesthetic quality artwork with a conceptual process. However, most sourcebooks and artwork focus on formal aspects.

4.3.3 Visual Arts within an online environment

The COVID-19 pandemic had a high and mostly negative impact on the educational system, especially within the higher educational institutes, for example high schools. It posed mental and emotional risks to the educators and the learners alike within these educational institutes. According to Cakin and Akyavuz (2021), in their study, *Educational Adventure of Students in the COVID-19 Period in Turkey: Determination of Parents' Views*, which was published in the International Journal on Social and Education Sciences (IJonSES), educational workers are among the groups of high-risk social

workers who were infected by the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, they concluded that a mental health as well as educational crisis developed in Turkey, which has a very high impact on their academic, economic, and social groups (Cakin and Akyavuz 2021). Although this study focused specifically on Turkey, the COVID-19 pandemic was a global outbreak, which means that many countries suffered from similar crises as Turkey (UNESCO-IESALC 2020).

Based on the above finding that COVID-19 had a negative impact on the educational institutes, which impacted mental and emotional risk for both learners and educators alike, I have asked educators the following question based on their opinion on the pandemic as well as the impact the pandemic had on the learners, educational institute and their subject Visual Arts:

- Does online learning have a positive or negative impact on the learners and you, as an educator? Substantiate your answer.
 - If online learning has a negative impact, list examples

Teacher A

“Learners don't have money for data. There is also the concern if [sic] learners have access to internet.”

Teacher B

“Online does not work for practical subjects. You need physical contact.”

Teacher C

“Money, not everyone has access to internet, it is expensive.”

The challenges and disturbances experienced by the educational institutes due to the ongoing pandemic cannot be denied. Temporary, but uncertain, suspension of face-to-face learning in higher educational institutes internationally has caused millions of learners, both in basic and higher education systems, to experience “displacement” or “disconnection” from formal learning (Devkota 2021: 145). Educators from all three schools in this study listed similar negative impacts that online learning had on Visual

Arts, which reflects similar notions described by Cakin and Akyavuz (2021). The educators listed poor economic status as an ongoing challenge, indicating that some learners do not have the money to access the internet, due to them not being economically strong. Teacher B even listed that online learning does not work well with the practical subjects, which is fundamental to Visual Arts. Educators need to be part of the learner's hands on learning, so that the educator can see what the learner is creating within their sourcebooks and final artworks.

Distance learning is seen as any process of learning, including for example computer technology, audio, and video, to achieve the outcome of learning, while maintaining physical distance from learners (Fallatah 2020: 30). Within this study, distance learning is referred to as online learning. Mostly, within online learning, approximately 80% of the course content is given online using computers and internet (Allen & Seaman 2011: 46). As stated in Chapter 2, online learning includes a variety of learning platforms such as e-learning, online learning, blended learning, as well as virtual- and computer learning (Khatsrinova, Veronika, Barabanova, Shagieva & Khatsrinova 2021: 455). These online learning platforms cover a wide range of applications and processes such as "distance learning, computer-assisted learning, web-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration" (Kashive, Powale and Kashive 2020: 2). Referring to the educator's opinion on online learning and its impact on the educational institutes and learners:

- b. If online learning has a positive impact, list examples

Teacher A

"Can see a lot more relevant art and ideas if you have internet access."

Teacher B

"Online learning has too much of a negative impact; the only positive side were [sic] that the learners were more creative in the process."

Teacher C

"Creativity blossomed and the learners could get ideas from the internet"

When asking the participating Visual Arts educators to list the positive impact of online learning, most replies reflected that the learners' creative process improved (see Appendix C, page 204). Teachers A and B both reflected on the negative impact of online learning, stating that the negative impact outweighs the positive impact. However, online learning can be seen as a new development in both basic and higher education, growing with virtual schools and universities (Alter 2015: 48). While this development does break away from the constraints of time and place, there are still some issues that arise between the real world and the virtual technology. Both basic (high school) and higher (universities) Visual Arts educators face substantial challenges in the new teaching and learning environment, because removing the traditional face-to-face learning makes it difficult for these educators to maintain the learning environment for the Visual Arts learners (Alter 2015: 48). Most learners do not follow the criteria created for them to use as a reference to create their sourcebooks, or the learners do not have self-discipline to complete their work. It is, nonetheless, difficult to control the lack of discipline in an online environment. As stated in Chapter 1, educators still need to guide and provide effective support to learners in order for them to complete their work to the extent of their abilities (OECD 2020: 7-8). Hence, my interview question engaged the Visual Arts educators to get their opinion on the standards of online learning and traditional learning:

- Do you believe that online learning has greater value than that of traditional learning? Why? / Why not?

Teacher A

“No. Not if a community can't afford internet/data while food is a necessity. If in a richer community, it will have great value.”

Teacher B

“No. One on one is crucial when teaching art and design.”

Teacher C

“No. The teacher needs to be present in guiding the learners and teaching them new techniques and skills. It is crucial for practical resources that the educator is present.”

The three educators interviewed share the same mindset, namely that traditional, face-to-face teaching is vital when teaching Visual Arts. The concern is that not all learners can afford data to receive online learning, and some do not have access to the internet whatsoever. Another concern is that, when teaching Visual Arts, practical, tangible teaching and experiences are vital to the development of the learners' artistic skills.

- What is the biggest factor for online learning?

Teacher A

“The availability of data.”

Teacher B

“You should have dedicated learners.”

Teacher C

“Learners’ should be able to work from home without any pressure from the teacher in class.”

There is still potential for the use of these online learning methods. The educators should just incorporate the methods effectively. Teacher A replied in the interview that the available data is the biggest factor for online learning. This is necessary for the information to be acquired and used for research purposes for these practical PATs, which is essential for the learners to do their own research in these PATs to discover artists and their styles that they can incorporate within their artwork. This, in the end, can improve and develop the learners' artistic skills. However, according to both Teacher B and C, these learners need to be dedicated Self-Actualised learners. This means that the learners must do their own work without much supervision from the educators so that they can be responsible enough to complete the PAT following the requirements from the educators' briefs.

To conclude this section: for these Visual Arts educators, there is a great benefit of working within a learning environment that relies on the digital media, because of the expansion of visual resources and virtual realities that have been developed in the recent years. The internet and digital resources deliver a vast variety of free videos, artistic information, gallery tours without being physically there, education material such as pre-

recorded art seminars and demos, visual library and much more (Alter 2015: 52). As Selinger (Ash 2004: 94) states, the Internet is by far the world's biggest library, however, it is also a mess of information, like that of the library's books laying on the floor. However, it is the educator's responsibility to get those "books laying on the floor" sorted out and to provide the right "book" for the right occasion (Alter 2015: 52).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the final discussion of findings and synthesis of the study, where I reflect on the main research question set in Chapter 1. The research question that this study aimed to answer is:

How do Grade 10 Visual Arts educators in public schools implement or approach the teaching of formal skills as opposed to conceptual development within an online environment?

Formal and conceptual skills are the fundamentals taught in the subject Visual Arts. During the study, I revealed that in most cases, the educator chose to emphasise formal over conceptual skills in their lessons. This was evident especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as stated before, when the national lockdown resulted in an online environment where teaching and learning took place via online classes. Formal elements reflect the 'handiwork' of the artist, the talent and skills which went into the creation of the artwork, which ultimately resulted in the work being seen as aesthetically pleasing by the viewer (Hare 2019: 1). However, even though conceptual skills were generally lacking in the artworks (Topic 2) that I have analysed, it does not mean that it was disregarded. Conceptual skills within this study were discussed as the notion or message behind the work, better yet, what the artist tried to convey through their artwork. In the end, both formal (use of art elements and design principles) and conceptual (message behind the artwork) skills were implemented in the creation of the artworks, however, focus was mostly on the aesthetic qualities (how the artwork presents itself as visually pleasing) than the message conveyed to the viewer. The lack of the application of the conceptual skills

could be the result of the learners being new to the subject Visual Art, and are still learning how to create conceptual pieces with deeper notions embedded within it.

This study addressed the impact COVID-19 had on these formal and conceptual skills taught in Visual Arts. I collected data from three Departmental schools that follow the DBE CAPS curriculum in their teaching methods. I considered the notions of Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (1943), which emphasises that people need to have a goal to achieve fulfilment or to grow, and this can be obtained through Self-Actualization. During the pandemic, it was revealed that self-discipline (Self-Actualization) is important for the learner to complete their work, in addition to developing their artistic skills, whether formal or conceptual.

I interviewed three Visual Arts educators to gauge their opinions and experiences on the online environment and analysed, critically, how it impacted how they taught artistic skills – formal and conceptual - during the pandemic. Furthermore, nine Grade 10 Visual Arts learners' PATs, three from each departmental school, were analysed to establish which skills were mostly developed and consequently used during the pandemic, where the learners had to embrace and demonstrate Self-Actualization to complete the assignment that they have received.

5.2 Summary of Chapters

5.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and overview

Chapter 1 introduced the CAPS (2011) curriculum used in the South African departmental schools as a guideline for each educator in terms of what is expected of them to teach each subject. For, the subject Visual Arts it is a guideline for the educators to follow, namely dividing the curriculum into three topics, Topic 1, conceptualising the process, Topic 2 the making of artwork and Topic 3 Visual Cultures Studies (CAPS 2011: 9). The weighting in terms of time that should be spent on these topics are divided into a 30% theory (Topic 3) and 70% practical aspects (Topic 1 and 2), which emphasises the importance of the teaching and learning of the practical components, as it is very time consuming (see figure 1, page 3). However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, which

resulted in the South African national lockdown and lessons were conducted online, the CAPS (2020) abridged version was developed to reduce the work done compared to the workload prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, with the introduction of the CAPS (2020) abridged version revealed the impact the pandemic had, namely that learners were falling behind with their syllabus, therefore, an abridged version was created to lessen the workload for these learners not receiving quality traditional teaching and learning experiences.

Furthermore, the change in the requirements in what needs to be completed by the Visual Arts learners, has consequently minimised from requirement of completing an A2 (42 x 59.4 cm) size artwork to minimum requirement of an A3 (29.7 x 42 cm) size artwork. The reasons for this were to make work less for the learners during such difficult times and to help them not fall behind with their work. The analyses of the PATs created during this time, however, show that minimising the work did not necessarily have a positive outcome, as the quality of the work and the development of the respective artistic skills have not necessarily improved.

In addition, Chapter 1 was used to clarify my stance that the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document uses a constructivist approach, introduced by Jean Piaget (1974), John Dewey (1938), and Lev Vygotsky (1978). Each of these theorists introduced different constructivist concepts and beliefs on how different teaching and learning methods implemented in the classroom can affect the cognitive abilities of the learners. The constructivist theory is ideal for developing the learners' creative processes, specifically in creating an artwork that is creative and innovate, which follows the theme that was provided through the assignment brief. Over time the learner will consider the style, technique and conceptual idea in creating an artwork that is deemed worthy by the educator that is regulated by the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document. Hence, through the constructive framework the learner then obtains the basic understanding of art, which they can implement within their artwork. The constructive theory is rooted in the belief that knowledge is developed based on the existing personal experience; therefore, the learner will create an artwork that contains personal beliefs or messages. However, for this to occur, the educator must create the formal assessment brief in such a manner that

the theme suites the learners understanding of historical, social or economic issues, which they can express through their sourcebook (Topic 1) and final artwork (Topic 2). The learner is ultimately responsible for facilitating their own learning and doing their own research about the message they want to convey based on their own experiences and understanding.

In addition, my study considered a humanistic approach, focusing on the theories introduced by Abraham Maslow (1943) and Carl Rogers (1959). Rogers (1959) introduced the notion of Experimental learning, where he emphasised human motivations; namely, that people need a goal to work towards. Maslow (1943) presented the term Self-Actualization, indicating that humans need the fulfilment of their goals to further their growth and development. Thus, during the pandemic, it was expected of the learners to have self-discipline; to complete and facilitate their assignments to the best of their abilities and hand it in on time, with limited supervision from the educators. Although the transcendence forms a constructivist approach towards a humanistic approach, my study suggests that the learner will build a better understanding of art, and this will help develop both their formal and conceptual skills.

5.2.2 Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 2 considered whether the Visual Arts educators had any impact on the decision that the learners made with regard to which artistic skills they would use and develop. During a meeting I attended as a first-year Visual Arts educator, the facilitator showed multiple learners' artworks and continued asking the educators to rate the artwork on how it looked. Not once did the facilitator ask a question in terms of the message that the artworks tried to convey, which led me to question whether educators favour certain skills over others. I surmised that the educators would focus more on the formal than on the conceptual skills development in their classes.

Chapter 2 explored the two terms, formal and conceptual, to create a better understanding of what each term meant and why certain skills were chosen in favour of another. In this study, formal skills were defined as the 'handiwork' behind the artwork, creating an art piece through the implementation of good craftsmanship which resulted in

the work being aesthetically pleasing for a viewer (Hare 2019: 1). Conceptual skills, however, is more difficult to define, but was best suited for the study to be defined as the idea or concepts that inspired the work. Using symbolic imagery, such as universal objects or certain colours to express a certain message, making it easier for the viewer to understand what the artist/learner tried to convey through their artwork. This can result in a disregard for the use of formal elements or design principles.

During the analysis of the CAPS (2011 & 2020) documents in Chapter 2, I revealed that the document encourages the educators to teach using a constructivist approach. According to Jean Piaget (1974), a Swiss psychologist, a constructivist approach is encouraged, which means that the learner needs to become their own facilitator towards learning, building on their own experiences and backgrounds. I argued that it is better to teach in such a manner, for it brings more freedom towards the learners' choice of learning. Also, during the pandemic, positive results can be gained from learners overseeing their own learning, with minimal guidance from the educator, even if it is only online. Furthermore, I discussed the American psychologist, Abraham Maslow's (1943) introduction of the Humanistic approach, a theory that determines that humans or, in this case, the learner, needs to develop self-discipline and complete their studies with limited guidelines from the educator. Carl Rogers (1959), an American psychologist, agreed with Maslow's statement and believed that the learners must work towards a certain goal to further grow and develop.

Chapter 2 also considered John Dewey's seminal text *Art as Experience* (1934), to understand the purpose of art education, focusing on which skills, values and knowledge learners are supposed to learn in this school subject. Dewey (1934) argued that the value and nature of art should focus on the aesthetic experience rather than the message behind the work. Furthermore, aesthetic work is much easier to understand than explaining the complexity behind the artwork. Thus, art education, according to Dewey, centres more on the formal skills than the conceptual skills.

After understanding art education, I then explored the online environment, specifically technology and how this impacts the way the educator had to teach and whether the national lockdown changed the focus of artistic skills taught online. Sayef Bakari (2017)

revealed certain implications for the use of technology within and outside the classroom. According to Bakari (2017), South Africa is economically and financially unstable, which means that not every household can afford technology such as WIFI, laptops or phones. This means that during the South African national lockdown, when most schools began to teach online via online platforms, many learners were unable to access this online teaching environment. This resulted in difficulties in teaching every individual learner properly. Nevertheless, according to Douglas Boughton (2004) and Mary Stokrocki (2007), both researchers in the field of electronic platforms, these online environments can be a benchmark to aid in the development of learners. Using an efficient assessment tool as a progress report for providing information on the learner's development. However, to achieve this outcome, South Africa needs to become economical stable for each learner to obtain equal, effective teaching online.

5.2.3 Chapter 3: Methodology

Three types of data sets were collected in this study: 1) Interviews with selected Visual Arts educators were conducted to determine whether educators prefer formal or conceptual skills development when teaching online; 2) To determine which skills Grade 10 learners prefer during online learning, two of each learner's PATs were analysed; 3) The South African CAPS policy document was examined to understand the documents' regulations on creating an assignment brief and what to expect from the creation of Topic 1: the conceptualising process and Topic 2: making of the artwork.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the interpretivist paradigm and how I used it to interpret and understand the Visual Arts methods of teaching. I Informal semi-structured interviews were used to establish a trustworthy and 'low pressure' interaction with the Visual Arts participants. Interviews with Visual Arts educators were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire, and data was collected from Visual Arts learners by analysing and interpreting their artworks. The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify and describe human actions and human experiences. As a result, understanding the way Visual Arts educators teach and what artistic skill, formal or conceptual, they deem worthy because of the curriculum or the impact of COVID-19 on the curriculum is imperative, as the curriculum is a guideline for the educators in knowing what is expected from them.

Chapter 3 thus explored art-based methods in analysing the artworks (PATs) of the Grade 10 Visual Arts learners. Art-based research is primarily used to understand the work and experiences behind the artwork. I introduced a table with various criteria, which I created according to the standards of the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document guidelines, whereby iconographical and iconological approaches to identify the formal- and conceptual skills used within the work was developed. These formal skills were specified as formal art elements, design principles and good craftsmanship embedded in the external aspects of the artwork. In addition, the conceptual skills were determined by the content, context and meaning behind the artwork, using certain designated themes or symbols to tell a story. The criteria helped to determine the change and progress of the Visual Arts learners during the pandemic and, furthermore, determined the skills used during the pandemic.

5.2.4 Chapter 4: Presentation and discussion of findings

In Chapter 4, two sets of data were analysed and findings discussed: 1. The analysis of the artworks and 2. The interviews with the educators. Throughout this chapter, the findings were discussed, considering the criterion introduced in Chapter 3, for the purpose of analysing and determining the skills used by the 12 Grade 10 Visual Arts learners. Most of the findings revealed similar/repetitive outcomes, for instance, at the beginning of the study, I argued that educators had a limited impact on the learner's development during the national lockdown, however, contrary to my initial beliefs, the educators still had means of communicating with learners and most importantly, have an influence on the outcome of their PATs. During the analysis of the PATs, certain symbols were repetitive such as artistic styles (Impasto technique of Vincent van Gogh from School B) or imagery such as light bulbs in each learner's work (from School A). This thus indicated that the educators had an influence on the learners, through methods such as assignment briefs. These briefs indicated exactly what was expected from the learners, so that they create artworks that the educators wanted to see in the learners' work.

Furthermore, in Chapter 4, I discussed the findings obtained from the interviews conducted with Visual Arts educators, to showcase their opinions and experiences during the South African national lockdown. Many of these educators revealed that they had negative experiences regarding the online teaching environment, even arguing that the

lockdown resulted in a backlog in the development of the learners' artistic skills. Even with the introduction of Self-Actualization (Maslow 1943), as discussed in Chapter 1, most of these educators who participated in the study felt that their learners did not care about values of self-discipline, which lead to incomplete and/or rushed artworks.

My findings further revealed that the Visual Arts educators favoured formal over conceptual skills, similar to how John Dewey (1938) suggested that the nature and value of art should consider aesthetic attributes above all else. In addition, it is easier to teach formal skills, as substantiated by very similar answers given by the three Visual Arts educators during the semi-structured interviews (see page 63).

5.3 Summary of key findings

The study's findings reveal that Visual Arts educators at departmental schools ranked formal skills higher than conceptual skills in an analysis of selected learners' PATs. During the interviews, these educators answered unanimously that it is easier to teach formal skills to novice artists than to teach them how to think conceptually. This reflected that educators chose to focus on formal skills development in an online environment – perhaps not because they deem them more important, but rather because they were easier to teach a so-called 'formula' than teaching learners to think critically and creatively. All schools showed different ways of developing the learners' skills but had similar outcomes in the Visual Arts subjects. This study found that educators influence the essential skills development of the learners, even without them being in the presence of the learners. This was visible in the assignment briefs and requirements that the educators had created. These briefs explain the theme of what the work should be based on and what the educator expects from the learners. This depends on the educator's personal preferences, skills, and expertise.

The final conclusions thus show that:

- Educators influence the learners, even if they were not with them during the pandemic. I revealed that the educator influences these learners through the

assignment brief and accompanying rubrics, which showcase themes, instructions, guidelines, and criteria dedicated to creating these PATs.

- Learners absorb and develop formal skills easier than conceptual skills, as they are new to understanding the subject of Visual Arts, which resulted in most educators focusing on formal skills. One could justify this choice since the learners need to know and understand the basics of artmaking (i.e., the formal art elements and design principles) before they can diverge into alternative modes of artmaking.
- The online environment had a negative impact on the Visual Arts learners, as they had to have self-discipline (Self-Actualization) to complete the PATs on their own. However, the analysis revealed that the majority of learners did not complete their PATs and that the overall standard of the work has decreased from previous years.
- Even though the CAPS (2011: 39) and the abridged documents (2020: 32 -33) state an equal focus should be placed on the conceptualising process and making of the artwork, the focus across all the participating educators in my study was on formal skills applied to the final artwork (Topic 2), rather on the conceptualising process (Topic 1) to do research and develop the message/idea behind the artwork. Note that conceptual skills were not disregarded; instead, the learners did not know how to incorporate a concept in their artwork, showing that the skill to apply concepts in their work was lacking.

Each selected school, using the CAPS (2011 & 2020) document as a guideline, and integrating it within the way they teach was evident in the participants PATs sourcebooks during the analysis of the PATs of the selected participating schools. It was apparent that prior to COVID-19, when educators taught in a traditional classroom setting, the educators focused more on the formal skill over the conceptual skill and this focus on artistic skills were still evident during national lockdown and after the introduction of the abridged version of the CAPS document, which reduced the curriculum workload, by moving Topic 2, making of the artwork, to count for marks in the final phase in term 4, the Retrospective Exhibition. The educators focused more on formal skills than conceptual skills, for it is a skill the learners can easily acquire during the national lockdown, with

limited guidelines from the educator. Most learners were able to obtain new skills from online channels, such as YouTube, to search for online videos on how to draw or paint and practice on their own, without much guidance from an educator or parent. In addition, the Visual Arts educators could create their own videos for the learners to use to develop their skills.

Furthermore, it became apparent that the online platform, even though it has some positive impacts according to the participants, was revealed to have a negative impact on the learners' growth and to have resulted in a backlog of the learners' work done before the lockdown was implemented. This was revealed during the interviews with all three educators when asked:

“Do you believe that online learning has greater value than that of traditional learning? Why/Why not?”

All three answers were unanimously “no”, as all three educators believed that it is crucial for the educator to be present when teaching art. In addition, Teacher A also stated during the interview that the learners need self-discipline to complete the assignments, and it was revealed that these learners did not have the necessary discipline to work entirely on their own, which resulted in incomplete work.

All the schools' participants indicated in the interviews that hands-on learning is best for a practical subject such as Visual Arts, for they can physically show, help, and guide the learner on improvements within their sourcebooks (Topic 1). This can be proven by analysing it through two methods; (1) By comparing previous years' work with the current year, however, it is difficult to suggest as the grade 10s are new to the subject of Visual Arts. Therefore, it can only be proven when they are in grade 11, which means previous works cannot be compared to the current year. (2) The compulsory exhibition, called the Retrospective Exhibition, during which all grades must exhibit their PAT 1 and PAT 2, as well as any additional work done during the one year. In addition, each PAT can be compared with each other to reveal any development. Furthermore, further analysis can be done upon the return to the schools, after COVID-19, analysing pre-COVID against post-COVID works, comparing the online environment with the traditional classroom environment, to showcase the development between these two stages. Furthermore, the

decrease in the learners' growth revealed that some learners did not follow a Self-Actualised approach in completing their sourcebooks upon return to the schools, after the pandemic. Instead, they did the bare minimum that was asked without applying much effort to their artwork.

In conclusion, the online platform, can be used as a tool in improving the subject's knowledge and skills, through videos, virtual tours, research, even communicating with the learners on a regular basis, however, this online platform cannot take over the job of the educator, especially when the subject requires a hands-on approach. Take note this study has no solution or suggested change to how an educator needs to teach, instead, the study explored the impact the online environment had on the artistic skills of the Visual Arts learners during the national lockdown.

5.4 Significance of the study

It is significant that this research was done now, as the learners whose works were considered all experienced the COVID-19 pandemic first-hand, as did the educators. This study cannot be done in one or two years, because then the data will no longer be authentic (since COVID-19 is now 'over') and the shift to integrating online learning would have by then been better integrated. Furthermore, I could not have done it earlier, as online learning was not such a vital component of teaching and learning, since COVID-19 did not exist prior to 2019.

5.5 Limitations

I became well aware of the limitations of this study after reviewing the literature, conducting the research process, and collecting empirical data. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a rapid change in education, leaning toward e-learning, but I came to realise that implementing a new teaching method within the classroom must be integrated systematically. Due to the restrictions and time constraints surrounding the pandemic and lockdown regulations, not all schools were in a position to implement this new online learning method. Restrictions such as South Africa's economic status, meant that not every household had the electronics, capacity, or money for online teaching. Furthermore,

my study showed that in the South African context, not all learners may benefit from an online environment, as learners had to value self-discipline in completing the assignment on what was asked of them. The government should gradually incorporate this teaching method into the classroom to ensure equal opportunities and rights for learning. This may be achieved if all households have basic electronics and access to the internet allowing them to utilise online meetings during such times as the national lockdown, although this is based on the notion of a utopian world.

In the 21st century, educators can assess learners' understanding in numerous ways. Educators found new ways to teach and assess learners due to the national lockdown in South Africa. This study considered the impact that the online environment had on the learners' artistic potential by enabling them to learn more effectively or not at all. Nonetheless, this presents particular challenges: e-learning relies heavily on the internet, and in developing countries like South Africa, not every child has an internet connection or a computer. In the findings established in Chapter 4, I acknowledged that the online environment and associated technology influence the teaching and learning of formal and conceptual skills. While new ways of learning within education are possible with technology, there are limitations to teaching through an online environment. The educator should note that self-discipline and Self-Actualization are necessary for this self-learning method to be successful.

Furthermore, a limited number of participants were used in the study compared to the masses of governmental schools in South Africa, which means that the small, limited samples that were gathered for data are very small compared to a country. This means that the findings revealed in the previous chapter can change when analysing a bigger number of participants. My recommendation is to use a semi-structured interview in a form of Google Forms, which is easier to record and does not take much time for the participants to complete, to send out to more governmental schools, not only situated in Gauteng. The reason for this is that the criteria that were created can take a long time when analysing just one artwork. This was revealed during the analyses of the participants' interviews from School A, B and C, that all three had similar answers, which

can reveal the experience was the same or similar. In other words, this can reflect a similar outcome when interviewing a bigger number of participants across South Africa.

5.6 Recommendations / Suggestions for further research

There is a difference between public and private/independent schools and what they have to offer, especially in the subject Visual Arts. Firstly, most private education institutes in South Africa follow an IEB curriculum, which requires different teaching methods from that of the government's DBE CAPS curriculum. Secondly, the private institutes are more financially stable than many economically struggling governmental schools, which means that they are technologically well equipped, differing from that of the public schools. With this in mind, further studies can be done in researching the different foci each curriculum requires from the Visual Arts educator. I suggest a comparative study between the two curriculums and the outcomes, by perhaps looking at the final artworks created by each respectively.

Further studies could also be done on the impact and influence the online-, blended- and hybrid learning has on the Visual Arts subject and how it can be used as a tool to improve the subject Visual Arts. After the pandemic, most schools have opted to continue using an online platform to communicate or add additional resources for the learners to use for means of research or just for extra information. Further research could show how blended learning can be used within the subject of Visual Arts and how it can improve the subject, especially in terms of the development of formal and conceptual skills.

5.7 Conclusion

Educators with similar answers during their interviews believed the formal factor in creating and analysing artworks is more crucial than the development of conceptual skills. In addition, all participating educators unanimously rated the impact of the pandemic and online learning as unfavourable. They believe that the Visual Arts subject requires face-to-face education. Moreover, not all learners are self-disciplined enough to finish their PATs without the educator's continuous supervision. In contrast, some learners might try to follow the instructions, while others were so-called "chancers" and did the bare

minimum of what was expected. These attitudes resulted in a decrease in the development of skills (both conceptually and formally) of the learners. In addition, these attitudes resulted in a backlog in their knowledge and skills in most subjects at school compared to the academic achievements of previous learners.

Furthermore, the educators participating in my study have expressed that they focus more on formal skills than conceptual skills. This also became apparent in the PAT artworks that I analysed. My findings show that the conceptual ideas still need development and are not clearly understood and implemented by the learners; however, this is a clear expectation (in the CAPS documents) from a Grade 10 learner who is learning about conceptual ideas and how to express oneself. Nonetheless, it is easier to understand and apply formal skills than conceptual skills, as the learners are developing their conceptual processes and are still processing how to apply these skills within their artworks. Formal skills can easily be taught to the learner, who can pick up the skill through practising sketches. What also makes conceptual skills more difficult to develop is that they should be based on the learners' interests and experiences. The DBE PAT guideline (2020: 7) expect educators to facilitate and guide the learners; however, more often than not, the educators' preferences, styles and ideals are forced onto the learners. Ideally, the educator needs the learner to develop a creative and innovative way to express their ideas. Still, the learner does not always know how to do so, and with the absence of educators in the physical space to guide them, this skill has been underdeveloped. Therefore, the conceptual aspect is significantly more complicated to teach and learn than the formal one, leaving educators to focus more on the formal aspects and creating aesthetically pleasing artworks rather than on developing conceptual skills in an online environment.

My study thus concludes that Grade 10 Visual Arts educators focus more on implementing formal skills over conceptual skills in the online environment, due to it being easier to teach. Tutorial videos can be uploaded for the learners to see how to do certain techniques, whereas conceptual ideas develop over time and through experience (also with guidance from the Visual Arts educator). What is concluded from the findings in this dissertation is that it is still difficult for Grade 10 Visual Arts learners, who take the subject

for the first time, conceptually the learners are new, and still struggle with symbolic values and deeper contextual meaning and how to apply it within their art. As for formal skills, learners learn from a young age to draw, where evidence of the basic elements already presents itself, whether it is line, colour or form. Therefore, the study shows that the focus of formal skills is more emphasised than the development of conceptual skills.

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