

Educational Drama: A Model used in a Business School

Rouxelle de Villiers #

University of Waikato

Hamilton, New Zealand

Email: rdevilli@waikato.ac.nz

Corresponding Author

Vida L. Botes

University of Waikato

Hamilton, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

This article considers the advantages, benefits, disadvantages and weaknesses of experiential learning through the use of educational drama (ED) to assist business students and academics to improve competencies required for their future roles in business. A review of the literature was undertaken. Simulated interaction (SI) and role-play (RP) are identified as an important aid in holistic learning to ensure knowledge acquisition, transferal and creation as part of competency development for business graduates and management executives. As such, these methods can potentially enhance learning of complex business issues and improve retention of complicated theories and concepts, especially of highly technical and quantitative subject matter.

Keywords: Knowledge; holistic learning; educational drama; experiential learning; presentational knowing; propositional knowing; role-play; soft-skills

JEL Classification: I21

PsycINFO Classification: 3550

FoR Code: 1302; 1503

ERA Journal ID#: 35696

Introduction

Educators are tasked with preparing graduate business students to be effective decision-makers in a highly complex and competitive marketplace where information and knowledge grows at an increasing pace. Whilst employers will continue to demand business school graduates with high levels of technical and quantitative abilities (Gremler et al., 2000) current complex business contexts necessitate additional competencies such as cultural sensitivity; building alliances; creative and critical thinking skills; problem-solving communication; negotiation; teambuilding and high level communication skills (Howieson, 2003).

It is the responsibility of educators to equip graduates with relevant knowledge and the ability to apply this knowledge in order to make decisions and be effective managers and leaders (Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002, 150) not just for today, but also for the future. Boyatzis and co-authors (2002, 150) indicate that 'the ability to use knowledge to make things happen ... can be called competencies'. Boyatzis and co-authors (2002) identify the integration of 'the development of these competencies into the curriculum as an essential element in [business schools] mission; in other words, to adopt the challenge of developing the whole person'.

To facilitate the development of these competencies, andragogs need to re-engineer curricula and learning experiences that are increasingly participative, experiential and learner centered (Beckem & Watkins, 2012; Goosen-Botes, 2013; Gremler et al., 2000; Sprecht & Sandlin, 1991). Chickering and Gamson (1987) summarize the components of 'learning centred' classes, as defined by the America Association and the Johnson Foundation for Higher Education as seven key points: (1) encourage student-faculty contact to cultivate motivation and engagement; (2) promote student cooperation and teamwork — collaborative and social, rather than competitive; (3) encourage active learning — students should write and talk about the material, not just listen to someone else — making it part of their own memory base; (4) provide constructive and prompt feedback, not just in assignments but in-class activities too; (5) emphasize spending quality time on tasks — help students learn about prioritizing and time management; (6) communicate high expectations and reward good performance; (7) respect different learning styles and ways of learning — provide students with opportunities to learn in diverse ways.

According to Kolb and Kolb (2008, 4) 'Learning is a holistic process of adaptation. Learning is not just the result of cognition but involves the integrated functioning of the total person—thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving. It encompasses other specialized models of adaptation from the scientific method to problem solving, decision making and creativity'. Scholars (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008) highlight the importance of gathering information and transforming it into learning and knowledge through many senses not only to promote whole person learning, but also to accommodate different learning styles and other biographic differences among learners (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). Much has been written by 21st century scholars and consultants about learning and management development as a non-linear, dynamic, holistic, temporal process. Prominent thought leading scholars, notably Dewey, Kolb, Piaget, Jung, Senge, Lewin and Rogers place experience and human adaptation central to their learning and development theories.

Rubin & Dierdorff (2009) signal the escalating criticism of business schools around the knowledge and capabilities they impart. Pfeffer & Fong (2002b, 84) criticise business education for not having a tight enough relationship as to 'what's important for succeeding in business'; that 'there is only a slight connection between the skills

needed in business and what is taught in graduate business programs' while Clinebell & Clinebell (2008, 100) say that 'it does not provide useful and relevant knowledge'. Botes (2009, 248) investigating the matter amongst management accountants in South Africa finds that a gap does exist between the skills provided by current education and those management accountants require in practice. Educators need to heed the advice and re-engineer or at least adapt their offerings. Indeed Boyatzis, Leonard, Rhee and Wheeler (1996) claim that 'competencies can be taught, but not the way we thought'. Business andragogs (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002a; Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009) have urged business schools to change their approach. Several studies with a particular focus on graduates in business, in South Africa (Barac, 2009; Botes, 2009; Coetzee & Oberholzer, 2009; Stainbank, 2009; De Villiers, 2010;) and further afield (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Gammie, Gammie, & Cargill, 2002; Howieson, 2003) highlight the need for accounting graduates to be equipped with soft skills, in order to contribute to employers' and sustained success. A recent study by Elm and Taylor (2010) alerted the authors to the possibility that experiential learning and in particular educational drama (ED) might offer some of the solutions to these business education dilemmas. Therefore this study investigates the 'road less travelled' — the less prevalent teaching methodology of educational drama.

Research Method

There is a dearth of studies related to learning/teaching business subject matter by means of experiential learning. This exploratory study determines through a literature review, anecdotal interviews with experts in andragogy and several conference workshops and surveys, whether ED as a form of experiential learning (in this study specifically role-play (RP) and simulated interactions (SI)) can deliver some of the benefits and advantages required to make business education more relevant, motivational and holistic. Our idea of using ED to teach Business is loosely anchored in *Drama Theory*, which according to Murray-Jones, Stubbs & Howard (2003) assert "that parties' behaviour and attitudes will reflect one or another way of resolving their dilemma(s)" (p.3). The question is whether ED is a teaching method to consider when re-engineering the curricula to ensure improved business education? To examine this question, we identify the strengths and weaknesses, benefits and pitfalls business andragogs should consider when contemplating the use of the ED teaching methodology.

Educationalists, business consultants and practitioners keen to develop more interactive and participative ways to engage learners will benefit from this study. The study will provide an overview of practical ways to include ED in curricula and will identify ways to circumvent pitfalls before they become hurdles to the successful implementation of ED (RP and SI) in the classroom. In addition, some areas of further empirical research will be uncovered and listed.

Literature Review

Knowledge and its theoretical underpinnings

Knowledge is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as:

'(i) expertise, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject; (ii) what is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information; or (iii) awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation.'

It is clear from this definition that practical understanding, experience and information such as facts, concepts and theories form integral parts of knowledge as two of the three aspects listed in the definition focus on experience. To date based on our own

experience as learners and anecdotal observations of other educators in business schools, a large number of tertiary educationalists focus their efforts on the second aspect of the definition that is, information, models, concepts and theory. The fact that the definition of knowledge consist of more than one aspect guides the authors to expand the search of literature beyond theory of knowledge to include educational studies related to experiential learning.

In their paper on the development of effective business managers and leaders and the supporting teaching methodology, Boyatzis & Saatcioglu (2007, 93) state that developing human talent could be broken down into three categories: 'helping people learn knowledge, helping them develop what to do with the knowledge and to learn why they would use their knowledge'. Boyatzis & Saatcioglu (2007) also add that to be effective, leaders and managers need 'the ability to use knowledge and make things happen'. Boyatzis (2008, 7) expands on the role of knowledge in the performance of outstanding leaders and managers by identifying three 'clusters of threshold competencies': (i) expertise and experience, (ii) knowledge and (iii) basic cognitive competencies such as memory and deductive reasoning.'

Baumgarten (as cited in Strati, 1996) suggests two parts to knowledge: 'on the one hand logic, which investigates intellectual knowledge; on the other hand aesthetics... which investigates sense knowledge'. Elm and Taylor (2010), mention that academia have often emphasized intellectual knowledge-based cognitive tools of logical arguments, scientific analysis and comprehension and have 'left aesthetic embodied knowledge to the fine arts or the margins of academy'. This cognitive emphasis sees knowledge acquisition as involving complex cognitive processes: perception, learning, communication, association and reasoning. However, to focus purely on cognitive processes and intellectual learning is to neglect a substantial and critical component to real-life learning, i.e. tacit, aesthetic, embodied learning (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008). To exclude tacit and implicit knowledge from discussion about teaching and learning is to only address learning in part.

Over the last century, there has been increased acceptance by academics of the notion that all forms of knowledge is founded in the aesthetic experience based in sense (or gut) knowing (Welsch, 1997). Various authors highlight the importance of gathering knowledge through a variety of senses and teaching methods (Kolb, 1984; Strati, 1996; Garventa, 1998; Heron & Reason, 2001; Yanow, 2001; Taylor, Fisher, & Dufresne, 2002; Taylor, 2003; Yang, 2003; Baruch, 2006; Beirne & Knight, 2007) are highlighted. To achieve holistic learning, both the body and the gut/senses need to be engaged (Elm & Taylor, 2010, 128). Elm and Taylor suggest that to 'promote learning in a complete way means creating wholeness through both artistic and discursive forms of representation.' Chomsky, a world-renowned linguist and philosopher quotes a famous physicist in a half-hour interview on education and creativity and says that it does not matter what is covered in the course material, but what students discover (Danovitch, 2013). He relates this to an earlier statement about the importance of learning through experiences and its concomitant improved retention, because such learning experiences are 'interesting' (Danovitch, 2013, 10 min47s). Following modern educationalists, the authors argue for wholeness of learning which incorporates both the mind and the aesthetics (senses/gut).

Compared to more conventional lecturer-centred teaching approaches (such as lectures, group-based research, reading and question-and-answer driven seminars) experience-based learning (such as video-recordings of student interactions with business professionals; in-class dramas and role plays, simulations and other forms of educational dramas) engage the whole person – intellect (logos), feelings (ethos) and senses (pathos). In the prescient words of Aristotle, as translated by Roberts 'Persuasion is clearly a sort of demonstration, since we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated' (Aristotle, 350.B.C.E.). Yang (2006)

identifies three learning processes: knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation and knowledge transformation. More recent theoretical underpinnings for the acquisition, creation and transformation of knowledge through ED is found in the work of Brunner (1966) on constructivism, Dewey (1963), Rogers (1983) (1969, 1994), Kolb (1984) and Boud (1996; Rogers, 1983) on experiential learning, Rogers (1983) on humanism, Senge (1990) on adaptive and generative learning and Botes (2013) on creative teaching.

The shift away from lecturer-centred teaching to learner-centred experiential learning requires a significant departure from traditional behaviour and demands discipline from both the faculty and the learners (Lamont & Friedman, 1997; Gremler et al., 2000;). According to Gremler and co-authors (2000) 'Experiential exercises place considerable responsibility for learning on the student, while the professor takes on the role of coach' (Gremler, et al., 2000, 36). Learners and faculty act as co-creators of knowledge, becoming full partners in the learning process — each taking a share of the responsibility for the process and the outcomes. 'An important benefit is that certain experiential learning strategies shift the explicit responsibility for learning from the instructor to the student, which in turn could encourage the kind of lifelong learning habits that teachers hope students will develop' (Hawtrey, 2007, 144). In the journal article *A Seismic Shift in Epistemology* (Dede, 2008, 80); the author posits three departure points from 'how and with whom' we learn. Utilising Web 2.0, Wikipedia and other online-knowledge bases Dede (2008) lists three considerable departure points: 'Curricula include considerable variation from one community to another in what constitutes 'socialization', 'expertise,' and 'essential' knowledge, based on the types of content and skills valued within a particular geographic or online subculture'; 'Active learning pedagogies emphasize constructivist and situated teaching approaches that scaffold students' co-creation of knowledge'; 'Assessment is based on sophisticated performances showing students' participation in peer review' (Dede, 2008, 81). The co-creation of knowledge, skills and attributes (KSA) requires graduates to demonstrate skills and capabilities significantly different from past expectations and therefore requires teaching approaches that are significantly different from past andragogies. Teaching methodologies themselves need to be, collaborative, adaptable, innovative, culturally and learner-style sensitive.

Over and above this, teachers are constantly concerned about motivating students by making business education more pertinent, motivational and attractive to students (Pearce & Jackson, 2006). This is particularly relevant to learners of highly technical and quantitative domains such as accounting, taxation, auditing, finance, law, statistics, mathematics, marketing metrics, marketing research or any of the other numerically based learning subjects. An important consideration for faculty of experiential learning or those andragogs, who regularly use collaborative learning interventions, is the engagement and motivation of students.

Presentational Knowing from Simulated Interaction (SI)

In our study the authors are particularly interested in the presentational form of knowledge acquisition, creation and transformation: i.e. SI (Armstrong & Green, 2005; Green, 2002, 2005) also called ED (Brennan & Pearce, 2008; Elm & Taylor, 2010) or role-play (Sebenius, 2001; Druckman & Ebner, 2007; Bosse, et al., 2010) in some literature. Although many authors comment on drama, theatrical productions, acting, role-playing and enactments as educational methods, they do not indicate whether they refer to these methodologies in the conventional, entertainment-related conventions or as emphatically distinguished and defined in this study and in the works of Van Ments (1989) and Brennan and Pearce (2008). Owing to a lack of clarity in some studies, we focus exclusively on those studies which clearly employ study or report on ED or simulated interactions conducted by students. Although there is clear evidence in the literature (Baruch, 2006; Felman, 2001) that teachers can deliberately

enact different roles (enacting different roles: e.g. emperor, storyteller, preacher, journalist, judge, sales person – for a comprehensive list see Baruch 2006), to enhance the learning experience and improve teaching effectiveness, this study will focus on the role-play and educational dramas where the students are the role enactors.

The authors subscribe to Van Ments' (1989) position in making a clear distinction between conventional theatrical role-play/drama and educational role-plays e.g. simulated interactions (as a type of educational drama). ED differs from exhibitional, entertaining role-acting in a number of androgogically imperative conventions: (1) SI is a means of knowledge acquisition, creation and transformation, rather than a demonstration of certain communication skills; i.e. it is process-centred rather than exhibitional. (2) Students fully participate in the creation of the knowledge and the process of learning with minimal scripting or directing from the teacher. (3) Students actively engage in researching, designing and reporting, with the teacher acting a facilitator but not director. (4) SI is student-centred learning where the educator does not provide the students with answers and does not tell them what they will learn, but students create their own meaning. In the words of Gremler et al. (Gremler, et al., 2000) faculty are to change from 'the sage on the stage' to 'the guide on the side'. (5) Since students improvise, create their own meaning and no script is provided, repeated re-enactments of the same drama are very likely to result in different dialogue and different outcomes. Finally, (6) like in real-world business, role- context is emphasized; which may be neglected or even ignored in traditional role-play. According to Green (2005, 5) simulated interaction (SI) is 'a form of role playing for predicting decisions by people who are interacting with others'. Given the prevalence of this type of decision-making in business, it is important to make the distinction between this type of role-enactment and mere theatrical role-playing where context and results are less important but character of the roles are more critical to the outcome. The example provided by Armstrong and Green (2005) to support their definition, is a decision forecast regarding the best way to secure an exclusive distribution agreement with a major supplier. To implement such a forecasting method Armstrong and Green (2005, 5) offer the following practical guidelines: 'To use simulated interaction, an administrator prepares a description of the target situation, describes the main protagonists' role, and provides a split of possible decisions. Role players adopt a role and read about the situation. Role-players then improvise realistic interactions with the other role players until they reach a decision; for example to sign a one-year distribution agreement. The role players' decisions are then used to make the forecast.

Does it work? Do stakeholders like it?

Although there is a proliferation of literature on drama as a teaching approach and learning medium, comparatively little empirical research has been done into using this learning method for teaching business concepts to graduates and executive students in higher education contexts (Brennan & Pearce, 2008; De Villiers, 2013b; D. A. Kolb, 1984). The central theme which emerges from a thorough literature review as it relates to business education, is that ED is not only diverse in its application across content fields and curricula but is also on the whole, quite popular among students as a learning method (Pearce & Jackson, 2006; Druckman & Ebner, 2007; Brennan & Pearce, 2008; Bosse, et al., 2010). Brennan (2008, 1) found 'strong evidence that students with prior full-time work experience have more favourable attitudes towards ED than those with none'.

Some qualitative studies into the nature and benefits of ED(ED) (Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Jackson, 2006) and quantitative studies into the comparative student attitudes and ED's value to teachers and the role education drama can play in achieving soft skills acquisition and transfer (Brennan & Pearce, 2008) are recorded. Armstrong and

Green (2005) use experiments to investigate accuracy and validity of SI to achieve and improve marketing graduates' competency in sales forecasting and report on the usefulness of SI in predicting decisions in conflict situations such as negotiations. A verbatim quote from Kesten Green's (2010) website provides some insight into this method: 'The group forecasting method of simulated interaction allows realistic representations of group interactions and does provide accurate forecasts'. Neither Green nor Armstrong report on the likeability factor for any stakeholders, nor the effort required to implement this methodology.

According to the empirical work of Brennan and Pearce (2008, 8) students find role-play drama 'an excellent method of acquiring knowledge and skills'. Of the 11 teaching methods surveyed (which include assignment-based research, discussions with co-students; self-guided research; group and self-analysis of case studies; question-and-answer seminars; private reading of textbooks and articles, watching videos; lectures and CBL) students clearly scored ED as highest in terms of 'how much they learn when each method is used' (Brennan & Pearce, 2008, 8). Brennan and Pearce (2008, 9) state that: 'ED is a potentially valuable too in marketing education, particularly where educational goals pertain to presentation skills, team-working skills, and confidence building'.

Discussion: Benefits & strengths

As mentioned before, the key benefit of role-play and SI is to achieve holistic learning outcomes. Additional advantages can be directly linked to the advantages of experience-based learning (Bloom, 1956; Dewey, 1963; Kolb, 1984; Anderson, Boud, & Cohen, 2000), specifically (a) whole person engagement – cognitive, affective and senses (Yanow, 2001; Taylor, 2003; Beirne & Knight, 2007; Elm & Taylor, 2010), (b) prior learning experiences and learners' personal meaning and the relevance to the learning, and (c) self-reflection and expert-assisted reflection to improve understanding and deepen learning (Pearce, 2004).

ED in business education dates back to 1960s, with Lewin's T-group well-known teaching method for training group dynamics (Kolb & Kolb, 2008). Kolb and Kolb (2008) reports a number of experiments related to Lewin's laboratory training methods, resulting in the first management textbook about experiential learning published 1971. A large number of published articles in other disciplines such as engineering, environmental chemistry, information technology and paediatrics, reports favourably on the use of ED in the classroom to teach interpersonal skills. They report on generic relational and social competency development – all very closely related to business management and the required soft skills such as client interaction, communication and negotiation. The literature indicates the popularity, acceptance, effectiveness and widespread use of experiential learning in education in general (Druckman & Ebner, 2007; Andrew, 2010; Bosse, et al., 2010; Evans, McGuire, & Thanyi, 2010).

Although empirical studies in business education are few, they all seem to concur that role-play and simulated interactions has educational merit (Torbet, 1989; Beaver, 1999; Knowles, 1998; Moshavi, 2001; Pearce, 2004; Brennan & Pearce, 2008). A wide range of educational benefits are reported by academics and researchers, ranging from: the embodiment of knowledge through physical activity and movement (Boud, 1996; Wright, 1998; Beaver, 1999) through removal of learning barriers through the introduction of play and fun (Leigh & Kinder, 1999; O'Toole & Dunn, 2002), enhanced creative thinking skills of participants (Moshavi, 2001) to improved retention (Brookfield, 1990; Popper & Lipshitz, 2000; Elm & Taylor, 2010). Pearce (2004) surveyed 32 undergraduate students and reported on eleven perceived benefits, viz. application, confidence, enjoyment, freedom, imagination, independent thinking, inter-personal skills, learning, and retention and role performance. In his

study on the role of theatre acting in teaching consulting skills, Ferris (2001) reports favourably on role-acting as 'powerful and effective' in improving team-based skills. This benefit of teamwork and trust, as well as the students' role in creating the learning and outcomes, are confirmed by Moshavi (2001) in his study on applying theatre techniques in the classroom. Beirne and Knight (2007, 602) report that participating students recognize the benefit of transferability of the acquired skills in the areas of collaborative problem solving, propensity to share responsibility and to negotiate roles and respective contributions' resulting in improved employability (Beirne & Knight, 2007, 602). They further attest that ED also cultivate 'the potential to empathize with contrasting positions' – an important aspect when working with human interactions in managerial positions as well as instilling an appreciation for management as a 'social and political rather than neutral process that sometimes involves unpalatable and difficult situations' (Beirne & Knight, 2007, 602). We regard this as a valuable outcome, since teaching often takes place in the sheltered, simulated classroom environment where communication and relating these issues of complexity, ambiguity and 'less-than-ideal' human interactions are hard to capture in lectures.

Of particular importance to this study are (i) the ability of methodology to provide meaning through links to students' prior learning; (ii) their ability to make sense of content by creating links with real-life experiences and (iii) links to students' future career aspirations. These attributes are important since (a) one of the key concerns raised about business education is the relevance and application to the real world (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002a) and (b) educationalists confirm that improved learning outcomes are achieved when links to prior learning can be made (Boud, 1996). There is clear and substantial evidence that ED and experiential learning delivers these outcomes (Boud, 1996).

In the words of Karl Weick (2005, p. 409) 'Sense making involves the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing. Viewed as a significant process of organising sense making unfolds as a sequence in which people concerned with identity in the social context of other actors engage going circumstances from which they extract cues and make plausible sense retrospectively, while enacting more or less order into those ongoing circumstances.' According to Weick and Sutcliff (2005, 40) 'sense making is the interplay between action and interpretation rather than evaluation of choice'. Grounded in this theory, it is clear that the primary benefit of ED as it relates to our study, is the resulting reflective interpretation process - often called debriefing (Sprecht & Sandlin, 1991; Boud, 1996) - whereby students make sense of new knowledge and create new understanding through the enactment within a given context. There is much evidence that this is in fact a result of and benefit achieved through ED (Wright, 1998; Moshavi, 2001; Pearce & Jackson, 2006; Brennan & Pearce, 2008; Green & Armstrong, 2009). From the list of seven benefits identified from students' reflections in the empirical study by Pearce and Jackson (2006, 225), three benefits relate directly the aforementioned issue of real-world relevance and realism: (a) creation of a realistic learning environment; (b) career simulation; (c) appreciation of industry roles. In addition, three benefits students reported relate to the emotional intelligence enhancement: (d) empathy through drama; (e) exposure to alternative perspectives and (f) motivational/enriching virtues of drama for them personally. The final benefit is: (g) students' acceptance of drama.

One of the key expectations of employers of business graduates, as expressed in popular media and scholarly literature, is graduates' ability to work in and lead teams (Kayes, Kayes, & Kolb, 2005). An influential study Kayes, Kayes and co-authors (2005), covering four decades of research on experiential learning on teams in simulation experiments, reports on teams' increased knowledge about 'the functions of teams in general' (2005, 330); 'team purpose and membership requirements' (2005,

341); team roles, team processes, team leadership, context and 'action to achieve the team's purpose' (Kayes, et al., 2005, p. 349).

A major benefit of experiential learning is long-term retention of knowledge and concepts. An empirical study in accounting classes (Sprecht & Sandlin, 1991) demonstrates a clear difference in students' retention of knowledge and skills over a six week period. Sprecht and Sandlin (1991) report no significant difference in short-term learning between lectures and experiential learning (where students enacted roles as loan committee members), but concluded that due to the improved understanding and better concept learning students achieve through experiential learning, they retain knowledge better than students learning via class lectures. This positive result of improved retention is confirmed by other authors (Umapathy, 1985; Van Eynde & Spencer, 1988; Sprecht & Sandlin, 1991; Druckman & Ebner, 2007)

Disadvantages & Weaknesses

No single teaching method is suitable for all discipline content, learner styles, teacher styles or contexts (Boud, 1996; Brennan & Pearce, 2008). Although there is an increase in the uptake and implementation of ED and role-play to enhance business education (Schibrowsky & Peltier, 1995; Brennan & Pearce, 2008;), both students and lecturers are still relatively inexperienced in this teaching method, leading to unease by both parties (Elm & Taylor, 2010). Hickcox (2002) reports on the inability of instructors to integrate learning methods into their preferred practices. As ED emphasizes both content and process, preparation is more intensive and time consuming than traditional teaching methods and this is often resisted by experienced teachers who use an industrialized set of course material. In addition inexperienced users resist as the holistic assessment methods required to fully assess all aspects of students' learning, often lead to additional work (Hickcox, 2002; Kolb & Kolb, 2008). Moreover, some of the experiential activities require small groups and may only be manageable with smaller class sizes (Mellor, 1991) as the facilitator plays a key role in the success of the activity (Certo, 1976; Boud, 1996;). The research of both Certo (1976) and Umapathy (1985) emphasize the critical role of the facilitator who must integrate all four Kolb's learning theory cycles into the activity to achieve the best possible outcome.

Unease and apprehension amongst student role enactors may be a result of past experiences with school plays or oral communication forms and must be dealt with in a sensitive manner by the facilitator (Beirne & Knight, 2007). Elm and Taylor also (2010) report on some participants' inability to interpret the play. They see the surface meaning and recall the actions, but the outcome is dependent on each learner's sense making abilities to interpret the play, as well as the ability of the facilitator to effectively debrief the experience (Green, 2002). Respondents report confusion about 'the purpose of the play' in the study by Elm and Taylor (2010). It is therefore a potential pitfall for the inexperienced drama facilitator.

Surveys about other experiential teaching methods, report on variations in attitudes of the psychographics of respondents. This leads the author to expect similar differences to be prevalent in role-plays and simulate interactions. Unfortunately the literature review on this issue is sparse and speculative. The quantitative study by Brennan and Pearce (2008) does elaborate on this issue, but merely speculates and offers the suggestion for further investigation. Brennan and Pearce (2008, 9), tentatively suggest, based on an empirical study into students' attitudes towards role-play, that: '[students] exposed to full-time work...appreciate [educational drama], whilst those who have not worked full-time, see ED as just 'play acting'. On the topic of authenticity, Baruch (2006, 57) reports on role-takers reporting on a need to 'act naturally and 'be themselves' at all times. '[W]earing a mask' may feel unnatural and contrived to some participants and may result in ineffective outcomes. 'Poor choice of

a role, poor performance in the role, and mismatch for the case in hand, will lead to ineffective outcomes’.

Closely linked to authenticity is the issue of relevance and applicability. A few studies (Pearce, 2004) report on students and lecturers seeing ED as ‘interesting and fun’ but have ‘difficult time seeing any relevance’ (Elm & Taylor, 2010, 133). Pearce (Pearce, 2004), in a qualitative study on the perceived disadvantages, identifies two additional disadvantages linked to the issue of relevance and authenticity as: engendering doubt, raising fear and suspicion and requiring a high level of commitment from students and teachers. It is interesting to note though, that in the same study Pearce (2004) highlights the students’ opinion that the advantages of ED outweigh the disadvantages.

In many instances role-play and ED might be used as an enhancement to other forms of teaching and may not be formally graded as part of a student’s or group’s assessment. However, it is important to sensitize educators to the pitfalls so that these may be foreseen, detected and prevented. As a final point, Schibrowsky and Peltier (1995, 13) describe problems related to academic dishonesty related to experiential learning. Not all of them apply directly to educational drama, since the nature of the assessment and grading schemes have an impact on the ability for students to circumvent the system or ‘wrongfully give, take or present information’ (13). The way in which educators execute SI and role-play may vary substantially, so for the sake of thoroughness possible ‘cheating behaviours’ recorded by Schibrowsky and Peltier (1995, 14-16) are listed here: (a) previous-player information; (b) collaboration amongst groups; (c) stealing information; (d) overplaying the game through multiple attempts; (e) free-riding by individual group members; (f) plagiarism; (g) falsify information; (h) recycling papers; and finally, (i) hiding vital information from opposing teams. (Advice on tactics and strategies to prevent and overcome these issues can be found in Schibrowsky & Peltier(1995)).

During our interviews and in the workshop surveys (De Villiers & Botes, 2014), expert andragogs referred to the ‘inaccurate discourse’ and ‘incorrect application of concepts and theory’ and ‘just plain uninformed and ill-considered responses’ by student role-players. These inaccuracies need to be identified and highlighted by skilled group facilitators. Faculty thus need to improve their feedback and coaching skills and should tutors be used, they need to be trained in these critical inter-personal coaching skills (de Villiers, 2013a). Further, facilitators and students need have sufficient prior knowledge (Kirschner, Sweller, & Richard, 2006) and all parties need to be briefed about the need to be actively engaged thorough-out the entire process. Assessments need to include both ‘outcome and process evaluations’.

Conclusion

ED in the form of role-plays or simulated interactions (SI) in the teaching of business management has been around since the 1960s. This study shows that SI (SI) and role-play (RP) can be an important aid in holistic learning to ensure knowledge acquisition, transferral and creation as part of competency development in business graduates and management executives. Specifically SI and RP address learning at the sensory or gut level. As such, it can potentially enhance learning of complex business issues and improved retention of complicated theories and concepts, especially of highly technical and quantitative subject matter.

Our research indicate that ED, as a teaching method delivers a number of benefits. Among others using ED in teaching business improves holistic learning, especially because it creates links to previous real life experiences; at the same time ED benefits team work as it helps to build trust and empathy with contrasting points of view and more pertinently ED develops understanding of the political and social implications of a management role. We found clear and substantial information that ED delivers on

the listed benefits. No single teaching method has only benefits and likewise our research revealed or at least asked questions about the shortcomings of using ED as a teaching method. Similar to other teaching techniques, SI/RP cannot be used in isolation and needs to form an integral part of a portfolio of methods to accommodate different teacher and learner styles. A real risk also exists that ED could be seen as an interesting and novel idea, without real relevance if the method is applied without intensive preparation. Using ED as a teaching method can also present a significant hurdle owing to previous negative experiences by role enactors. As any teaching methodology has potential pitfalls, we highlight only a few that can easily be anticipated and addressed by facilitators, given the knowledge and due attention. Specifically we draw attention to the importance of briefing and preparing materials and students well and debriefing the role enactments after the completion of the experiential intervention.

Overall, SI/RP can enhance learning by focusing on both cognitive and emotive learning (mind and gut), provided that facilitators use optimal methods and remain vigilant about the potential pitfalls.

References

- Albrecht, W. S., & Sack, R. J. (2000). *Accounting education: Charting the course through a perilous future, accounting education series* (16): American Accounting Association.
- Anderson, L., Boud, D., & Cohen, R. (2000). Experience-based learning. In G. Foley (Ed.), *Understanding adult education and training* (2nd Ed., 225-239). St. Leonards, NSW, Australia: Allen and Unwin.
- Andrew, T. (2010). Importance of role play learning activities in technology classes. <http://www.suite101.com/content/importance-of-role-play-learning-activities-in-technology>
- Aristotle. (350.B.C.E.). Rhetoric. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html>
- Armstrong, S. J., & Mahmud, A. (2008). Experiential Learning and the Acquisition of Managerial Tacit Knowledge. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 7(2), 189-208. doi: 10.5465/AMLE.2008.32712617
- Armstrong, J. S., & Green, K. C. (2005). Demand forecasting: Evidence-based method. In L. Moutinho & G. Southern (Eds.), *Strategic Marketing Management: A Business Process Approach*. Cengage Learning.
- Baruch, Y. (2006). Role-play teaching: Acting in the classroom. *Management Learning*, 37(1), 43-61. doi: 10.1177/1350507606060980
- Beaver, D. (1999). *NLP for Lazy Learning*. Shaftesbury, Dorset, England: Element Books.
- Beirne, M., & Knight, S. (2007). From community theatre to critical management studies. *Management Learning*, 38(5), 591-611. doi: 10.1177/1350507607083209
- Bennis, W. G., & O'Toole, J. (2005). How business schools lost their way. *Harvard Business Review*, 83(5), 96-104.
- Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The cognitive domain*. New York, NY: David McKay.

- Bosse, H. M., Nickel, M., Huwendiek, S., Jünger, J., Schulz, J. H., & Nikendei, C. (2010). Peer role-play and standardised patients in communication training: A comparative study on the student perspective on acceptability, realism, and perceived effect. *BMC Medical Education*, *10*(1), 27. doi: 10.1186/1472-6920-10-27
- Botes, V. L. (2009). *The perception of the skills required and displayed by management accountants to meet future challenges* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Boud, D. (1996). The end of teaching as we know it: How can we assist people to learn what we don't know. *Australian Journal of Experiential Learning*, *35*, 66-74.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Editorial comment: Competencies in the 21st century. *Journal of Management Development*, *27*(1), 5-12. doi: 10.1108/02621710810840730
- Boyatzis, R. E., Leonard, D., Rhee, K., & Wheeler, J. (1996). Competencies can be developed, but not in the way we thought. *Capability*, *2*(2), 25-41.
- Boyatzis, R. E., & Saaticioglu, A. (2007). A 20-year view of trying to develop emotional, social and cognitive intelligence competencies in graduate management education. *Journal of Management Development*, *27*(1), 92-108. doi: 10.1108/02621710810840785
- Boyatzis, R. E., Stubbs, E. C., & Taylor, S. N. (2002). Learning cognitive and emotional intelligence competencies through graduate management education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, *1*(2), 150-162.
- Brennan, R., & Pearce, G. (2008). Educational drama: A tool for promoting marketing learning? *International Journal of Management*, *8*(1), 1-9. doi: 10.3794/ijme.81.237
- Brookfield, S. (1990). *The Skilful Teacher*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bruner, J. S. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Certo, S. C. (1976). The experiential exercise situation: A comment on instructional role and pedagogy evaluation. *The Academy of Management Review*, *1*(3), 113-116. doi: 10.5465/AMR.1976.4400877
- Chickering, A. C., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Principles for good practice in undergraduate education. In T. W. Journal (Ed.), *The Wingspread Journal*. Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation.
- Danovitch, R. (Producer). (2013). Professor Chomsky: Reflections on Education and Creativity. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDx2-mdInhI>
- De Villiers, R. (2013a). 7 Principles of highly effective managerial feedback: Theory and practice in managerial development interventions. *The International Journal of Management Education*, *11*(2), 66-74. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2013.01.002>
- De Villiers, R. (2013b). *Management Competency and Incompetency training: Theory and Practice. Developing Contextual Intelligence through Decision-Competency Training in Nurturing the Opposable Mind*. PhD, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland.
- Dede, C. (2008). A Seismic Shift in Epistemology. *Educause Review*, *May/June*, 80-81.
- Dewey, J. (1963). *Experience and education*. New York, NY: Collier.
- Druckman, D., & Ebner, N. (2007). Onstage or behind the scenes? Relative learning benefits of simulation role-play and design. *Simulation and Gaming*, *39*(4), 465-479. doi: 10.1177/104687873111377

- Elm, D. R., & Taylor, S. S. (2010). Representing wholeness: Learning via theatrical productions. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 19(2), 127-136. doi: 10.1177/1056492609360407
- Evans, G. J., McGuire, M., & Thanyi, D. (2010). *Using environmental consulting as a team design project: Role play to reality*. <http://library.queensu.ca/ojs/index.php/PCEEA/article/view/3099/3037>
- Felman, W. P. (2001). *Never a Dull Moment: Teaching and the Art of Performance*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ferris, W. P. (2001). Theater Tools for Team Building. *Harvard Business Review*, 80(12), 24-25.
- Gammie, B., Gammie, E., & Cargill, E. (2002). Personal skills development in the accounting curriculum. *Accounting Education*, 11(1), 63-78. doi: 10.1080/09639280201015327 2
- Garventa, E. (1998). Drama: A tool for teaching business ethics. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 8, 535-545.
- Green, K. C. (2002). Forecasting decisions in conflict situations: A comparison of game theory, role-playing and unaided judgment. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 18, 321-344.
- Green, K. C. (2005). Game theory, simulated interaction, and unaided judgment for forecasting decisions in conflicts: Further evidence. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 21(3), 463-472. doi: 10.1016/j.ijforecast.2005.02.006
- Green, K. C. (2010). Forecasting Methods. http://www.forecastingprinciples.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=16
- Green, K. C., & Armstrong, J. S. (2009). Role-thinking: Standing in other people's shoes to forecast decisions in conflicts. *MPRA Paper*, 16422(July 2009), 1-8.
- Gremler, D. D., Hoffman, K. D., Keaveney, S. J., & Wright, L. K. (2000). Experiential learning exercises in services marketing courses. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 22(1), 35-44. doi: 10.1177/0273475300221005
- Goosen-Botes, V. (2013). Creating a history of accounting: a visual approach. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 26(4), 653-661.
- Hawtrey, K. (2007). Using Experiential Learning Techniques. *Journal of Economic Education*, 38(2), 143-152.
- Heron, J., & Reason, P. (2001). The practice of co-operative inquiry: Research 'with' rather than 'on' people. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 179-188). London, England: Sage.
- Hickcox, L. K. (2002). Personalizing teaching through experiential learning. *College Teaching*, 50(4), 123-128. doi: 10.1080/87567550209595892
- Howieson, B. (2003). Accounting practices in the new millennium: Is accounting education ready to meet the challenges? *The British Accounting Review*, 35(2), 69-103.
- Kayes, A. B., Kayes, D. C., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Experiential learning in teams. *Simulation and Gaming*, 36(3), 330-354. doi: 10.1177/1046878105279012

- Kirschner, P. A., Sweller, J. C., & Richard, E. (2006). Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Teaching. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(2), 75-86. doi: 10.1207/s15326985ep4102_1
- Knowles, M. (1998). *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 4*(2), 193-212. doi: 10.2307/40214287
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kolb, D. A., & Kolb, A. (2008). Experiential learning theory: A dynamic holistic approach to management learning, education and development. In S. J. Armstrong & C. Fukami (Eds.), *Handbook of Management Learning, Education and Development*. London, England: Sage Publications.
- Lamont, L. M., & Friedman, K. (1997). Meeting the challenges to undergraduate marketing education. *Journal of Marketing Education, 19*(Fall), 17-30.
- Leigh, E., & Kinder, J. (1999). *Learning Through Fun and Games*. Roseville, NSW, Australia: McGraw-Hill.
- Mellor, A. (1991). Experiential learning through integrated project work: An example from soil science. *Geography in higher education, 15*(2), 135-149. doi: 10.1080/03098269108709143
- Moshavi, D. (2001). "Yes, and...": Introducing Improvisational Theater Techniques to the Management Classroom. *Journal of Management Education, 25*(4), 437-449. doi: 10.1177/105256290102500408
- Murray-Jones, P., Stubbs, L., & Howard, N. (2003). Testing and automating human interactions in Peace and Stabilisation Operations. In *The 8th International Command and Control Research and Technology Symposium*.
- O'Toole, J., & Dunn, J. (2002). *Pretending to Learn*. French's Forest, NSW, Australia: Longman.
- Pearce, G. (2004). The advantages (benefits) and disadvantages (weaknesses) of educational drama. *International Journal of Management Education, 4*(2), 29-45.
- Pearce, G., & Jackson, J. (2006). Today's educational drama: Planning for tomorrow's marketers. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 24*(3), 218-232. doi: 10.1108/02634500610665691
- Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. T. (2002a). The end of business schools? Less success than meets the eye. *Academy of Management & Education, 1*(1), 78-95. doi: 10.5465/AMLE.2002.7373679
- Pfeffer, J., & Fong, C. T. (2002b). The end of business schools? Less success than meets the eye. *Academy of Management & Education, 1*, 78-95.
- Popper, M., & Lipshitz, R. (2000). Organizational Learning. *Management Learning, 31*(2), 181-196. doi: 10.1177/1350507600312003
- Rogers, C. R. (1983). *Freedom to learn for the 80's*. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing.

- Rubin, R. S., & Dierdorff, E. C. (2009). How relevant is the MBA? Assessing the alignment of required curricula and required managerial competencies. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 8*(2), 208-224.
- Schibrowsky, J. A., & Peltier, J. W. (1995). The dark side of experiential learning activities. *Journal of Marketing Education, 17*(1), 13-24. doi: 10.1177/027347539501700103
- Sebenius, J. K. (2001). Six habits of merely effective negotiators. *Harvard Business Review, 79*(4), 87-95. doi: 10.1225/9411
- Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday/Currency.
- Sprecht, L. B., & Sandlin, P. K. (1991). The differential effects of experiential learning and traditional lecture classes in Accounting. *Simulation and Gaming, 22*(2), 196-210. doi: 10.1177/1046878191222003
- Strati, A. (1996). Organizations viewed through the lens of aesthetics. *ORGANIZATION-LONDON-, 3*, 209-218. doi: 10.1177/135050849632004
- Taylor, S. S. (2003). Knowing in your gut and in your head: Doing theatre and my underlying epistemology of communication. *Management Communication Quarterly, 17*(2), 272-279. doi: 10.1177/0893318903256239
- Taylor, S. S., Fisher, D., & Dufresne, R. L. (2002). The aesthetics of management storytelling: A key to organizational learning. *Management Learning, 33*(3), 313-320. doi: 10.1177/1350507602333002
- Torbet, W. R. (1989). Leading organizational transformation. In R. Woodman & W. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Change and Development* (Vol. 3, pp. 83-116). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Umapathy, S. (1985). Teaching the behavioral aspects of performance evaluation: An experiential approach. *The Accounting Review, 60*(1), 97-108.
- Van Eynde, D. F., & Spencer, R. W. (1988). Lecture versus experiential learning: Their differential effects on long-term memory. *Organizational Behaviour Teaching Review, 12*(4), 52-58. doi: 10.1177/1046878191222003
- Van Ments, M. (1989). *The effective use of role-play* (Rev. ed.). London, England: Kogan Page.
- Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., & Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organizational Science, 16*(4), 409-421. doi: 10.1287orsc.1050.0133
- Welsch, W. (1997). *Undoing aesthetics*. London, England: Sage.
- Wright, D. (1998). Embodied learning: Approaching the experience of the body in drama education. *Nadie Journal, 22*(2), 87-95.
- Yang, B. (2003). Toward a holistic theory of knowledge and adult learning. *Human Resource Development Review, 2*(2), 106-129. doi: 10.1177/1534484303002002002
- Yang, B. (2006, Retrieved 24 August 2012). *A holistic conceptualization of adult learning and its critiques of selected concepts and theories*. Paper presented at the 47th Annual Adult Education
- Yanow, D. (2001). Learning in and from improvising. *Reflections on Society for Organizational Learning and MIT, 2*, 58-62.