

*International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*  
Vol. 23, No. 8, pp. 489-512, August 2024  
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.8.25>  
Received May 22, 2024; Revised Aug 8, 2024; Accepted Aug 30, 2024

# Transformative Impact: Dramatic Arts for Grade 12 Academic Excellence

Limkani Sincuba,\*  Sakyiwaa Boateng   
Walter Sisulu University  
Mthatha, South Africa

**Abstract.** The study investigated the influence of dramatic arts on academic performance among Grade 12 students. The study was framed within the social constructivism theory, which posits that learning is an active, social process where students construct knowledge through interaction with their environment and peers. The study employed an interpretivist qualitative research methods to explore the transformative potential of dramatic arts, emphasising the impact on critical thinking, problem-solving, and proficient communication. Data from 117 students in Grade 12 who were part of a purposive sample were gathered using open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The data was analysed through thematic analysis. The findings highlighted the positive impact of dramatic arts integration on academic performance, student engagement, empathy development, and communication skills. Participants reported enhanced critical thinking skills, deeper subject understanding, and a more meaningful relationship with academic subjects. The study also offered recommendations for educational institutions, including developing comprehensive programs incorporating dramatic arts, continual professional development for teachers, building robust assessment and evaluation systems, and collaboration with local theatre organisations and cultural institutions to enhance students' understanding of dramatic arts.

**Keywords:** academic excellence; dramatic arts; impact; transformative; potential

## 1. Introduction

Dramatic arts integration into the Grade 12 curriculum may be a game-changing approach to promoting academic excellence through cutting-edge academic excellence. The multidisciplinary method may give students a dynamic platform for learning and inquiry by fusing traditional academic disciplines with dramatic excellence, which refers to a high level of skill and proficiency in dramatic arts (Nordgaard et al., 2023). Teachers may stimulate their students' deeper

---

\* Corresponding author: *Limkani Sincuba*, [lsincuba@wsu.ac.za](mailto:lsincuba@wsu.ac.za)

critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and creative problem-solving by including dramatic arts, improving academic achievement and fostering holistic development (Chen & Dong, 2023). By showcasing the various ways theatrical techniques could improve learning experiences, introducing dramatic arts may set the stage for investigating the transformative influence of dramatic arts on academic attainment in Grade 12.

Dramatic arts, including improvisation, role-playing, and theatre, provide a unique setting where students may safely and creatively explore complex concepts, ideas, and feelings (Kellner, 2020). Students acquire empathy and perspective-taking abilities by taking on the roles of characters and stories, which could help them understand a range of opinions and societal challenges (Catterall et al., 2018). Moreover, the cooperative essence of dramatic arts might foster leadership, teamwork, and communication skills, which are necessary for success in the professional and academic domains (David Carlson & Dobson, 2020; Fancourt et al., 2014).

Furthermore, experiential learning in which students actively engage in their educational journey may be promoted by the immersive aspect of dramatic arts (Chen et al., 2021). Students comprehend academic subjects more profoundly and assimilate knowledge through kinesthetic and sensory experiences by depicting historical events, literary works, or modern scenarios (McWilliam et al., 2018). The practical method could develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities—all crucial for negotiating the complexity of today's environment (Schwandt, 2015).

In addition, the therapeutic advantages of dramatic arts may strengthen students' mental well-being, which lowers stress and anxiety levels frequently linked to academic pressure (Huotilainen et al., 2018). Students acquire resilience and coping skills through self-expression and catharsis, improving their mental health and academic performance (Justin, 2020). Nonetheless, the transformative impact of dramatic arts on Grade 12 academic excellence extends beyond conventional pedagogical approaches. Dramatic arts catalyse holistic student development and academic success by fostering empathy, collaboration, experiential learning, and emotional well-being (David Carlson & Dobson, 2020).

Despite the acknowledged benefits of integrating dramatic arts into education, there may be a notable gap in empirical research examining its transformative impact on academic excellence in Grade 12. While existing studies highlight the potential of dramatic arts to enhance critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and holistic development, there may be limited evidence directly linking these benefits to measurable academic outcomes (Braund & Athiemoolam, 2021). Therefore, further research may be needed to explore how dramatic arts could be strategically implemented to optimise academic achievement in Grade 12, particularly in diverse educational settings where conventional approaches may fall short. Hence, this study seeks to fill the gap in the literature by exploring how participation in dramatic arts enhances students' academic performance and fosters critical thinking, creativity, and social collaboration.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does integrating dramatic arts in the Grade 12 curriculum affect students' academic performance?
2. What are the psychological and socio-emotional effects of participating in dramatic arts activities on Grade 12 students?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Impact of Dramatic Arts on Academic Performance**

According to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa (2011), Dramatic Arts is the study of the representation of human experience in dramatic form for an audience (Nordgaard et al., 2023). This study integrates practical experiences and competencies with studying dramatic practices, processes and products (Mangwegape, 2022). It aims to promote and develop creativity as a rich, diverse and productive resource through dramatic communication, interaction and representation (Braund & Athiemoolam, 2021). Learners explore how dramatic elements are selected and combined for particular purposes within diverse contexts, focusing on the role of the dramatic arts in South Africa (Mokoena, 2019).

Dramatic Art integrated education refers to the process of education that involves the use of arts both as a means and as a subject of study (Agarwal et al., 2023). Art integration in education refers to teaching different topics by including diverse forms of artistic expression. According to the Art Integrated Learning Guidelines (2019) by NCERT, Dramatic Arts is a method of experiential learning that offers a fair environment for all students to learn at their speed and allows them to develop their understanding with the assistance of art-integrated activities (Braund & Athiemoolam, 2021).

According to Agarwal et al. (2023), drama is a captivating educational technique that enables students to actively engage, closely observe, and organically enhance their creative and natural abilities. Moreover, it improves students' creativity, cognitive skills, lexicon, articulation, and self-assurance (Deaux & Snyder, 2018). It facilitates the growth of three cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor domains. Incorporating dramatic arts into the curriculum can significantly enhance students' educational experiences and overall development (Guo, 2024). Research suggests that arts integration should be meaningful and connected to the academic curriculum, with equal emphasis on both content areas and artistic lessons (Davis et al., 2017). By genuinely connecting arts activities to educational content, students can grasp big ideas and make valuable connections across disciplines, fostering a holistic understanding of the material (Mangwegape, 2022).

Recently, dramatic arts may have had an increased transformative impact on Grade 12 academic excellence. Research has demonstrated the several advantages of including dramatic arts in the curriculum (Mokoena, 2019). For example, Todhunter-Reid (2019) conducted longitudinal research that showed a good association between academic accomplishment and arts engagement, theatrical

arts, among at-risk students. This suggests that integrating dramatic arts in Grade 12 education could have mitigated academic challenges and enhanced overall performance (Nordgaard et al., 2023).

Moreover, Kellner (2020) highlighted the transformational potential of the arts, media, and culture, emphasising how dramatic arts may foster creativity and critical thinking. Research on the neurology of music, a related art form, and its implications for improving cognitive function and controlling emotions have been conducted by Huotilainen et al. (2018). Furthermore, a study conducted by Cohen et al. (2007) shed light on the psychological processes that underlie self-affirmation therapies, which have been demonstrated to improve cognitive flexibility and lessen ideological narrow-mindedness. These findings imply that dramatic arts participation enhances mental flexibility and critical thinking abilities, which are necessary for success in the classroom (Cohen et al., 2007). Agwu and Nmadu (2023) looked into how cooperative learning affected academic performance and self-regulated learning, and they found that academic self-concept and collaborative involvement were positively correlated. These results imply that including collaborative activities in Grade 12 education in Asia may help students' academic performance and self-perception since dramatic arts frequently require group projects.

Catterall et al. (2018) study investigated the relationship between at-risk youth's involvement in the arts and their academic success. While not exclusive to the dramatic arts, these results imply that incorporating the arts—including the dramatic arts—into the Grade 12 curriculum may benefit African students' academic performance (Braund & Athiemoolam, 2021). Despite being centred on music, the results suggest that participating in artistic endeavours, such as dramatic arts, may enhance mental and affective growth, boosting academic excellence in Grade 12 in African contexts (Braund & Athiemoolam, 2021). Also, Kellner (2020) has highlighted the ability of art, media, and culture to alter, emphasising how artistic participation can foster creativity and critical thinking. These observations highlight the potential of dramatic arts to support students' overall development and academic performance in Grade 12 in the African environment, even if they are not unique to the continent (Deaux & Snyder, 2018).

## **2.2 Psychological and Socio-Emotional Development through Dramatic Arts Integration**

The integration of dramatic arts into the curriculum has been associated with numerous psychological benefits for students, particularly in developing empathy, emotional intelligence, and personal growth (Mokoena, 2019). Research has highlighted the positive correlation between emotional intelligence and student well-being (Wen et al., 2020). Studies have shown that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing students' self-efficacy, resilience, and mental health, all of which are essential components of personal development (Wang, 2024). As teachers incorporate dramatic art into the curriculum, they provide students with tools to navigate their emotions effectively and cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and others (Nordgaard et al., 2023).

Emotional intelligence has been linked to effective stress-coping strategies among students in various disciplines, highlighting its importance in managing academic challenges and promoting mental well-being (Nogaj, 2020). As teachers foster emotional intelligence through dramatic arts activities, students can develop adaptive coping mechanisms and enhance their emotional regulation skills (Braund & Athiemoolam, 2021). Arts education initiatives, including dramatic arts, have been recognised for their potential to promote emotional well-being and enhance students' emotional intelligence (Guo, 2024). By integrating emotional intelligence with self-efficacy, arts education can positively impact students' confidence, creativity, and overall emotional well-being (Guo, 2024; Nordgaard et al., 2023). Studies have indicated that emotional intelligence is positively related to academic performance, suggesting that cultivating emotional intelligence through arts education can improve learning outcomes (Maher, 2021). The transformative power of arts engagement in fortifying students' mental health and enhancing their academic performance draw attention to the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence development in educational practices (Wang, 2023).

### **2.3 Engagement and Motivation in Learning through Dramatic Arts Integration**

To explore how dramatic arts encourage active participation and sustained engagement in learning, it is essential to consider the psychological aspects of student motivation, enjoyment of learning, and reducing academic anxiety through drama-based activities (Mokoena, 2019). Research has indicated that student buy-in and enjoyment of the active learning process are positively associated with engagement in active learning and increased learning gains (Shaw & Bernard, 2023). This suggests that when students value and enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to actively participate and remain engaged in their educational experiences (Nordgaard et al., 2023). Arts-based learning, including creative writing, theatre, and movement sessions, has fostered camaraderie among students and provided opportunities to learn new skills, enhancing their engagement and enjoyment of the learning process (de la Croix et al., 2011). By incorporating dramatic arts into the curriculum, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning (Nordgaard et al., 2023). This active participation in drama-based activities enhances students' creativity and critical thinking and contributes to their overall engagement and motivation in the educational setting (Bettman, 2020). The integration of arts education, mainly through dramatic arts, has been recognised for promoting student engagement and reducing academic anxiety (Guo, 2024). Providing students with opportunities to express themselves creatively and engage in experiential learning can help alleviate stress and anxiety related to academic performance (Markgraaff, 2021).

Studies have shown that arts integration in education can enhance students' emotional well-being and contribute to a positive learning environment that fosters active participation and sustained engagement (Guo, 2024; Thomson et al., 2019). Arts-rich schools that encourage independence, intellectual challenge, and risk-taking have been found to engage students in active exploration and enhance their learning experiences (Thomson et al., 2019). This approach promotes active

participation and cultivates a deeper appreciation for the arts and their educational role (Markgraaff, 2021). Drama-based activities in the curriculum can also provide students with opportunities for self-expression, collaboration, and problem-solving, essential components of active learning and sustained engagement (McCarthy, 2015). This implies that as students engage in these interactive activities, they can explore complex issues, develop critical thinking skills, and actively participate in learning (Markgraaff, 2021). This hands-on approach to education enhances students' understanding of academic concepts and promotes a sense of ownership and empowerment in their learning journey (Nordgaard et al., 2023).

While the literature highlights the various benefits of dramatic arts in education, there may be a significant gap in understanding the transformative impact of dramatic arts for Grade 12 for academic excellence. Most studies focus on general outcomes like emotional intelligence, creativity, and social skills, but few directly link these benefits to academic performance at a critical stage (Nordgaard et al., 2023). Consequently, further research may be necessary to investigate the transformative impact of dramatic arts on Grade 12 for academic excellence.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The Social Constructivism Theory underpins the study (Raza, 2023). Social constructivism Theory emphasises the collaborative nature of learning, where knowledge is actively constructed through interactions with others and the environment (Saleem et al., 2021). One of the fundamental tenets of social constructivism is its focus on the learner as an active participant in the learning process, highlighting the importance of collaboration and social interaction (Al-Qaysi et al., 2019). The theory views knowledge as being co-constructed through interactions, nurturing a deeper understanding of concepts through dialogue and shared experiences (Rothschild-Yakar et al., 2019). Moreover, social constructivism aligns with the idea that learning is a social process, emphasising the community's and cultural context's role in shaping individuals' understanding of the world (Detel, 2015). This perspective is precious in promoting learners-centred learning environments where learners take ownership of their education and actively participate in constructing knowledge (Zhou et al., 2020). By integrating dramatic arts into the curriculum, students could engage in hands-on, experiential learning that encourages them to actively create knowledge rather than passively receive information (Davis et al., 2017).

Active involvement in learning may improve academic performance, as students might be more likely to retain information when actively engaged in the learning process (Tian et al., 2021). Furthermore, integrating dramatic arts could enhance students' critical thinking skills and literacy by promoting constructivist reform and infusing technology into the curriculum (Thomas et al., 2012). Through arts integration, students are encouraged to think creatively, analyse information from multiple perspectives, and make connections between different subject areas, leading to a deeper understanding of the material being taught (Jordan & O'Donoghue, 2018). This interdisciplinary approach to learning improves students' academic performance and promotes their overall engagement in the

learning process (Kneen et al., 2020). Moreover, arts integration may help address the problem of devaluing the arts in the classroom by emphasising the importance of the arts in education and curriculum development (LaJevic, 2013). By incorporating arts activities that genuinely connect to the academic curriculum and ensuring that content from both areas is given equal importance, students might be more likely to see the relevance of the arts in their overall education (Matuk et al., 2023). It could lead to increased learner engagement and motivation to learn, ultimately contributing to developing students' critical thinking abilities and sense of social responsibility (Petrusly et al., 2024). This approach aligns with the social constructivist theory, which emphasises the importance of social interactions in the learning process and the construction of knowledge through shared experiences (Blagoeva et al., 2018), which enhance learners' learning experiences and contribute to their academic excellence.

## **4. Methods**

### **4.1 Research Approach**

This study employed an interpretive qualitative case study methodology to investigate the transformative impact of dramatic arts in Grade 12 for academic excellence. The methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of students' experiences, perceptions, and behaviours within the educational context, providing rich and detailed insights into the influence of incorporating dramatic arts. By employing qualitative research, we probed into how students interact with the curriculum, how their academic performance was influenced, and how their engagement levels were affected by including dramatic arts activities (Fitriana & Fatimah, 2023).

A case study approach (Yin, 2018) was followed. This approach enabled us to capture the intricacies of students' experiences and behaviours, shedding light on the challenges and benefits of incorporating dramatic arts activities and uncovering how these activities influence academic performance and engagement. A single case study was chosen, which enabled us to contextualise the findings within the specific school setting, considering the unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities in that environment (Li et al., 2021). Contextual understanding was crucial for interpreting the results accurately and making relevant and applicable recommendations for the school under study. By focusing on a single school, we comprehensively understood the dynamics at play and the implications of incorporating dramatic arts for student retention and academic performance.

### **4.2 Population and Sample Criteria**

The target population was high schools in the Mthatha Education District. The study employed Purposive and convenience sampling to select one school within the district. 117 Grade 12 students from four classes were sampled for the study. Participants were chosen based on their involvement in dramatic arts from Grade 10 to Grade 12, ensuring they had significant exposure to the subject. Of 270 Grade 12 students at the school, those who met the criteria were selected for their relevant experience. This method allowed the researchers to focus on

individuals most likely to provide rich, pertinent data aligned with the study's objectives (Salmia et al., 2023).

### **4.3. Data Collection Processes**

The researchers employed open-ended questions, interviews and observations to collect data for this study. These methods were chosen to capture the nuanced experiences and perceptions of the 117 participants, comprising Grade 12 students from one school. The goal is to understand the impact of dramatic arts on student academic achievement, engagement, and motivation.

The open-ended questions were designed to elicit in-depth responses from the participants regarding their experiences with dramatic arts integration in their curriculum (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021). These questions were administered in written form to all the participants during the period for dramatic arts, allowing students to express their thoughts freely without the constraints of pre-determined response options (Wiehe Lopes, 2021). The questions focused on how participation in dramatic arts influenced the students' understanding of academic content, their engagement with school activities, and their overall motivation to learn. For example, questions such as, "Describe a moment during a drama activity that helped you understand a difficult concept?" and "How has participating in drama influenced your interest in other subjects?" were used. This approach allows for a broad range of responses, capturing the diversity of experiences among the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The participants took 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selected subset of students, providing an opportunity to explore individual experiences in greater depth (Ruslin et al., 2022). These interviews included open-ended prompts that encouraged participants to discuss specific instances where dramatic arts had a notable impact on their academic performance and engagement (Wiehe Lopes, 2021). The interview questions were designed to be flexible, allowing the interviewer to probe further into interesting or unexpected responses (Ruslin et al., 2022). The semi-structured nature of the interviews facilitated a rich, dialogical exploration of the topic, allowing for the emergence of new insights and themes (Edwards & Holland, 2020; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Out of the total sample of 117 participants in the field of dramatic arts, a purposive selection process was employed to identify 15 participants for in-depth interviews, ensuring rich, relevant, and diverse data. The first author interviewed 15 students. The interviews were conducted during the last period the following day after completing the questionnaire.

The classroom observations were conducted to gather real-time data on how dramatic arts are integrated into the curriculum and how students interact during these activities. The observations focused on the process and outcomes of drama-based lessons, including student participation, engagement, and collaboration. We observed several drama classes, paying attention to students' verbal and non-verbal behaviours, the dynamics of group activities, and the overall classroom environment. The observations provided contextual data that complemented the



self-reported data from the open-ended questions and interviews, offering a comprehensive understanding of the impact of dramatic arts on students' academic and motivational outcomes (Angrosino, 2007). The first author conducted the observations for the whole term.

#### **4.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the data collection process, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, ensuring confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences (Xu et al., 2020). The data were collected and analysed in a manner that respects the participants' perspectives and experiences, ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings (Mertens, 2023). Participants' names were not included in the data interpretations to ensure anonymity.

#### **4.5 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research includes the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study's findings (Enworo, 2023; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Establishing trustworthiness is essential to demonstrate that the research faithfully portrays the participants' experiences and offers significant and dependable insights (Amin et al., 2020).

##### *4.5.1 Credibility*

Credibility ensures that the findings accurately and authentically represent the participants' viewpoints (Johnsen, 2020; Shenton, 2004). This study used triangulation to boost credibility by utilising several data-gathering methods, including open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and observations, ensuring that the research captures the nuances and complexities of the topic (Radić & Hren, 2022). By employing multiple data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, the study can triangulate the data and enhance the credibility of the findings.

##### *4.5.2 Transferability*

Transferability pertains to the degree to which the conclusions can be extrapolated to different circumstances or settings (Guba, 1981; Riazi et al., 2023). This study offers comprehensive explanations of the research context, participants, and methodology, enabling others to evaluate the relevance of the findings to comparable educational environments. Despite being limited to a single school and 117 participants, the detailed accounts of the participants' experiences in dramatic arts provide valuable insights that can apply to other schools sharing comparable characteristics.

##### *4.5.3 Dependability*

Dependability refers to the degree of consistency and replicability of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Riazi et al., 2023). To guarantee reliability, the study concept, data collection methods, and analytical procedures are accurately recorded, enabling the possibility of conducting an audit trail (Amin et al., 2020). This level of transparency allows other researchers to duplicate the study or comprehend the methodology used to obtain the results (Riazi et al., 2023). In addition, the researchers engaged in peer debriefing with colleagues who

critically evaluated the research process, which aids in detecting any biases and verifying that the findings align with the collected data (Amin et al., 2020).

#### *4.5.4 Confirmability*

Confirmability guarantees that the participants' answers influence the results rather than the researcher's prejudice or assumptions (Guba, 1981; Riazi et al., 2023). Confirmability in this study is ensured by practising reflexivity, which involves the researchers critically examining their impact on the research process and maintaining an impartial position while collecting and analysing data. An audit trail documents all research decisions, enhancing confirmability by substantiating that the findings are based on the collected data (Amin et al., 2020).

#### **4.6. Data Analysis**

This study used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2022) to analyse the data. The first step in the thematic analysis involved familiarising with the data. We read and re-read the transcripts of interviews, responses to open-ended questions, and observation notes to immerse in the content individually (Nordgaard et al., 2023). We made initial notes to capture any early impressions or significant details that stood out (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Byrne, 2022). This familiarisation helped us understand the data's depth and breadth, allowing more detailed analysis.

We then systematically coded our data together, identifying meaningful segments of data related to the research questions and labelling them with concise phrases or words. We then examined the codes to identify patterns and relationships among them, leading to the development of themes. Themes are broader patterns that capture something important about the data about the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nordgaard et al., 2023). This stage involved organising the codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within these themes (Byrne, 2022). We then reviewed our potential themes to ensure they accurately represented the data (Nordgaard et al., 2023). This involved two levels of review. First, each theme's data extracts were checked to see if they formed a coherent pattern. Second, the themes of the entire dataset were reviewed to confirm that they reflected the meanings evident in the data, as Byrne (2022) and Braun and Clarke (2006) advised. Some themes were refined, combined, or discarded during this process if they needed more supporting data (Nordgaard et al., 2023).

After the themes were reviewed, each theme was defined and named. Finally, the themes were woven into a narrative that formed the basis of the findings. This narrative was supported by selected data extracts that illustrated each theme, providing a compelling account of the data concerning the impact of dramatic arts on student academic achievement, engagement, and motivation.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1 Biographic profile of participants**

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the participants for the study.

**Table 1: Demographic profile of participants**

Criteria	High school learners	Frequency
Gender	Males	62
	Females	55
Average age	17	16
	18	91
	19 and above	10
Grade	12	117
Pseudonyms for interview participants	HSSA, HSSB, HSSC, HSSD, HSSE, HSSF, HSSG, HSSH, HSSI, HSSJ, HSSK, HSSL, HSSM, HSSN, HSSO.	15

The sample size comprised 117 Grade 12 students, with an average age of 18 years, revealing a diverse age range within the sample, with some students aged 17 while others were 19 years and above. Among the participants, 62 were male, and 55 were female, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution within the sample. In addition, 15 students were selected for interviews, providing a more in-depth qualitative insight into the impact of dramatic arts on academic performance among Grade 12 students. Selecting a subset of students for interviews provides a more personalised insight into the experiences and outcomes of integrating dramatic arts into the educational framework for Grade 12 students.

## 5.2 Data Presentation

Based on the gathered data, Table 2 shows the generated research themes and sub-themes used to present and discuss the study results.

**Table 2: Generated research themes and sub-themes**

Research question	Generated theme	Generated sub-themes
1. How does integrating dramatic arts in the Grade 12 curriculum affect students' academic performance?	Theme 1: The impact of dramatic arts integration on academic performance and student engagement in Grade 12 education.	Sub-theme 1.1: Integration of dramatic arts and enhancement of student understanding and retention of academic content due to dramatic arts
		Sub-theme 1.2: Increased academic engagement and motivation of students due to dramatic arts engagement.
2. What are the psychological and socio-emotional effects of participating in dramatic arts activities on Grade 12 students?	Theme 2: Psychological and socio-emotional Effects of dramatic arts participation on Grade 12 students' academic excellence	Sub-theme 2.1: Developments of empathy and emotional intelligence.
		Sub-theme 2.2: Improved communication skills and self-confidence.

### 5.2.1 Theme 1: *The impact of dramatic arts integration on academic performance*

The integration of dramatic arts in the Grade 12 curriculum has been proven to significantly improve students' comprehension and retention of academic material. With its active and interactive approach, this theme delves into how drama-based learning aids students in internalising and establishing connections with intricate concepts across many subjects. Two sub-themes emerged from the data. These are: (1) *the enhancement of student understanding and retention of academic content* and (2) *increased academic engagement and motivation*.

#### ***Sub-theme 1.1: Enhancement of student understanding and retention of academic content***

This sub-theme explores how participation in dramatic arts activities helps students better understand and retain academic material. It encompasses how drama-based methods, such as role-playing and creative storytelling, facilitate a deeper grasp of complex concepts and improve memory recall of subject matter. When the participants were asked about the impact of dramatic arts integration on their academic performance, most indicated that drama activities have helped them connect with historical events or scientific principles more vividly, leading to improved performance in related subjects. Participants reported that enacting scientific processes has made these concepts more memorable and engaging. One participant narrated:

*"Integrating dramatic arts into Grade 12 education held promise for enhancing my academic performance and learning engagement. When dramatic arts were used in the lessons, I was able to learn very well, and that has helped develop my critical thinking skills, deepen my understanding of the subjects, and strengthen my time with my studies."*  
(Participant HSSJ): interview excerpt)

This finding implies that the student enjoyed dramatic arts, and the subject seemed promising in addition to academic excellence. When participants were asked about the enhancement of student engagement and retention of dramatic arts, they reported that integrating dramatic arts into the curriculum has increased their engagement in the teaching-learning processes and helped them retain the information they learn in other subjects. One participant has this to say:

*"Involvement in dramatic arts positively impacted my academic performance. This has helped me maintain positive retention of most other subjects, which I initially thought were complicated."* (Participant HSSD: interview excerpt)

The finding may imply that involvement in dramatic arts may enhance cognitive functions such as memory retention and problem-solving, potentially leading to improved performance in other academic subjects. It suggests a positive correlation between creative engagement and overall academic success, indicating that arts-based learning might contribute to interdisciplinary benefits. One student concurred with participant HSSD when answering the open-ended questions by indicating that:

*“Dramatic arts have helped me to be able to focus on my studies as a Grade 12 student. Those activities I engaged in have helped me focus more on another subject. This has motivated me to learn and pass my controlled tests. Above all, I see life as better now than before.”* (Participant HSSA: open-ended question excerpt)

The finding highlights the transformative role of arts in enhancing students’ focus and motivation. The participant’s engagement in artistic activities has positively influenced their academic performance and overall outlook on life. It underscores the potential of arts education to foster holistic development in students.

*“In my Life Sciences class, we engaged in a dramatic activity where we were required to perform the process of photosynthesis. I recall embodying the role of ‘sunlight’ and illuminating the ‘chlorophyll’ that my classmate was portraying. Although it may seem unimportant, I have just understood the procedure with such clarity. When I contemplate photosynthesis, a vivid image immediately comes to mind, and everything becomes clear and understandable. I achieved an excellent grade on the most recent controlled test due to my ability to articulate each step without any uncertainty.”* (Participant HSSM: open-ended question excerpt)

This finding was also evident in the responses to the open-ended questions. The finding implies that experiential and embodied learning, such as dramatic activities, can significantly enhance comprehension and retention of complex scientific concepts. By physically enacting processes like photosynthesis, students form vivid mental images that aid long-term understanding, improving academic performance and increasing confidence in articulating subject material.

### ***Sub-theme 1.2: Increased academic engagement and motivation***

This sub-theme addresses how integrating dramatic arts into the curriculum boosts students’ engagement and motivation in their academic work. It highlights the role of drama in making learning more dynamic and enjoyable, thereby increasing students’ willingness to participate actively in their education. Findings indicated that the participants felt more excited about attending school and participating in academic activities because of the creative elements introduced through drama. They shared experiences of increased interest in their studies and a greater enthusiasm for classroom discussions and projects. This finding was also observed during the classroom observations. Two participants narrated during the interviews:

*“In the past, I intensely disliked attending English FAL (First Additional Language) class due to its monotonous nature. However, my mindset changed once my teacher incorporated dramatic elements into English literature. As a result, I now eagerly anticipate each English lesson. Our dramatic adaptation of one of the novels we studied gave me a fresh perspective on the characters. I became immersed in the book to the extent that I even read ahead, a behaviour I had never exhibited. I experience a keen sense of connection with the subjects’ matter, which is reflected in my academic performance.”* (Participant HSSB: interview excerpt)

This finding implies that integrating dramatic elements into traditional subjects, like English FAL, could transform student engagement and motivation. Drama fosters a deeper connection to the material and enhances comprehension and enthusiasm, leading to improved academic performance and a positive shift in learning behaviour. One student has this to say:

*"The inclusion of drama in my school curriculum has enhanced my level of interest. Previously, I would become disconnected during lessons, but my attention and participation have improved since we started including interactive dramatic activities. I desire to engage in the activity and am actively focusing on it to make meaningful contributions to the collective. Learning has ceased to be a tedious task; instead, it has become something that excites me. My teachers have also observed the improvement, particularly in my increased enthusiasm when approaching my assignments. This has also positively impacted my academic engagement, which has resulted in my ability to maintain a positive retention of information in other challenging subjects."* (Participant HSSA: interview excerpt)

This finding implies that incorporating drama into the curriculum enhances student engagement and fosters a more active, participatory learning environment. It highlights the transformative effect of interactive activities on attention, enthusiasm, and motivation, leading to improved academic performance and retention in challenging subjects. This suggests drama fosters holistic cognitive and emotional development.

#### *5.2.2 Theme 2: Psychological and socio-emotional effects of dramatic arts participation on Grade 12 students' academic excellence*

The integration of dramatic arts in the Grade 12 curriculum has a crucial impact on influencing students' psychological and socio-emotional well-being. Two sub-themes emerged from this theme: (1) *development of empathy and emotional intelligence* and (2) *improved communication skills and self-confidence*.

##### ***Sub-theme 2.1: Development of empathy and emotional intelligence***

This sub-theme focuses on how involvement in dramatic arts promotes empathy and emotional intelligence among students. It captures how drama activities encourage students to understand and express different perspectives and emotions, enhancing their interpersonal skills and emotional awareness. When students were asked to describe how playing diverse characters has helped them relate better to others' feelings and situations, both in and out of the classroom, most responded that these activities had increased their ability to manage their emotions and respond empathetically to their classmates.

When participants were asked about the impact on the empathy of student engagement and retention of dramatic arts, they reported that dramatic art activities had enhanced their engagement and retention of the subject matter. One participant shared her sentiments:

*"During one of our dramatic art activities, we were required to spontaneously create scenes in which we engaged in conflict with another individual. Initially, it posed a challenge, but with continued practice, I*

*gradually managed to cope. Engaging in this activity has enhanced my ability to be patient and effectively control my emotions in my everyday life. I have developed the ability to manage stressful situations, become calm, and adjust to other students' emotions."* (Participant HSSC: interview excerpt)

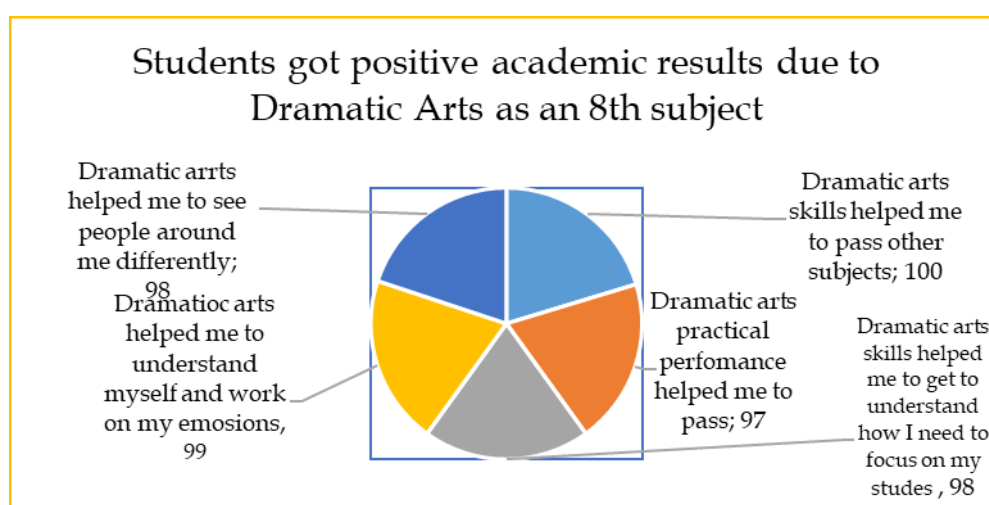
This finding implies that dramatic arts activities, such as spontaneous conflict creation, significantly contribute to emotional regulation and empathy. The participant's experience highlights how drama fosters patience and composure, improving their ability to handle stress and relate to others, suggesting that such activities promote valuable interpersonal and emotional skills. One participant narrated:

*"My involvement in local community events like church activities, for example, made me realise that my communication skills developed as I would express myself better than before."* (Participant HSSH: interview excerpt)

This finding implies that participation in local community events has a practical impact on enhancing communication skills. The participant's improved ability to express themselves more effectively suggests that real-world experiences can significantly contribute to developing interpersonal and expressive competencies. One participant has this to say:

*"Dramatic arts helped me to build resilience and helped me to top some of the academic performances which had similar skills taught in dramatic arts."* (Participant HSSL: interview excerpt)

This finding implies that dramatic arts foster resilience and directly enhance academic performance. The skills learned through drama, such as perseverance and adaptability, appear to transfer to academic contexts, contributing to improved performance in subjects requiring similar competencies. This highlights the broader impact of drama on educational success.



**Figure 1: Positive impact of dramatic arts advocacy for Grade 12 results**

Figure 1 shows that 100 % of the participants reported that dramatic arts helped them to pass other subjects. 97 % reported that dramatic arts practical performance enabled them to pass the subject. 99 % of dramatic arts helped them understand how they need to focus on their studies. 99 % of the participants reported that dramatic arts enabled them to understand themselves and to work on their emotions. 98 % reported that dramatic arts helped them to see people around them differently.

***Sub-theme 2.2: Improved communication skills and self-confidence***

This sub-theme examines how dramatic arts contribute to developing the communication skills and self-confidence of students who engage in it. It reflects how performing in front of an audience and engaging in group drama exercises improve students' ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and assertively. During the classroom observation, it was seen that most learners could openly express newfound confidence in public speaking and participating in discussions and debates. While the first author observed an English language oral presentation session, one student had exceptional talent and stood out. This student remained largely silent throughout my observations. The first author later learned from the teacher that the student exhibited extreme shyness and remained quiet since the beginning of the school year. However, the teacher was taken aback when the student willingly offered to be the first to present, which he did well.

It was also found from the data from the interview and the open-ended questions that participants report enhanced ability to collaborate with others and convey their ideas more effectively, which positively impacts their overall social interactions and academic presentations. One participant shared his sentiments:

*"Before I learnt dramatic arts, I harboured an intense fear of public speaking in the presence of my classmates. However, since participating in numerous dramatic activities since Grade 12, I have observed a significant transformation in my life. I exhibit far higher levels of self-confidence while engaging in verbal communication. I have overcome my fear of making mistakes as I have acquired the ability to think quickly and articulate my thoughts well."* (Participant HSSM: interview excerpts)

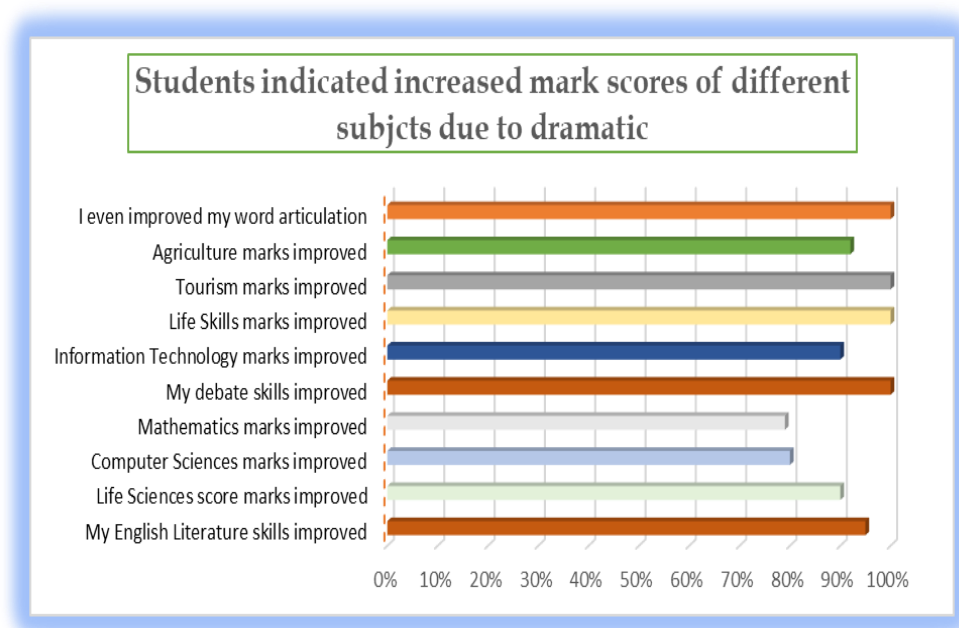
This finding suggests that engaging in dramatic arts can significantly improve self-confidence and public speaking skills. The participant's experience demonstrates how consistent involvement in drama activities can reduce the fear of mistakes and enhance verbal communication, leading to greater confidence and effective articulation in academic and social settings. One participant has this to say:

*"Ah! Through my engagement with dramatic arts, I have acquired the ability to communicate with others effectively. Previously, I showed shyness and actively avoided group tasks. However, I have developed greater ease in engaging in discussions and expressing my thoughts. I have acquired the skill of active listening and effectively communicating my thoughts in a manner that draws the attention of others."* (Participant HSSF: interview excerpt)



This finding indicates that engagement in dramatic arts can significantly improve communication skills. The participant's shift from shyness to confident expression and active listening highlights how drama fosters greater ease in discussions and enhances the ability to engage others, demonstrating its effectiveness in developing interpersonal skills.

This finding implies that students have benefitted from integrating dramatic arts into their school curriculum and significantly increased their self-confidence in their subjects.



**Figure 2: Students indicated different subject marks showing positive improved marks due to dramatic arts students' activities**

Figure 2 shows that all students indicated that there had been a drastic improvement in their marks in all subjects: English Literature skills improved 95%, Life Sciences score marks improved 90%, Computer Science marks improved 80%, Mathematics marks improved 89%, Their debate skills improved 100%, Information Technology marks improved 90%, Life Skills marks improved 100%, Tourism marks improved 100%, Agriculture marks improved 92%, and I even improved there was an improvement in their word articulations by 100%

## 6. Discussion

In this study, we explored the transformative impact of dramatic arts on academic excellence among Grade 12 students, drawing upon the theoretical framework of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). Social constructivism posits that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction and that learning is deeply embedded in cultural and social contexts. The dramatic arts are a powerful pedagogical tool within this framework that fosters collaborative learning, critical thinking, and creative expression. Our findings reveal how dramatic arts' dynamic and interactive nature enhances cognitive engagement and promotes a deeper understanding of complex concepts across the curriculum. The

collaborative process inherent in drama activities is a critical factor that allows students to negotiate meaning, challenge assumptions, and develop multiple perspectives. These experiences are vital to nurturing a more profound intellectual engagement, a key component of academic excellence.

The first theme addresses the influence of dramatic arts on students' academic performance, revealing the significant impact of dramatic arts on students' academic performance. The study found that student involvement in dramatic arts enhances student understanding and retention of educational content and increases academic engagement and motivation, facilitating a deeper grasp of complex concepts and improving memory recall of subject matter, which leads to improved student performance. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting the transformational potential of the arts, media, and culture, emphasising how dramatic arts promote creativity and critical thinking (Kellner, 2020). The findings corroborate the study conducted by Cohen et al. (2007), which shed light on how dramatic arts participation enhances mental flexibility and critical thinking abilities necessary for classroom success (Cohen et al., 2007). This finding implies that dramatic arts activities can significantly improve comprehension and retention of complex concepts, increase learner engagement and motivation to learn, and ultimately contribute to developing students' critical thinking abilities and sense of social responsibility, as Mokoena (2019) opined. This finding also aligns with the social constructivist theory, which emphasises the importance of social interactions in the learning process and the construction of knowledge through shared experiences (Blagoeva et al., 2018), which enhance learners' learning experiences and contribute to their academic excellence.

The second theme examined the influence of students' psychological and socio-emotional well-being when dramatic arts are integrated into the curriculum. The study found that dramatic arts integration in the Grade 12 curriculum has a crucial impact on developing empathy and emotional intelligence, improved communication skills, and self-confidence activities, which increase students' ability to manage their emotions and respond empathetically to their classmates. This finding aligns with a study that has shown that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing students' self-efficacy, resilience, and mental health, all of which are essential components of personal development (Wang, 2024). This implies that as teachers incorporate dramatic art into the curriculum, they provide students with tools to navigate their emotions effectively and cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and others. The finding also provides evidence of the transformative power of arts engagement in fortifying students' mental health and enhancing their academic performance, drawing attention to the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence development into educational practices. This finding aligns with a study by Maher (2021), which indicated emotional intelligence is positively related to academic performance, suggesting that cultivating emotional intelligence through arts education can improve learning outcomes. The transformative power of arts engagement in fortifying students' mental health and enhancing their academic performance draw attention to the importance of incorporating emotional intelligence development in educational practices (Wang, 2023). This finding implies that dramatic arts activities

significantly contribute to emotional regulation and empathy. The participant's experience highlights how drama fosters patience and composure, improving their ability to handle stress and relate to others, suggesting that such activities promote valuable interpersonal and emotional skills.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study explored the transformative effects of dramatic arts on academic performance among Grade 12 students. The study was framed within the principles of social constructivism theory and uncovered valued findings regarding the beneficial impact of incorporating dramatic arts into education. After integrating dramatic arts into their study, the findings indicated increased critical thinking skills, a deeper understanding of the subjects, and a stronger emotional connection to academic topics. This study highlights the need to acknowledge the transformative capacity of arts-based methods in education, namely in promoting critical thinking and improving student involvement. Hence, this study provides insights into incorporating dramatic arts into the educational program so students enhance their academic achievements and cultivate essential skills and abilities such as empathy, communication, and problem-solving.

## **8. Recommendations**

The findings emphasised enhanced critical thinking abilities, heightened understanding of academic subjects, and a stronger affinity towards academic subjects by integrating dramatic arts into the curriculum. The study's findings can be used to make recommendations for stakeholders in the educational system. Educational institutions are recommended to implement comprehensive programs incorporating dramatic arts into the curriculum to enhance students' academic performance and involvement. This may be achieved by creating a designed curriculum that blends dramatic arts into traditional academic areas, guaranteeing that students benefit from incorporating the arts throughout their educational experience.

Furthermore, teachers may need continual professional development to successfully incorporate dramatic arts into their teaching approaches to maintain high-quality education. Longitudinal studies may be carried out on how best to have dramatic arts as a subject done by most students up to Grade 12 and beyond. Dramatic arts may help students get acting, filming, production and editing jobs if they have done dramatic arts at the school level in Grade 12.

Teachers could obtain regular professional development support to acquire the skills and knowledge required to effectively include dramatic arts in their teaching practices. Training programs would help teachers understand the ideas of arts integration, how to construct lesson plans incorporating dramatic arts, and how to evaluate student performance in these activities. Workshops and collaborative planning sessions may be helpful.

Teachers should be encouraged to exchange best practices and innovative ideas, fostering a community of practice for arts integration. Schools are additionally

urged to upgrade their resources and facilities to support the integration of dramatic arts. This may include providing appropriate locations for performances, rehearsals, and other creative activities and ensuring access to necessary materials and equipment. Investing in artistic infrastructure may be crucial. Schools may have specialist dramatic arts facilities, such as theatres or multipurpose rooms with stage lighting, sound equipment, and props. Schools may also set aside funds for costumes, sets, and other items needed in theatrical performances. Ensuring students access high-quality resources may significantly improve their learning experience and participation in the dramatic arts.

Students may be motivated to form connections with local theatre organisations, artists, and cultural institutions to gain real-world experience and mentorship in the dramatic arts. Collaboration with the community may allow students to participate in performances, seminars, and mentoring programs run by experts in the subject. These collaborations improve students' awareness of dramatic arts and its significance outside the classroom. Schools might plan school visits to local theatres, invite guest lecturers, and provide internships. Such efforts may widen students' horizons and motivate them to pursue more education or employment in the arts.

This study suggests building robust assessment and evaluation systems to monitor the influence of dramatic arts integration on student outcomes such as academic success, engagement, and critical thinking abilities. Creating a framework for evaluating the efficacy of arts integration initiatives is crucial.

## 9. References

- Agarwal, H., Verma, A., Gera, P., & Mohapatra, A. K. (2023). *Comparative analysis of models for movie review sentiment analysis* [Conference session]. 2023 6th International Conference on Contemporary Computing and Informatics (IC3I). <https://doi.org/10.1109/ic3i59117.2023.10398105>
- Agwu, U. D., & Nmadu, J. (2023). Students' interactive engagement, academic achievement and self concept in chemistry: An evaluation of cooperative learning pedagogy. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*, 24(2), 688–705. <https://doi.org/10.1039/d2rp00148a>
- Al-Qaysi, N., Mohamad-Nordin, N., & Al-Emran, M. (2019). What leads to social learning? Students' attitudes towards using social media applications in Omani higher education. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(3), 2157–2174. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10074-6>
- Amin, M. E. K., Nørgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A., & Desselle, S. P. (2020). Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative pharmacy research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 16(10), 1472–1482. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005>
- Angrosino, M. (2007). *Doing ethnographic and observational research*. Sage.
- Bettman, M. C. (2020). *Forum theatre as performative pedagogy in the teaching and learning of life orientation in primary schools in South Africa* [Doctoral thesis]. University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Blagoeva, N. V., Karppinen, S., & Kairavuori, S. (2018). The integrated approach to teaching visual art in after-school activity classes. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 38(1), 224–239. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12173>

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braund, M., & Athiemoolam, L. (2021). South Africa: Struggling on. In N. McGuinn, N. Ikeno, I. Davies, & E. Sant (Eds.), *International perspectives on drama and citizenship education* (pp. 100–109). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003058144-10>
- Byrne, D. (2022). A worked example of Braun and Clarke's approach to reflexive thematic analysis. *Quality & Quantity*, 56(3), 1391–1412. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-021-01182-y>
- Catterall, J. S., Dumais, S. A., & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2018). *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies* [Research report #55]. Art Works. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>
- Chen, J., Lin, C.-H., & Chen, G. (2021). A cross-cultural perspective on the relationships among social media use, self-regulated learning and adolescents' digital reading literacy. *Computers & Education*, 175, Article 104322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104322>
- Chen, Y., & Dong, Z. (2023). Students' psychological analysis for classroom teaching strategies of art songs based on STEAM education. *Sustainability*, 16(1), Article 323. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16010323>
- Cohen, G. L., Sherman, D. K., Bastardi, A., Hsu, L., McGoey, M., & Ross, L. (2007). Bridging the partisan divide: Self-affirmation reduces ideological closed-mindedness and inflexibility in negotiation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(3), 415–430. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.3.415>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
- David Carlson, J., & Dobson, T. (2020). Fostering empathy through an inclusive pedagogy for career creatives. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 39(2), 430–444. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12289>
- Davis, J., Clayton, C., & Broome, J. (2017). Thinking like researchers: Action research and its impact on novice teachers' thinking. *Educational Action Research*, 26(1), 59–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2017.1284012>
- de la Croix, A., Rose, C., Wildig, E., & Willson, S. (2011). Arts-based learning in medical education: The students' perspective. *Medical Education*, 45(11), 1090–1100. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04060.x>
- Deaux, K., & Snyder, M. (2018). *The Oxford handbook of personality and social psychology*. Oxford University Press. <https://books.google.co.za/books?id=hTdtDwAAQBAJ>
- Detel, W. (2020). *Schleiermacher's hermeneutics reconsidered*. Paper uploaded to Academia.edu
- DBE (Department of Basic Education) (South Africa). 2011. *Report of the Annual National Assessment 2011*. Government Printer.
- Edwards, R., & Holland, J. (2020). Reviewing challenges and the future for qualitative interviewing. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 23(5), 581–592. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1766767>
- Enworo, O. C. (2023). Application of Guba and Lincoln's parallel criteria to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative research on indigenous social protection systems. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 23(4), 372–384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/qjrj-08-2022-0116>
- Fancourt, D., Ockelford, A., & Belai, A. (2014). The psychoneuroimmunological effects of music: A systematic review and a new model. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 36, 15–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2013.10.014>

- Fitriana, N., & Fatimah, M. (2023). *Coping strategies in improving happiness among higher education students in Indonesia* [Conference session]. International Conference on Psychology: International Conference on Indigenous Treatment and Contemporary Psychology (ICoP 2022) (pp. 31–38).  
[https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-080-0\\_5](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-080-0_5)
- Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *ECTJ*, 29(2), 75–91. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02766777>
- Guo, L. (2024). Research on educational space design from the perspective of child psychology. *Art and Design*, 7(4), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.31058/j.ad.2024.74001>
- Huotilainen, M., Rankanen, M., Groth, C., Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, P., & Mäkelä, M. (2018). Why our brains love arts and crafts: Implications of creative practices on psychophysical well-being. *FormAkademisk – Forskningstidsskrift for Design Og Designdidaktikk*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.7577/formakademisk.1908>
- Johnsen, B. (Ed.). (2020). *International classroom studies of inclusive practises: Comparing teaching-learning processes*. Cappelen Damm Forskning.  
<https://doi.org/10.23865/noasp.122>
- Jordan, D., & O'Donoghue, H. (2018). Histories of change in art and design education in Ireland: Towards reform: The evolving trajectory of art education. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 37(4), 574–586.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12205>
- Justin, S. (2020). Enhancing school connectedness in vulnerable youth through arts education: Considerations for education systems in St. Lucia. *Antistasis*, 10(2).
- Kellner, D. (2020). *Media culture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429244230>
- Kneen, J., Breeze, T., Davies-Barnes, S., John, V., & Thayer, E. (2020). Curriculum integration: The challenges for primary and secondary schools in developing a new curriculum in the expressive arts. *The Curriculum Journal*, 31(2), 258–275.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.34>
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interviews*. Sage.
- LaJevic, L. (2013). Arts integration: What is really happening in the elementary classroom? *Journal for Learning through the Arts*, 9(1).  
<https://doi.org/10.21977/D99112615>
- Li, F., Jin, T., Edirisingha, P., & Zhang, X. (2021). School-aged students' sustainable online learning engagement during COVID-19: Community of inquiry in a Chinese secondary education context. *Sustainability*, 13(18), Article 10147.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810147>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newberry Park.
- Maher, L. (2021). *How emotional intelligence affects human resource practices within Dublin Bus* [Master's thesis]. National College of Ireland.
- Mangwegape, B. (2022). Exploring selected Setswana drama texts as the principle of Ubuntu/Botho in educational context. *Education and New Developments 2022*, 17–22. <https://doi.org/10.36315/2022v1end004>
- Markgraaff, R. (2021). *Parental perceptions: Choosing dramatic arts as a Grade 12 subject* [Master's dissertation]. University of Pretoria.
- Matuk, C., Vacca, R., Amato, A., Silander, M., DesPortes, K., Woods, P. J., & Tes, M. (2023). Promoting students' informal inferential reasoning through arts-integrated data literacy education. *Information and Learning Sciences*, 125(3/4), 163–189. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ils-07-2023-0088>
- McCarthy, G. (2015). Motivating and enabling adult learners to develop research skills. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 55(2), 309–330.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1068383.pdf>
- McWilliam, M. (2018). *Interactive comment on "Aero-elastic wind turbine design with active flaps for AEP maximization" by Michael K. McWilliam et al.* Wind Energy Science discussions. <https://doi.org/10.5194/wes-2017-50-ac2>

- Mertens, D. M. (Ed.). (2023). *Mixed methods research: Research methods*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350273191>
- Mokoena, M. T. (2019). *The role of drama in education in fostering a soft skills curriculum in the paperless classroom of South African primary schools* [Master's research report]. University of the Witwatersrand.
- Nogaj, A. A. (2020). Emotional intelligence and strategies for coping with stress among music school students in the context of visual art and general education students. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 68(1), 78–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429420901513>
- Nordgaard, C., Reyneke, M., & Olivier, L. (2023). Impact of drama-based pedagogy on self-directed learning skills and motivation in Grade 12 English home language learners. In M. Havenga, J. Olivier, & B. J. Bunt (Eds.), *Problem-based learning and pedagogies of play: Active approaches towards self-directed learning* (pp. 191–214). Aosis. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2023.bk409.09>
- Osborne, N., & Grant-Smith, D. (2021). In-depth interviewing. In S. Baum (Ed.), *Methods in urban analysis* (pp. 105–125). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-1677-8\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-1677-8_7)
- Petrusly, Kollo, F. L., Bani, M. D. S., Mahfud, T., & Zulkarnain. (2024). The effect of gamification using Kahoot on students' critical thinking abilities: The role of mediating learning engagement and motivation. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(5), 953–963 <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i5.1524>
- Radić, B., & Hren, D. (2022). Psychological well-being and work in the dramatic arts. *St Open*, 3, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.48188/so.3.2>
- Riazi, A. M., Rezvani, R., & Ghanbar, H. (2023). Trustworthiness in L2 writing research: A review and analysis of qualitative articles in the Journal of Second Language Writing. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 2(3), Article 100065. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2023.100065>
- Ruslin, Mashuri, S., Rasak, M. S. A., Alhabsyi, F., & Syam, H. (2022). Semi-structured interview: A methodological reflection on the development of a qualitative research instrument in educational studies. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 12(1), 22-29. <https://doi.org/10.9790/7388-1201052229>
- Rothschild-Yakar, L., Stein, D., Goshen, D., Shoval, G., Yacobi, A., Eger, G., Kartin, B., & Gur, E. (2019). Mentalizing self and other and affect regulation patterns in anorexia and depression. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02223>
- Saleem, A., Kausar, H., & Deeba, F. (2021). Social constructivism: A new paradigm in teaching and learning environment. *Perennial Journal of History*, 2(2), 403–421. <https://doi.org/10.52700/pjh.v2i2.86>
- Salmia, S., Sudarmin, S., & Mujahidah, M. (2023). Problem-based learning combined with realistic mathematics approach Grade V elementary school. *Jurnal Pembangunan Pendidikan: Fondasi dan Aplikasi*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.21831/jppfa.v10i2.55581>
- Schwandt, T. A. (2015). *The SAGE dictionary of qualitative inquiry*. Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483398969>
- Shaw, R. D., & Bernard, C. F. (2023). "Turning the prism": School improvement and the arts. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2023.2212183>
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201>

- Thomas, C. N., Hassaram, B., Rieth, H. J., Raghavan, N. S., Kinzer, C. K., & Mulloy, A. M. (2012). The integrated curriculum project: Teacher change and student outcomes within a university–school professional development collaboration. *Psychology in the Schools, 49*(5), 444–464. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21612>
- Thomson, P., Hall, C., Earl, L., & Geppert, C. (2019). The pedagogical logics of arts-rich schools: A Bourdieusian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 40*(2), 239–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1554474>
- Tian, M., Lu, G., Li, L., & Yin, H. (2021). International undergraduate students in Chinese higher education: An engagement typology and associated factors. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.680392>
- Todhunter-Reid, A. (2019). In-school arts education and academic achievement: A child fixed effects approach. *Arts Education Policy Review, 120*(2), 112–119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2018.1423595>
- Vygotsky L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Harvard University Press.
- Wang, Z. (2023). *The development of personal friendship networks*. <https://doi.org/10.22215/etd/2007-06677>
- Wang, Z. (2024). Leisure sports involvement and personal development engagement. *Journal of Education and Educational Research, 8*(3), 283–291. <https://doi.org/10.54097/3wa3pr04>
- Wen, Y., Chen, H., Pang, L., & Gu, X. (2020). The relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial self-efficacy of Chinese vocational college students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17*(12), Article 4511. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124511>
- Wiehe Lopes, A. (2021). *Coaching for creativity: Early educators' experience with story drama* [Poster 28]. AERA 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3102/ip.22.1888403>
- Xu, A., Baysari, M. T., Stocker, S. L., Leow, L. J., Day, R. O., & Carland, J. E. (2020). Researchers' views on, and experiences with, the requirement to obtain informed consent in research involving human participants: A qualitative study. *BMC Medical Ethics, 21*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-020-00538-7>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications; Design and methods*. Sage.
- Zhou, Y., Zhao, J., & Zhang, J. (2020). Prediction of learners' dropout in e-learning based on the unusual behaviors. *Interactive Learning Environments, 31*(3), 1796–1820. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1857788>