Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study, and thank you for signing the participant consent form and for completing your demographical information. This interview will be recorded and then transcribed. Your identity will be anonymized in the transcription of this interview, as well as any other information that may identify any other person or institution. You are welcome to switch off your camera or keep it on, and you may at any point withdraw from this study.

Thank you.

Okay, so as you know, my study is about blended learning. So firstly, let's just get started with do you use a blended approach when you teach?

Yes, I do.

Great. How would you define blended learning?

For me blended learning, I take it in two parts, right. The first part that I take is, ah, blended learning is the inclusion of non traditional methods of teaching in our current teaching methods. If I say our traditional methods of teaching is where me as a teacher, as an educator or as a lecturer I'm in front of a class. And I am using mainly the face to face interaction where I am teaching, giving information to students, and I am using, the only method that I'm using is the face to face way I interact in class in the classroom environment. Then when I look at blended learning, I am now switching from the traditional method, and I bring in other methods of of teaching or of of sharing knowledge, which is mainly I can be doing online, which is, both, I can do it in class where I am teaching in class. Some students are somewhere, they are listening to me and they are getting the information from me. And also I can bring in videos where I share links or YouTube links, I share discussion links, where students now log in, they take that, we do an interaction or a an online session, an online discussion. That for me is blended learning in the sense that I have moved from the sole method of traditional teaching where I'm standing in class. Now I'm bringing in other activities that can be done online, where students can do the learning online on using an online platform.

I like this. So for you blended learning is the mix of traditional classroom teaching and non-traditional methods.

Yes, that's correct.

Great. Now, in my study, we taking the definition of blended learning as a blend between classroom learning, anything that happens in a class and online learning. Like you just said, there are many different ways that the, that blended learning can be done. But just in this study, one facet is online, one facet is in the online version. If we go with that definition that I just gave, what three things would you do in an online classroom?

It's very, it's an online classroom is a very difficult classroom for me because I would want to, I would want to read nonverbal messages from the students if I can see them. If I am in a classroom, then I’ll be able to tell whether what I'm teaching they are understanding or not, which is difficult for me with a blended learning in the sense of the online learning because for me, I would want to interact and with online learning these days is mainly, it’s either that you get a chat, a student puts in a chat to acknowledge I would want to ask questions, I would want to see participation. And I'd also want to gauge level of understanding in terms of interaction and feedback, of which I don't get that from online. So mostly the activities that I would do out normally I normally use is I, I put questions, I put questions in the chat, and I asked for discussion, where I would pick from the names of the students out to pick to say, so and so, can you give us your own understanding of this, or what is your take on this just to encourage participation in discussion, because it's very difficult to measure whether students are understanding or not in an online, because they are all logged on you if the cameras are not on, it's also difficult to understand or to know, if we are still together. I've got one session where there was a student they are in, in inside the house and is sitting with their parents, and I am teaching. And now I'm looking at what activities can I give this child, obviously he is intimidated with the parents being around and doesn't want to say anything in terms of participation, some may be the opposite, they want to show off that I understand. Some may be the opposite, that they are intimidated that I don't want to say the wrong thing and my parents will hear it. I also put in some scenarios, which I can share a scenario on the screen and ask for input in terms of how would you take it? How would you address this? What is your comment on this so that I try to encourage participation. But in most cases, there may be one or two who are always participating in a class of 25, the rest are quiet. And you don't know if if they are understanding. Another activity that time I also give out a, give a case study. I give them a case study and I say let's go through it in the next 15 minutes, then let's discuss. I can also do splitting the classroom where I put them in groups and ask them to discuss in a group and then then after a few minutes, they are back and we get to one person or a group representative to discuss or to say what the group discussed. So those are some of the online activities that I do. Mostly, the giving of a quiz, I give them a quiz to complete. Giving them a discussion, a scenario which they can discuss or a case study. Or for them to to to roleplay.

Roleplay?

Roleplay, it I, I want to use it. I haven't used it, but I've seen a way it has been used. For example, it's for someone doing human resources management. So what they did is to have people into two groups, then someone is the recruitment manager. Someone is the person attending an interview. So then they started to have a discussion like a real interview, which was done online.

Very cool. Okay, if I can just summarise what I think all of the activities that you said. So it seems to me like you like to have a lot of discussions in class and you start those discussions, either with posting things in the chat box, or putting a scenario on the screen, or maybe even having a case study.

Yes.

And then you also have a quiz, which, do you use that for developing or more for assessment?

It's more for assessment.

Okay, cool. The same thing, what what three activities would you do in a normal face to face class, so, on campus?

On campus, I normally want to, I can see the students so I normally put them in pairs they can do a discussion in pairs. Sometimes I actually ask that we come together, and we, it's like a brainstorming where I put like a title on the board, and then ask them what comes to your mind? We write different ways. It's like a mind map, where we put different words coming from the students to say, this is what comes to my mind, then we build on that in terms of definition, in terms of an explanation, we can then build on what the different words that were thrown in, in that we're writing on the board just to indicate what what comes to your mind when you are taught by a word like, business management. So they will bring in words and then we we compile our own definition, which is easier for understanding because the students are the ones that are bringing it in. So that's one activity, I also give them case, case studies, I do them even face to face as well. Even role plays, I do them face to face. And also I want, I sometimes flipped the classroom. Where I sit in the in the audience, I sit as a student, and I ask them to take us through a discussion topic, or I asked them to, to, to to give their own views or opinion regarding a certain topic of discussion.

Very interesting. So you flip the role.

Yes, you flip the role.

Okay, thank you so much. Now, uhm, I'm going back to the online activities. So again, in a sense you using discussion as the main conversational development activity, and then you use these other things, such as questions, scenarios, case studies, as the means of getting the conversation started. Right, In your opinion, what would you, why why would you say, do you use discussions in your online classrooms? What is the aim?

The aim for me, it's mainly to engage. I want to engage with students because it's, it's, I don't feel they're engaged if they're not involved in the discussion. So the main aim for me is engaging them. And when I'm engaging them, I am developing their mental thinking in terms of their cognitive level, I want them to, to to to, to apply. So my discussion brings in mainly the application path where you now use what like when you when you are talking about something, you tend to leave it and you tend to practice it in a way so it's more of from your mind. When you talk about it from your mouth, it gets in your mind and you act on it. So more more more often, you remember something that you were engaged or involved in than something that was just said, and you're not part of it. So the discussion brings in the engagement, it brings in the involvement and it also brings in the practical application that may come that I may put into it. So that is mainly the reasoning behind the discussions to have them be part of the learning and be involved in the learning and practice the learning.

Yeah, no, I agree with you. Um, okay, then you said that two of the methods that you use in this discussion is you either paste the scenario, or you give a case study. Can you explain to me what do you think is a scenario or what would a typical scenario look like for you? And what is a case study? So what's the difference between the two?

Okay, so basically this scenario is you are putting someone, you are giving a picture of what happened or you are creating a scene, right? When you create a scene, someone has to now analyze it in terms of if I was the Human Resources Manager - there is a scenario that there is always people are leaving the organisation, this one is left the organisation etc, etc, you being the manager of that institution or of that company, you are now put in that scene where you are sitting there you are the Human Resources Manager, what will you do? Or what will you react? How would you respond to such a scene where someone comes in and packs their bags, and they tell you that I quit. What is your take on that? What is your next action, what do I want, what steps I want to follow, what I want to I want to bring the present. So it's more of, it's an active scene that is happening that we want you to feel that in your mind to play it and see this happening in the real world. And now imagine you're you're very imaginative, you are now imagining how you would then react or respond to that. Then with a case study, it's something that is already taken place, this is a case that happened, you are now told that this company recruits people this is what they do they use this method and this method of recruitment, they post the adverts, etc, etc. This is what they do, right? So this is something that is that, that that is already there, it's a case that has been presented to you it's already there, you are not just imagining you are now in that case, and you are responding to what what to do, or what to advise in such a case. So it's a thin line between a scenario in the case study because they all refer to something happening. So now with this scenario, it's mainly you are in those shoes you are now you're you're involved, it's like if you are part of it, with a case that you're watching, and you're advising from where you are sitting.

Okay, I hear you and excellent points that you made there. Um, okay, so correct me if I'm wrong, but with the discussion, you are looking for engagement and application. So would you say that's more where you want students to apply theory that they may be just learned?

That is correct.

And then in a scenario, you you require students to use the analysis and the imagination in order to put them in that situation, that made up situation?

That is correct.

And in a case study, it's a true case. So they know this has happened before. And the development aspect that you're looking at is to give advice on what what should have happened.

That is correct.

Perfect. In your class to class or in your face to face. You mentioned, um, three things that I'm interested in - brainstorming or you call that mind mapping, roleplay and flipping the role. Can you explain to me with brainstorming or mind mapping What exactly do you mean? And also, why do you use it? What is the aim?

So, we are living in an environment where the type of students we have are not students who are not informed. So they are well informed. And some of the topics that you are discussing, they already know about it. They've seen it, they've Googled it, they've talked about it, and with mind mapping or brainstorming is trying to connect them to what they already know. So, for easier understanding for easier of comprehension. So, if someone if if you if you have been involved or you have you have come across a certain topic. Nowadays, we look at, they know so much about technology. And they might have used it, they might have maybe have access to it. And now, when you are discussing a topic for technology, you will find that it's not something that is new to them. So if I am mind mapping and I am brainstorming, I am trying to also gauge their level of understanding for me to also know what to focus on or what to cover in terms of any topic under discussion. Because if they are not engaged, and you're saying something that they already know, they switch off. So, when your mind map or when they brainstorm, they don't switch off, because they are going to be telling you, and they want you to see and know that they know it. So you are giving them that opportunity to to to to show you what they've already know what they know about it, and what they understand. And it makes it easier on your part. Because then you might you sometimes they actually pick that I had not looked at it from this angle, but they've brought it in, and I haven't covered this part, but they've brought it in, they've already covered it. So it's actually making your your job easier because they are teaching themselves. And when they teach themselves, they understand it better than when you're saying it yourself. So I find that it connects them very well, because sometimes the friends say something, this one comments, this one comment, and at the end, they come up with something and it's easier for them to, to remember in some cases I’ll hear students saying that, I remember because Karabo said it in class. So then I know that because it was said by Karabo, it stick in them. What I said didn't stick but what was said by Karabo stuck, because they are at the same same level they understand each other. So that that for me is very important in terms of connecting, and in terms of for them to reflect on and remember. And also if I look at it to discussion [unrelated to the interview]. If I if I look at a discussion. I want to have that, that that students have that control in terms of knowing to say I knew something or I contributed something. And it's, it's at least I knew something. So you find that, uhm .. [pause]

It build their confidence?

Yeah, it's builds their confidence because they, they might have come across it. Now they are sharing it, and they're discussing it. And it builds on the application part, which is also what we didn't have when I was in school, it was more of theory. And I realized that I missed out on the application. If I look at my kids, when I'm asking about something I pick that they understand from examples given and they will respond with an example than with the theory to say, oh, but so and so, it means this and look at this company, we are doing this. Me, I know that theory, but I don't have examples to show or to tell which is where my application is limited. So for me that is that is important for them to be engaged, involved so that they can apply and they can link it to a real life situation.

Okay, then your roleplay. I'm very interested in here. What do you do in a roleplay scenario and why would you use that in the class?

So in a roleplay scenario is mainly to, I'm trying to find a better word, to have to make it stick or to make someone practice like you know, the technical colleges that you go for apprentice, you, you you, you are given you the teaching or the learning is through practice. So the roleplay is for practice, for you to practice, I think we, we, we also have group group group presentations or group work, where students are put in a group just to develop their group think, to develop their team, blending with others, or being able to work with others, it's the same with the role play where you are putting someone is a manager, you're putting them in a position of a manager, right, and they have to behave and act like a manager. And once it's, it's what once it sticks in their mind in their actions, it's very easy for them to relate to it or refer to it, when they are faced with such scenarios where maybe they there is a challenge at work, someone walks in, in your office, they are shouting, and so in a role play, we will bring in someone who is like that, who is rude we, who is suppose to, to respond to that end, we want to see your body language, you want to see how you it, you interact, we want to see your, your, the behaviors that can actually be acceptable or not acceptable in a work environment. So you are putting them in, in an office and you are putting them to do or to practice what they would do in a normal work environment.

Okay, then the flip role. So you've already explained that, when you mean a flip role, you go and sit in the audience and a student who would do something in the front. So what would they do? And why do you use this method.

So what we did with the flip the classroom, what normally happens is, I give them a topic before, before the day of the topic. So they go to, to research about it. And it's a way of encouraging research, it's a way of encouraging them to, to widen up and not only wait for the lecturer or for the teacher to spoon feed them. So I give them a topic before class. So let's say my class is on Thursday, I would have given them to say, next week, we are going to cover a topic on international trade. So I need you to go and read up on international trade, each one will come and present to us or pick on anyone who would lead the class in terms of the topic and also in terms of discussion. So you have to go and read chapter one on this and this we are going to cover this when we are in class in I'll pick on anyone, so anyone can come and present on the topic. So they go they read on the day of the class they come in, and I can pick on anyone to say today you are now the lecturer you are taking my position, you are teaching us about international trade. You ask the other students, you ask them questions, and you comment, me I will just be a student today, and I'll also be asking questions as a student. So then the student, the one that is leading, will be in front will be asking and what I pick from from flipping the classroom is the students want to be acknowledged that they know. They also want to be acknowledged that they can actually teach another student or they can tutor other students because they know especially a specific topic. So that gives them, like I'm empowering them to say, you can go out there and talk about this. You can go out there and practice this because you are in charge, you know, and I don't know I'm learning from you. So and during those sessions, I would acknowledge something that I didn't know that I've learned something today I didn't know about this, or this is how you do it. This is how it is, and you find so many ways of explaining something coming from students, so many, so many theories, which they come up with from trying to explain it. And the other part is how they simplify things, which as a lecturer I don't I am going into detail, and they just simplify it and say, no, this is the simplified version, just do it this way. In this way, and it's easier for them to understand it. when Mpho gave the class, I understood it very well. I understands you, because she is talking the the language that I understand. And she, she simplifies it to the level that I understand, which is good for me. So yeah, that's how that's how it becomes easier to understand.

Okay, so just to summarise, and very interesting, I must say. So with a mind mapping. Mind Mapping seems to be a very, very well rounded approach. So the students, you use this approach, because the students already have some basic knowledge, or maybe a lot of knowledge. And you give them this opportunity to mind map or to brainstorm, because it shows their level of knowledge, which means that you can evaluate where they are and what they still need to know. But it also gives them the opportunity to impress you, and teach themselves as a class, which means there is peer learning happening, and also helps them to remember, because they connected it with the previous knowledge.

Correct.

With roleplay, you use this for practicing. And you use this so that students build up a fictitious sense of how they should behave before they are in that situation.

Correct.

In a sense, you're preparing them for the future in terms of behavior.

Yes

And then with flipping the classroom. I love this. So the first aim is to get them to do some research beforehand. And then they come into the class, and they teach the peers and yourself this new information, but they use their own student terminology, which makes it easier for everyone else to understand, which again, touches on that peer learning.

That was correct.

Okay, [name deleted], we've done incredibly interesting methods here. Is there anything that we didn't talk about that you think would add value to my study?

No, I think I think for me, we've touched on almost the methods that are being used looking at the type of students we have now. Yeah, so yeah, I think we've touched much of it, in terms of some are mainly doing the quizzes online, mainly quizzes, and take home assessments. That's an assessment method, which is being done online. But they engage or the learning or the teaching and learning that is happening on online or is blended learning is mainly touching on those those those activities, maybe I'm not aware of other activities, because I haven't used other than the ones that I have discussed.

I was surprised that you didn't use lecturing as an approach...

It’s traditional method.

… but, if I look at the rest of your methods, they are very active and very participatory. So that makes me think that that is the type of teacher that you are. You prefer your students to experience life rather than you just reciting a textbook.

Yeah.

That's lovely.

[Laughter] Yeah, I look at the student that type of students we have. It's a different breed in terms of their learning and the way they learn and our learning is our methods of teaching. It's not the business ass usual, the way that we used to do. Lecturing, yes, it's a method we use, I use it, I use it, but I feel like lecturing is more of the traditional methods that I was talking about where it’s more of there’s a teacher, the students have to listen. And now, the engagement is limited, because it's like, I'm preaching, I'm like, in a church, I'm preaching to this congregation that is sitting. So it's, and that's how I was taught where, where it was, mainly, we go into a lecture room, we sit and there's a lecture in front and you write assessment. And so the engaging part was once limited, you'll find there'll be one or two that will ask questions and people like, this one talks too much, you know, because we just want to sit and listen, we take in, there is no two way or interaction, and you just see when I write. So when, when this when when this type of students now get into the industry would then get queries or concerns regarding the, the involvement or the engagement part where I don't know how to apply the theory, because it's mainly I was like, reciting, or I was cramming it, or I was, but then you get someone who was from, engaged, or in an environment where there was application, it's easier for that person to get into a position and start than me who is used to if to read and learn. And then yeah, it takes me time to start being engaged.

Yeah, no, absolutely. I agree with you. It's, I think we're doing all we were done a disservice to with being lectured at. And now the students of today get the opportunity to not go through that but to actually build their skills and the knowledge at the same time.

Yeah. Yeah.

Okay, [name deleted] thank you so much.