AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES OF RESEARCH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING
ISSN PRINT: 2521-0262
ISSN ONLINE: 2662-012X

Importance of Curricularisation of Masterclass Performances in South African Higher Education for Opera Singer Graduates

Sakhiseni Joseph Yende
Department of African Language Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa
Corresponding Author email: sakhiseniyende@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Work-integrated learning (WIL), facilitated through masterclass performances, has emerged as an essential instrument for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, enhancing the quality of education and the competitiveness of graduates in the professional world. However, there is limited knowledge about the importance of masterclass performances in enhancing WIL for opera singer graduates, especially in South African higher education. Firstly, this study applies the WIL framework for understanding the benefits and opportunities of masterclass performances in improving opera singer graduates' employability through WIL. Secondly, this study examines the potential role of adopting masterclass performances into South African higher education (music schools) curricula. The study defines masterclass performances for a curriculum providing students with working experiences in experiential learning. The study design includes a qualitative research method with critical discourse analysis. This study's findings have six themes: (a) importance of curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates; (b) benefits of the masterclass for opera singer graduates, (c) successes of masterclass performances at international universities; (d) lesson for universities of South Africa from the masterclass performances (e) emerging trends in masterclass performances in improving WIL; and (f) Challenges facing curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education. The findings reveal that masterclass performances in the curricula can assist opera singer graduates in improving their employability in the industry. This study concludes by affirming that the masterclass performances curriculum offers unique WIL and performative opportunities for opera singers, graduates in particular. The curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates is instrumental in providing a comprehensive, practical, and well-rounded education that prepares students for successful careers in the opera industry.

Keywords: Curriculum; Higher Education; Masterclass Performance; Opera Singer Graduates; Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

INTRODUCTION

The term 'masterclass' is broadly used in the performing arts industry (acting, dance, opera, physical theatre, music theatre). However, in this paper, the term 'masterclass' refers to public events at the university level whereby a prominent musician (opera singer) is invited to teach students at an advanced level in front of an audience (students). The term is frequently utilised to refer to performance classes, in which students of a principal study instructor perform and receive coaching in front of other students to improve students' confidence. According to (Lafosse, 2014, p. 4), "a masterclass is a unique pedagogical situation in which a professor or performer is entrusted to teach one student in front of an audience, with all in attendance expected to learn from witnessing the exchange."

Scholars point out that masterclass performances offer opera singers essential and valuable performance opportunities (Creech et al., 2009). Also, masterclass performances are crucial as they provide opera singers with new techniques, ideas for approaching musical interpretation, and access to a professional community of practice (Cherevko et al., 2021; Creech et al., 2009; Hanken & Long, 2012). Cherevko et al. (2021) point out that masterclass performances offer a unique pedagogical experience for students, especially opera graduates, where a professional performer or a professor is entrusted with training selected students in front of an audience. Masterclass performances have dual benefits for both the masters receiving the training and the students participating in the project (Cherevko et al., 2021). Hanken (2010) asserts that a "masterclass can serve to improve or promote something or someone, i.e., improve learning or promote a career". Attending a masterclass can benefit opera singers by allowing them to receive feedback and guidance from experienced professionals in the industry. Masterclasses are often led by renowned performers or coaches who can offer valuable insights into technique, interpretation, and stage presence.

Previous studies by Creech et al. (2009) and Cherevko et al. (2021) have underscored a long-standing argument regarding the importance of masterclass performances as an effective tool for improving opera singers' careers. For instance, Long et al. (2011) argue that through masterclass performance, students are able to develop work skills such as flexibility, personal confidence, communication skills, and artistic imagination that prepare them for successful music careers in the industry. Nevertheless, other studies have highlighted issues that remain, such as the lack of masterclass performances to prepare graduate students for the industry (Cherevko et al., 2021; Creech et al., 2009; Hanken & Long, 2012).

The nature of music curricula in South African higher learning institutions has intensified today's challenging conditions. Numerous attempts have been made, such as Yende (2022), to investigate the significant issues facing the current opera singer graduates in South Africa. However, little empirical research has been done to investigate the role of masterclass performances as a work-integrated learning (WIL) component for opera singer graduates in South African higher education. This gap in the research area has also been highlighted in past studies, which found that further research is still needed to address the issues facing opera graduate students in masterclass teaching, which stems from the improper curriculum that currently does not adequately prepare opera singers with the necessary work skills (Yende, 2021).

Therefore, to keep up-to-date with the ever-changing opera industry, it is necessary to address the current challenges opera singers face in South African higher education. This study was driven by the observation among scholars that masterclass performances help opera graduates improve their careers in the industry (Atkinson et al., 2013; Haddon, 2014). Cherevko et al. (2021) reveal that "masterclass performances open new ways to raise the level of performer's skills, and thus are the key to the further successful development of singers' careers". Participating in a masterclass gives opera singers the opportunity to get feedback from someone who has more knowledge and experience than they have, which is one of the key advantages. Opera singers can use this feedback to pinpoint their strengths and areas where they need to improve. Opera singers can advance their talents and professions by considering this feedback and working to put it into practice (Cherevko et al., 2021; Creech et al., 2009; Haddon, 2014).

This study was motivated by the limited attention given to investigating the importance of implementing masterclass performances in the curriculum in South African higher education. In South Africa, masterclass performances are essential for preparing opera singer graduates with various aspects of performance required in the opera industry, ranging from musical expression to work on vocal technique and scenic mastery. In addition, in South African music schools, masterclass performances are essential for South African opera singers who aspire to commence their singing careers abroad. Against this background, this study investigates the importance of implementing masterclass performances in South African higher education curricula for South African opera singers.

For opera singers to gain practical skills, masterclass performances are a need. They provide a special chance to study from seasoned experts, gain real-world experience, and hone the abilities necessary to be successful as an opera singer (Cherevko et al., 2021; Haddon, 2014). Cherevko et al. (2021) reveal that masterclass performances are a leading modern method for developing practical skills for opera singers. Cherevko et al. (2021, p. 291) strongly believe that:

> "Masterclass performances provide new perspectives on the growth of performer's skills and become the key to furthering performers' successful careers. Therefore, we can convincingly consider the masterclass performances as the leading pedagogical technology for improving the individual performing qualities of singers of different ages and levels of vocal and technique skills."

These benefits are essential for opera singers to develop their careers and possess the skills required in the industry. Therefore, there is an urgent need to look holistically at the importance of masterclass performances in South African higher education to prepare opera singers for the industry. Therefore, in this study, the researcher developed and focused on specific questions that attempt to answer the importance of curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researchers developed four fundamental research questions in this study to guide, address, and provide in-depth insight into the importance of curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates:

a) Why is it important to curricularise masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates?
b) What are the benefits and opportunities of masterclass performances for South African opera singers?
c) What can the universities of South Africa learn from the masterclass performances?
d) What are the emerging trends in masterclass performances as WIL opportunities?
e) What challenges face those curricularising masterclass performances in South African higher education?

The curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates is important for providing students with a comprehensive and well-rounded education in all aspects of opera performance (Yende, 2021). Curricularisation can also help to ensure that students receive consistent and high-quality instruction, are adequately prepared for the demands of a career in opera and promote accountability and transparency in the educational processes.

Opera singers from South Africa who want to start their careers singing overseas can benefit much from masterclass performances. Many vocalists in South Africa are brilliant and devoted performers, and the country has a rich and diversified musical tradition. However, many of these singers encounter considerable obstacles in pursuing their goals of an international career because of various issues, including limited access to resources and opportunities.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, the researchers deployed WIL as a critical conceptual framework to bring insight into how WIL responds to industry demands (Fleischmann, 2015). The researchers chose WIL because they believe performing arts students require industry work experiences as chances to put theory into practice. This was further supported by Fleischmann (2015) and Yeo and Rowley (2020), who proclaim that WIL is crucial in the performing arts, particularly in higher education, since it allows students to apply their academic knowledge and skills in a real-world setting. In recent years, WIL has been perceived by many South African higher education institutions as both a credible pedagogy and a means of responding to employers' demands for work-ready graduates, especially in the performing arts (Yende & Mugovhani, 2021).

WIL recently gained popularity and it can be understood through the lens of Critical Theory as it addresses the underlying power dynamics, societal structures, and inequalities that shape the world of work and education (Fleischmann, 2015; Yende; 2021; Yeo & Rowley, 2020). Critical Theory seeks to uncover and challenge the power dynamics inherent in social institutions. In the context of WIL, it questions the hierarchies and power imbalances that exist between employers and students. It prompts reflection on how these dynamics may influence the learning experience and outcomes.

WIL generally plays a significant part in helping students transition from university to a career in the performing arts (Fleischmann, 2015). WIL contributes significantly to the education of prepared graduates for the workforce, particularly in the performing arts industry. WIL's principles and core value is that it helps universities improve efficiency to better match the demands of the performing arts industry. WIL is crucial because it seeks to promote and equip students with expertise and skills for industry requirements (Yende, 2021). This study argues that masterclass performances should be adopted and embraced in South African higher education as part of WIL. The researcher argues that masterclass performances have the potential to improve WIL significantly for opera singer graduates everywhere, not only in South Africa. WIL can also be used to transform the employability of performing arts opera in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

As highlighted in the abstract, critical discourse analysis was employed in this study as a methodology that allows the researchers to critically analyse and understand the content of existing scholarly literary writing on the importance of curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education (music schools). Critical discourse analysis is increasingly essential to thoroughly examine the existing literature on a specific subject (Fairclough, 1995; Rogers, 2002). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is defined (Fairclough (1995, pp. 132–133) as follows:

> "By critical discourse analysis, I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships

> of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles overpower."

Critical discourse analysis was used because it vigorously identifies and studies particular areas of inequality, racism, prejudice, and injustice (Rogers, 2002). In this study, the researchers adopted critical discourse analysis as an effective methodology that provides critical analysis. The primary aim is to reveal the relationship between masterclass performances and WIL in higher education. In this study, the researcher begins with a comprehensive literature search using academic databases, libraries, and relevant journals, using keywords like "curricularisation of masterclass performances", "opera singer graduates", and "South African higher education". The researcher selected peer-reviewed articles, theses, dissertations, and reputable sources directly related to the topic using relevant academic sites.

Critical discourse analysis was implemented because this study focused on precedent studies on the importance of masterclass performances in higher education. Since minimal attention was given to the topic, critical discourse analysis was understood to be appropriate and suitable for this study (Rogers, 2002). Both narrative and theme analysis were combined in the critical discourse analysis. A narrative and thematic analysis was utilised as a primary method for analysing and interpreting the stories depicted in the currently chosen literature (Forman & Damschroder, 2007). The researcher grouped the selected literature by themes related to the curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education. The researcher summarised the main findings of each study to identify common threads, conflicting viewpoints, and gaps in the existing research.

CONTEXTUALISING THE MASTERCLASS PERFORMANCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

It is essential to highlight that graduates in the performing arts industry are deemed insufficient to bridge the gap between university and industry. Hence, masterclasses in the performing arts industry play an important part in WIL to engage students in work experience before completing their studies.

The overall finding of this study reveals that masterclass performances may greatly aid South African opera singers' aspirations of a successful international career. These performances can help students develop into assured, competent artists who can compete on the international stage by giving them the tools, criticism, and connections they need to be successful. The study's findings show recurring themes in the literature gathered for it.

The findings of this study were divided into five significant sections developed from the questions: 1) Importance of curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates, 2) Benefits of masterclass performances for South African opera singers, 3) Lesson for universities of South Africa from the masterclass performances, 4) Emerging trends in masterclass performances in improving WIL, and 5) Challenges facing curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education.

Importance of curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates

Since 1994, there have been some commendable changes in the South African higher education landscape, including curriculum review, revision, transformation, and development, which occurred at an unprecedented pace (Yende & Pashkevitch, 2022; Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018). This was accelerated by the promulgation of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) in 2007 and the subsequent Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) in 2013 (Scholtz, 2016; Yende, 2021). Since the call for curriculum transformation, South African institutions that offer performing arts have started to review and revise their curriculum to align it with the requirements of the HEQF (Yende, 2021). In addition, universities aligned their performing arts curricula to ensure that their graduates meet the needs of employers. A well-structured curriculum ensures that the masterclass sessions are designed to build upon each other, providing a clear learning path for the singers. This allows the singers to develop their skills in a structured and systematic manner, ensuring that they are well-equipped for a career in opera (Taylor, 2010; Yende & Mugovhani, 2021).

Despite the extensive curriculum transformation in South African institutions that offer performing arts, opera graduates face unemployment. This was further emphasised by Yende and Mugovhani (2021), who claim that youth unemployment has a devastating impact on the youth regardless of their career. However, South Africa's unemployment problem is especially severe for opera graduates. The importance of developing a curriculum that exposes students to WIL can be drawn from Yende and Mugovhani's (2021, p. 122) study, which affirms that:

> "There is a need for a curriculum that increases students' exposure to the work environment. This exposure could easily be achieved by optimising work-integrated learning (a recognised learning strategy of vocational higher education institutions). This necessity for the work-integrated learning strategy was also corroborated by the students in their responses to the interviews conducted in this study."

From the above quote, Yende and Mugovhani (2021) stress the importance of revising South African universities' performing arts curricula to meet changing industry demands. Therefore, it is important to note that curriculum revision is essential for improving the employability of opera graduates in South Africa.

On the importance of the curricularisation of masterclass performances in higher education, Yende (2022) highlights that engaging opera students in real-world theatre has positive outcomes, which can be achieved through masterclass performance programmes. Based on this premise, the findings demonstrate that the curricularisation of masterclass performances is essential as it forms part of WIL and has the potential to equip students with expertise and skills for the requirements of the industry. This is consistent with Fleischmann (2015), who affirms that masterclass performances are important as the performances transfer knowledge and skills regarding the practical needs of the industry. Masterclass performances are crucial for opera students because they allow students to practice their abilities and advance their knowledge. Through masterclasses, students can collaborate directly with seasoned specialists in the field who can provide advice and critique on their performances, assisting them in honing their craft and fostering their artistry.

Benefits of masterclass performances for South African opera singers

Masterclass performances benefit opera singer graduates (Cherevko et al., 2021; Creech et al., 2009; Haddon, 2014). This was highlighted by Hanken (2010), who affirms that masterclass performances can be particularly beneficial for opera singer graduates, as the masterclasses provide unique opportunities for skill development, exposure to diverse artistic styles and interpretations, and access to professional networks. Masterclass performances expose opera singer graduates to various artistic styles and interpretations, helping them develop a more nuanced understanding of the art form (Cherevko et al., 2021; Taylor, 2010).

This exposure can be especially valuable for opera singer graduates with limited access to diverse opera experiences in South Africa. This was substantiated by Long et al. (2011), who point out that masterclass performances allow opera singers to develop their skills through direct feedback and guidance from experienced professionals. This can help to build confidence and enhance performance abilities, ultimately leading to greater success in the field. Importantly, masterclass performances facilitate cultural exchange between South African opera singers and international artists, creating opportunities for learning and collaboration across diverse cultural contexts. Masterclass performances offer numerous benefits for opera singer graduates, including exposure to diverse artistic styles, skill development, and cultural exchange (Cherevko et al., 2021; Haddon, 2014; Long et al., 2011).

By taking advantage of masterclass opportunities, South African opera singer graduates can enhance their skills and knowledge, build professional networks, and gain the inspiration and motivation necessary to succeed in the challenging and rewarding world of opera.

Successes of masterclass performances at international universities

Masterclass performances have been integrated into the curriculum of many countries worldwide, particularly in music, performing arts, and related disciplines. Some countries known for adopting masterclass performances in their educational curriculum include Germany, Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom (Cherevko et al., 2021; Creech et al., 2009; Haddon, 2014). For instance, the United Kingdom is known for its prestigious music and performing arts schools, where masterclasses are a common feature. Institutions like the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music frequently host masterclasses. Furthermore, Creech et al. (2009) state that the United States has a rich tradition of incorporating masterclass performances into the curriculum of music schools, conservatories, and performing arts institutions. Renowned musicians often conduct masterclasses for students. Masterclass performances have been integrated into the educational curriculum globally, especially in music, performing arts, and related fields. Countries such as Germany, Italy, the United States, and the United Kingdom are notable for adopting masterclasses.

Lesson for universities of South Africa from the masterclass performances

There are several lessons that universities in South Africa can learn from the masterclass performances in opera. These lessons include that masterclass performances offer a unique opportunity for experiential learning, allowing students to learn directly from experienced professionals through observation, practice, and feedback (Yende, 2021). Universities can incorporate similar experiential learning opportunities into their programmes, providing students with valuable hands-on experience in their field of study (Yeo & Rowley, 2020).

Since opera is an international aesthetic, it is always important to expose opera singers to cultural backgrounds (Cherevko et al., 2021; Haddon, 2014). Masterclass performances often bring together artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, creating cross-cultural exchange and learning opportunities. Universities can similarly prioritise exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences, promoting a more inclusive and global approach to education. Masterclass performances offer opportunities for networking and collaboration among artists, potentially leading to new collaborations, job opportunities, and other professional connections (Atkinson et al., 2013; Creech et al., 2009; Haddon, 2014). Universities can similarly prioritise networking and collaboration opportunities, creating forums for students to connect with professionals in their fields and engage in collaborative projects and initiatives.

Overall, universities in South Africa can learn from the masterclass performances in opera by prioritising experiential learning, exposure to diverse perspectives, mentorship and guidance, and networking and collaboration opportunities. By incorporating these lessons into their programmes, universities can better prepare students for success in their chosen fields and promote a more inclusive, diverse, and connected approach to education.

Emerging trends in masterclass performances in improving WIL

Masterclass performances can be a powerful tool for improving WIL. It provides opportunities for students to develop practical skills and gain exposure to real-world scenarios in a supportive learning environment. Some emerging trends in masterclass performances can further enhance WIL by incorporating technology.

Masterclass performances can be enhanced by incorporating technology, such as virtual reality, live streaming, and videoconferencing. These technologies can allow for greater accessibility, reach, and opportunities for students to engage with professionals and peers from diverse locations (Yeo & Rowley, 2020).

Scholars point out that masterclass performances can be an opportunity to bring together students from different disciplines, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange (Cherevko et al., 2021; Haddon, 2014). This can help to prepare students for the complex, interdisciplinary challenges they may face in the workplace.

Furthermore, masterclass performances can be an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning and receive feedback from professionals and peers. Incorporating opportunities for self-reflection and feedback can help students improve their skills and knowledge and provide valuable insights for future career development (Cherevko et al., 2021; Long et al., 2011). Masterclass performances can be an opportunity for students to develop entrepreneurial skills and explore new business opportunities. Students can gain valuable experience in developing and launching new products, services, and business models by emphasising entrepreneurship and innovation in a masterclass performance.

In conclusion, masterclass performances can be a powerful tool for improving WIL. By incorporating emerging trends such as technology, interdisciplinary collaboration, reflection and feedback, and entrepreneurship, masterclass performances can help prepare students for success in their chosen fields and contribute to a more innovative, socially responsible, and inclusive workforce.

Challenges facing curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education

Numerous challenges face those who curricularise masterclass performances in South African higher education (Cherevko et al., 2021; Hanken & Long, 2012). Hanken and Long (2012) indicate that masterclass performances require significant resources, including space, equipment, and experienced professionals. Many universities in South Africa may not have the resources to offer regular masterclass performances, which can limit student access and opportunities. Another challenge is that masterclass performances are often offered as standalone events or activities rather than being fully integrated into the broader curriculum. This can limit the impact of masterclass performances on students' overall learning and development, as they may not be able to apply what they learn in the context of their other courses and activities (Atkinson et al., 2013; Lafosse, 2014).

To overcome these challenges, universities in South Africa may need to consider strategies such as seeking external funding and partnerships, investing in technology infrastructure, prioritising diversity and inclusion, and developing more integrated curricula that fully incorporate masterclass performances into students' overall learning experiences (Long et al., 2011). Additionally, universities may need to explore alternative approaches to masterclass performances, such as online or hybrid formats, that can expand access and reach while addressing resource constraints.

DISCUSSION

In this article, it is discussed that masterclasses provide valuable networking opportunities for opera students, allowing them to connect with professionals in the industry and potentially gain access to future performance opportunities or employment offers. This study argued that the curricularisation of masterclass performances is paramount for opera singer graduates in South African higher education. This is important in South Africa, where the opera industry is relatively small and competitive, and opportunities for performance and career advancement may be limited.

This article highlights that masterclasses provide an opportunity for singers to refine their skills under the guidance of experts in the field. It was also highlighted that masterclasses could become disjointed and lack direction without a well-structured curriculum. The literature of this study describes masterclass performances as an essential aspect of the education of opera singer graduates in South African higher education. It provides an opportunity for singers to refine their skills, learn from experts in the field, and prepare for a career in opera.

Furthermore, in addition to the masterclass sessions, students should have opportunities to perform in public settings. This can include recitals, concerts, and operatic productions, which provide valuable performance experience and exposure. Effective assessment and feedback are important for students' progress. The masterclass instructor should provide regular feedback in group and individual settings to help students improve their skills.

Consistent with previous research, Creech et al.'s (2009) findings reveal that masterclass performances can improve WIL for opera singer graduates by providing exposure to industry experts, real-world application of academic learning, networking opportunities, and performance opportunities. These experiences can enhance opera singer graduates' practical skills and knowledge and better prepare them for a successful career in opera. Masterclass performances allow opera singer graduates to learn from

experienced professionals in opera. This exposure provides insight into the industry and its requirements and helps students understand what it takes to succeed. This finding aligns with the WIL conceptual framework that states that WIL significantly contributes to education by preparing graduates for the workforce, particularly in the performing arts industry (Yeo & Rowley, 2020).

Again, the findings of the current study show that even though masterclass performances are essential for opera singer graduates, there are challenges with the curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education, including limited resources, inadequate funding, limited access to technology, limited opportunities for performance, and limited collaboration. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring the success of masterclass performances in South African higher education (Fleischmann, 2015).

This study established that universities should strive to embrace masterclass performances in opera schools. They can offer a unique and valuable learning experience that is difficult to replicate in other settings. By bringing in guest artists and experts, universities can provide their students with the best possible education and training, helping to prepare them for successful careers in opera and beyond. This finding is congruent with previous studies by Atkinson et al. (2013) and Cherevko et al. (2021). For opera schools, in particular, masterclasses can be an important and useful tool for developing vocal technique, stage presence, and overall performance skills. Working closely with a renowned opera singer or director can be an invaluable experience for aspiring performers. It can help to prepare them for the rigours of a career in opera. The results of this study reveal that masterclass performances are an important aspect for opera singer students, and can help students develop skills, gain confidence, and make valuable connections in the industry.

Masterclass performances give graduating opera singers vital real-world experience. Students have planned opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical situation by including the situations in the curriculum. This guarantees a more all-encompassing education that better equips graduates for the demands of the workplace. In conclusion, the curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates is instrumental in providing a comprehensive, practical, and well-rounded education that prepares students for successful careers in the opera industry. It bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and the competitiveness of graduates in the professional world.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the data and literature, opera schools are recommended to embrace masterclass performances to ensure the employability of graduate opera singers. The educational experience and skill development of students can be considerably improved by incorporating masterclass performances as part of a curriculum. The study concludes that opera schools should adopt masterclasses and include them in their regular course offerings. Students should be aware of how masterclasses relate to and enhance their assignments. Institutions can effectively integrate masterclass performances into their curricula by heeding these recommendations and giving students valuable opportunities for skill development, practical training, and exposure to industry directors. With this strategy, students are more equipped to succeed in their chosen fields, and their educational experience is enriched.

CONCLUSION

The current study explored the importance of the curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates. Masterclasses provide a unique opportunity for singers to learn from experienced professionals, hone their skills, and build their networks in the industry. By participating in masterclasses, opera students can gain valuable experience performing in front of others and receiving feedback on their technique, interpretation, and overall artistry. Furthermore, many employers in the opera industry value the experience and training that comes from participating in masterclasses. By including masterclass performances as part of their curriculum, opera schools can help to prepare their graduates for success in the professional world.

Embracing masterclass performances can be an important way for opera schools to ensure the employability of their graduates. By providing opportunities for students to learn from experienced professionals, build their networks, and gain exposure to potential employers, opera schools can help prepare their graduates for successful careers in the opera industry. In addition to providing opportunities for students to participate in masterclasses, opera schools can help their graduates build networks and gain exposure to potential employers. This can include facilitating opportunities for students to perform in local opera companies or festivals, connecting them with alums or other industry professionals, and offering career development resources such as workshops or seminars.

Using a framework of analysis largely informed by the central tenets of Fleischmann's (1995) outline of WIL, this study examined the importance of WIL in providing opera singer graduates with work experience to respond to the demands of the industry. By so doing, this study has argued and revealed that masterclass performances offer important skills to opera singer graduates. By providing an opportunity to develop vocal technique, interpretation, stage presence, artistry, and collaboration skills, masterclass performances can help opera graduates succeed in the highly competitive and demanding world of professional opera.

The approach and analysis in the article were informed by what the researcher viewed as a nexus that gradually grew in higher education as a key for graduate employment. Cumulatively, masterclass performances can also help opera graduates develop important collaboration skills. Furthermore, opera is a highly collaborative art form, and successful opera singers must be able to work effectively with other artists, including conductors, directors, and fellow performers. Through participation in masterclasses, opera graduates can learn how to work collaboratively with others to create a successful performance.

Through masterclass performances, students can learn important skills such as stage presence, interpretation, and audience communication. They can also gain exposure to various styles and genres of opera, broadening their understanding and experience. One of the key benefits of masterclass performances in the curriculum is the opportunity for students to work closely with experienced instructors and mentors. These mentors can provide personalised feedback and guidance, helping students identify areas where they need to improve and giving them strategies to overcome any technical or artistic challenges they may face. This study affirms that the masterclass performances curriculum offers unique WIL and performative opportunities for opera singers, particularly graduates.

LIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

The study was limited to critical discourse analysis using existing literature.

For this reason, the results of the study cannot be generalised to other forms of art, such as visual and fine arts, nor can the findings be generalised to other countries. The study aimed to investigate the importance of the curricularisation of masterclass performances in South African higher education for opera singer graduates. It is recommended that the study be replicated on a broader spectrum.

REFERENCES

Atkinson, P., Watermeyer, R., & Delamont, S. (2013). Expertise, authority and embodied pedagogy: Operatic masterclasses. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *34*(4), 487–503. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2012.723868

Cherevko, K., Zhyshkovych, M., Kalyn, R., & Komarevych, I. (2021). Master class as a leading pedagogical technology in professional improvement of individual performing qualities of singers. *Revista Amazonia Investiga*, *10*(47), 282–292. https://doi.org/10.34069/ai/2021.47.11.29

Creech, A., Gaunt, H., Hallam, S., & Robertson, L. (2009). Conservatoire students' perceptions of master classes. *British Journal of Music Education*, *26*(3), 315–331. https://doi.org/10.1017/S026505170999012X

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Longman. https://archives.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/media/methods/critical.html

Fleischmann, K. (2015). Developing on-campus work-integrated learning activities:The value of integrating community and industry partners into the creative arts curriculum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, *16*(1), 25–38.

Forman, J., & Damschroder, L. (2007). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Advances in Bioethics*, *11*(07), 39–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3709(07)11003-7

Haddon, E. (2014). Observational learning in the music masterclass. *British Journal of Music Education*, *31*(1), 55–68. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265051713000223

Hanken, I., & Long, M. (2012). Master classes - What do they offer? *NMH-Pulikasjoner*, *8*, 5–28.

Hanken, I. M. (2010). The benefits of the master class. The masters' perspective. *Nordic Research in Music Education. Yearbook*, *12*, 149–160.

Lafosse, A. L. (2014). *Learning To Teach a Master Class, With a Consideration of Its Pedagogical Value and Examples From the Clarinet World*. *May*.

Long, M., Gaunt, H., Hallam, S., & Creech, A. (2011). *Mapping Master classes*.

Rogers, R. (2002). Between contexts: A critical discourse analysis of family literacy, discursive practices, and literate subjectivities. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *37*(3), 248–277. https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.37.3.1

Scholtz, D. (2016). Curriculum revision : Challenges in responding to change Curriculum revision : Challenges in responding to change. *Progressio*, *35*(2), 132–

152.

Taylor, A. (2010). Participation in a master class: Experiences of older amateur pianists. *Music Education Research, 12*(2), 199–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613801003746576

Terblanche, T., & Bitzer, E. (2018). Leading curriculum change in South African technical and vocational education and training colleges. *Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training, 1*(1), 104. https://doi.org/10.14426/jovacet.v1i1.16

Yende, S. J. (2021). *Performing Arts: A case study. Practitioners' Corner. The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning. -16* (1), 129–141.

Yende, S. J. (2022). *The Quest for New Digital Skills for Opera Artists and Opera Companies during the Covid-19 Pandemic*. Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology. *7*(6), 1–2.

Yende, S. J., & Mugovhani, G. (2021). Employability challenges facing vocal art graduates in South Africa: A case study of Tshwane University of Technology. *Muziki, 18*(1), 110–126. https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980.2021.1957002

Yende S.J., & Pashkevitch. R. (2022). Importance of Decolonising Western Languages in South African Opera Schools in Higher Education: A Content Analysis. *African Perspectives of Research in Teaching & Learning (APORTAL), 6*(1).

Yeo, N., & Rowley, J. (2020). 'Putting on a Show' Non-Placement WIL in the Performing Arts: Documenting Professional Rehearsal And Performance Using Eportfolio Reflections. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, 17*(4), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.53761/1.17.4.5