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Educators' Experiences of Skills Development in a Funded Technology-Enhanced Learning Initiative

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

01 Background & the Pro-Telde Project

02 Theoretical Framework

03 Research Methodology

04 Findings (5 Themes)

05 Discussion

06 Conclusion & Implications

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01 BACKGROUND

Funded international project to strengthen Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) and digital pedagogy in South African TVET colleges.

CONSORTIUM OF 7 PARTNERS:

Europe: Pixel - Associazione Culturale, Universita Degli Studi di Roma la Sapienza, University of Peloponnese

South Africa: University of Johannesburg, Vhembe TVET College, Majuba TVET College, and Central Johannesburg TVET College

Pro-TELDE

Promotion of Technology-Enhanced Learning and Digital Education in South African University and TVET Colleges

What Pro-Telde Set Out to Do

Train

Build educator capacity

Structured training in digital pedagogy and TEL, equipping lecturers with both technical skill and pedagogical confidence

Design

Experiential by design

Foregrounded experiential learning, peer collaboration, and contextual resource design — not lecture-style delivery

?

An open question

Most TEL evaluation measures competence acquisition quantitatively — little is known about how educators actually experience this process

Research question: How do educators experience skills development in a funded TEL initiative within three South African TVET colleges?

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Three Lenses on Educator Skills Development

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Mishra & Koehler (2006); via Shulman

Educators must balance technology, pedagogy & content — not just acquire tools

Constructivism

Active, experiential learning

Knowledge built through interaction, hands-on application, reflective practice

Technology-Enhanced Learning Perspectives

DigCompEdu; Salmon's e-tivities

Digital tools enable interactive, learner-centred, democratised access

Together they provide a multidimensional lens: cognitive (TPACK), experiential (Constructivism), and contextual (TEL) — the three axes against which findings were coded.

Interpretive Qualitative Case Study

PARADIGM

Interpretive qualitative approach, embedded within a broader mixed-methods evaluation

DESIGN

Case study — three TVET colleges: Majuba, Vhembe, Central Johannesburg (rural to urban range)

SAMPLING

12 participants, purposively selected — educators directly engaged with Pro-Telde

COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews, 30 minutes, conducted online via Microsoft Teams

ANALYSIS

Braun & Clarke (2006) six-phase thematic analysis — inductive coding + TPACK/Constructivism/TEL deductive lenses

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Triangulation of perspectives, rich contextual description, peer debriefing · UJ-JBS ethical clearance

Five Themes, One Analytical Arc – not a flat list

4.1	From Functional to Pedagogical	*Tool use shifts from content delivery to learner-centred design*
4.2	Individual Skill → Institutional Capability	*Personal competence becomes institutional infrastructure (or doesn't)*
4.3	Experiential Design & the Transfer Problem	*What made the learning stick — pedagogical architecture, not content*
4.4	Three Modes of Capability Translation	*Enabling, constraining, and policy-neutral institutional environments*
4.5	Capability Circulation	*Effects extend beyond direct participants into wider networks*

From Functional to Pedagogical Tool Use

BEFORE

LMS used as a document repository. Tools possessed but pedagogical purpose absent. Self-rated digital engagement: 2/10.

AFTER

Padlet for live collaborative introductions. Google Forms as formal assessment. Flippity & Miro redesigning content encounters. YouTube as on-demand access

“Whatever I recorded it, I uploaded in YouTube and I give the students a link. They're able to use that link, whatever they are, their own time, and they're able to repeat it.”

This is not a change of platform — it is a redesign of the temporal logic of teaching. The lesson extends beyond the classroom; control of repetition moves to the learner.

Individual Skill → Institutional Capability

THE STUDIO

One participant's Animaker training led the institution to approve multi-year equipment budgets — microphones, interfaces, monitors, camera — across two budget cycles.

"Everyone is looking at me now like, okay, let's see the blueprint. We're going to build from there."

A studio is not a set of skills — it's an enabling environment for continuous production. Not a threshold reached, but a space maintained.

Individual competence generated institutional investment. That investment created conditions for further competence — without more external training.

THE FREEMIUM TRAP

Several November-course platforms ran on freemium models — full features locked behind institutional licensing.

"You are training, but you're not really training, because you need full access to get all the features of the tool."

Not an individual problem — an institutional policy gap that individual motivation cannot bridge.

What Made the Learning Stick

The training taught THROUGH the methods it was teaching ABOUT — not lecturing about active learning, but doing it.

Physical → Digital Bridge

"They interacted with us first, and then they said, okay, this is how you do this in a computer."

Embodied logic before screen-based operation — cited independently by multiple participants as the single most effective technique.

Accountability Structure

"A sense of accountability was also enforcing us that you need to be accountable to report."

Deadlines and peer presentations replicated professional responsibility. Confidence came from having delivered, not from reassurance.

Retrospective Meaning-Making

"(Miro, named and explained) gave meaning to an experience she had already had."

Training organised prior unexplained exposure (e.g. Mahara) into intelligible knowledge — a less-documented transfer mechanism.

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Three Modes of Institutional Response

Enabling

"Already ready for implementing... approving everything that we say we need."

Multi-year equipment budgets, sector-wide TEL plan, trained educator as institutional blueprint. Existing computer labs removed the access problem before it arose.

Constraining

"Because I'm from the rural areas, network coverage or internet connectivity, that is the biggest problem."

Load-shedding, connectivity gaps, data costs. Practice continued — but carried entirely by individual resourcefulness, not institutional provision.

Policy-Neutral

"Some of us were doing it because we know how to do it."

No governing framework. No policy that speaks to online teaching. One educator taught through a month-long hospitalisation, producing 20+ student distinctions — entirely on personal commitment.

Capability Circulation Beyond Direct Participants

Trained Educator

Peer Gatherings

Post-training sessions reviewing application, helping colleagues, sharing with non-attendees. "The more you spread the information, you learn more."

Cross-Institutional Networks

Persisted after training — joint podcast production, practical support across Majuba/Vhembe/CJC boundaries.

Institutional Procedure Redesign

Online placement assessments replaced traditional auditions — using programme-acquired capability to redesign institutional process.

"When you want to train your colleagues who are at the same level with you, it comes with resistance." — Peer authority is negotiable in ways hierarchical authority isn't. The programme built leadership and patience for this, not just content knowledge.

Capability Catalysts, Not Skills Transfers

1 **Wrong question, right question**

Evaluating training by which tools participants can name asks the wrong question. The right question: can they articulate how a tool changes the student-content relationship? This is the TPACK distinction made operational.

2 **Individual achievement complicates TPACK**

The literature frames TPACK integration as individual cognitive achievement. The Majuba studio complicates this: individual competence generated institutional investment, producing infrastructure for continuous reproduction.

3 **A third readiness category**

Existing frameworks treat institutional readiness as binary — supportive or unsupportive. Policy-neutral environments are a third category: neither obstruct nor enable, producing permanently individual capability that cannot scale.

4 **Impact is relational, not sequential**

Capability formation, institutional conditions, and circulation are simultaneous and mutually determining. The same educator is a practitioner in one institution and infrastructure in another.

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Capacity-Building Requires Three Things Together

1

Experiential learning design

Active before passive, embodied before digital, doing before describing — these are replicable design principles, not facilitator personality.

2

Institutional alignment

Infrastructure, leadership support, and policy alignment determine whether competence becomes practice — readiness is not binary; policy-neutrality is its own category.

3

Sustained post-training support

Capability circulates into networks beyond direct participants — but only when institutions don't leave that circulation to chance.

Questions???

Grazie for your attention!

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