**Research proposal**

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**Topic**

Digital learning in South Africa.

**Abstract**

Digital learning is the use of tablets, smartphones and smartboards for teaching and learning. This way of learning is growing rapidly around the world and South Africa has implemented it in some parts of the country like Gauteng. This research aims to investigate the impact of digital learning in south African classrooms.

**Problem statement and substantiation**

For many years the conventional classroom has been part of the education system and it has worked thus far despite its challenges, it got us where we are today but we have entered a digital age hence the need for digital classrooms. Everything around us is changing through technology and innovation but should our education system change with it. Several studies have been done on the digital classroom like how it is being a new student in an old system and how going digital is going to positively impact both learner and educator and make learning interactive and fun (Vander ark: 2011) and more studies have been done on how these technologies can be disruptive (Flavin, 2017) and Mesfan *et al* (2017) discusses the digital classroom in the developing country Ethiopia, the challenges they face and advantages that come with it. Even though teaching and learning is the same throughout the world, the circumstances are different for every country we are not America nor are we Ethiopia.

South Africa needs to study how this change will impact our learners, teachers and the future of this country. We need to know if in the long run we can deal with the consequences of this change. We must investigate if this new way is working better than the conventional classroom for us, is it worth the investment or not. The biggest question of all remains, is going digital is the future of the south the African classroom?

**Research aims and objectives.**

As mentioned above the aim is find out if going digital is the future for south Africa. we will look into the following subtopics to answer our questions.

1. Access and Affordability
2. Experience
3. Adapting the change

Technology does not come cheap we are a developing country, corruption is inevitable the rand is weak and the economy is not really stable so can we really afford to pay for this technology? As it is already the school infrastructure in this country is not really up to standard and not every learner has access to textbooks and those things come cheap compared to the smartboards and tablets the digital classroom needs, where are we going to get the money for the equipment, maintenance and training and how is this going to impact the economy.

We will further look into the experience as whole, firstly the teachers most of the teachers are used to the old way of doing things they will need training but will they be able to adapt to this style of teaching. Our leaners the new learners in an old system like Vander-ark says how will they use this technology are they going to flourish and pass more or become disruptive , are we polluting the learners by providing internet access in the classrooms is this new technology making learning interactive and fun or is causing a division between the learners themselves and their teachers.

**Research method**

It has been almost five years since the Gauteng classrooms have become somewhat paperless, the digital classroom was implemented and put in action five years ago by MEC for education Panyaza Lesufi. We will observe from this experience and see if the rest of the country can go digital .

For the purpose of this research we will use inductive approach for we will observe what Gauteng has been doing to make this work.

Firstly, we look into the question of money. Where did they get the money to pay for paperless classrooms, how much was it ? and how much debt are they in and as for maintenance and training how much are they spending a year on those two things. If this was the whole country then how much would we need to implement this system.

For this we will shall interview the stakeholders and managers of the project. We will also need all the necessary paperwork so we can also perform an analysis and come up with our own conclusion

Secondly we look into the question access, how did the distribute the tablets and make certain that every learner has access to one, how do they deal with theft , vandalism and negligence.

Also for this objective we might do interviews look into related theft cases and other obstacles they might have faced during distribution. We will interview the manufacturer and distributer, the department and the principals and teachers . to find out if the equipment was sufficient , working properly and if it arrived on time.

Thirdly we look into the results and adaptability.

* Is the pass rate higher than in other provinces where they still use the conventional system.
* Are learners more interactive and fun or are they disruptive and hard to discipline
* Can the teachers use the new technology and how are they adapting
* Is this method of learning better than the old method?

For this we will use statistical methods, we will look in pass rates before and after the investigation. Randomly pick a school to visit so we can see how it actually works and perform a survey and ask learners and teachers how they really feel about going digital. We will use charts and graph to illustrate the patterns and trends.

**Provisional chapter division**

1. Introduction
2. Body - Evidence, findings and arguments
3. Outcomes
4. Discussion of outcomes
5. Conclusion and recommendations
6. References and appendices.
7. Additional attachments.

**References**

Vander Ark, T. 2011. Getting Smart : How Digital Learning Is Changing the World . <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.nwulib.nwu.ac.za/lib/northwu-ebooks/reader.action?docID=693618> Date of access : 09 Apr. 2019

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