



# Magazine EDUCATION

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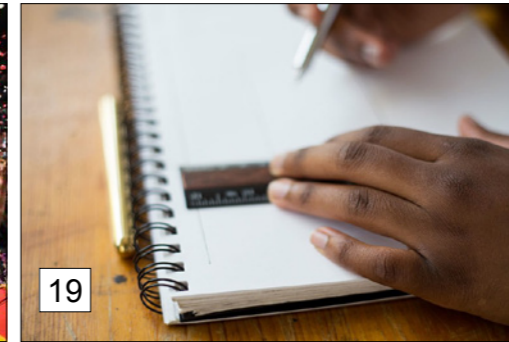
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## Editor's column

### Should tablets replace textbook?

Proponents of tablets say that they are supported by most teachers and students, are much lighter than print textbooks, and improve standardised test scores. They say that tablets can hold hundreds of textbooks, save the environment by lowering the amount of printing, increase student interactivity and creativity, and that digital textbooks are cheaper than print textbooks.

Opponents of tablets say that they are expensive, too distracting for students, easy to break, and costly/time-consuming to fix. They say that tablets contribute to eyestrain, headaches, and blurred vision, increase the excuses available for students not doing their homework, require costly Wi-Fi networks, and become quickly outdated as new technologies are released.

In 2010, Amazon announced e-books were outselling paper books, and in 2012, e-book revenue exceeded that of hardcover books for the first time ever. In 2016, about 90% of all textbooks used in higher education in South Africa were available as e-books.

In a 2017 global survey of primary and secondary school teachers in 89 countries by Schoology, 95% of teachers responded positively in response to the question "in your opinion, does digital or blended learning positively impact student growth or achievement?" with 52% saying "very much" and 43% saying "somewhat."

A 2016 an international survey by Deloitte found that 88% of parents of high school learners, 84% of teachers, and 75% of students, are "very or somewhat interested in having more at-home digital content available to supplement what's being taught in school." 73% of teenagers said they would spend more time learning over the holidays if digital learning resources were made available to them.

In South Africa, ongoing surveys conducted by district-based administrators found that 99% of respondents "saw at least one benefit in using digital content over print in the classroom" with 76% saying that it allows teachers "to deliver individualised instruction" and 63% saying that it "captures greater learner attention/engagement." Education officials also had concerns about switching to digital content with 60% of public school administrators and 30% of private school administrators worried about unequal access to the internet at home.

Alongside the benefits, mobile devices certainly come with their share of complications. Teacher authority, for example, is one area that can easily be undermined when mobile technology is allowed in classrooms. One of the often-mentioned benefits of mobile devices in classrooms is that they allow simultaneous work to take place – but does that undercut the master lesson plan?

There is also the question of cost and even having learners bring their own devices can be an issue. Bring-your-own-device policies may draw attention to situations where some students are more privileged than others, and there is always the potential for theft.

There are privacy issues to consider, too, especially now that tracking cookies are so prevalent on personal mobile devices. Do we really want third parties following our students on their learning paths? And should teachers have access to what students do on their mobile devices when outside the classroom?

#### Yours in education

**Janos Bozsik**  
Editor

# CloudGate Xs accelerating ICT efficiency with energy-savvy computing

## This cost effective Micro-PC is ideal for school-business or education use

With the ever present threat of power outages coupled with skyrocketing electricity bills, schools and organisations across sectors are looking for energy efficient and power-saving computing solutions. The palm-sized CloudGate Xs offers such a solution, weighing just 300g and drawing less than 24W of power. As with its sister device, CloudGate X, the CloudGate Xs is capable of running the Linux, Windows 10 and Chrome operating systems. Additionally, however, the CloudGate Xs sports the newest generation Intel Gemini Lake CPU – and thereby offers a critical performance increase of 25% over the CloudGate X. With its new, sleek design, this powerful device also benefits from improved heat dissipation.

“The CloudGate Xs is an ideal replacement for most desktop computers, at a fraction of the cost. It also comes in at the same price point as the CloudGate X, making it an extraordinarily accessible – yet sophisticated – computing solution,” explains Xavier Nel, Head of Product at CloudGate. “Simply plug in a screen, keyboard and mouse and you have a mini-PC for business or education use.”

Perhaps most importantly, this is an eco-friendly solution. By using less than 10 percent of the electricity a typical desktop requires, this user-friendly device lessens the energy footprint for an organisation considerably. With the spectre of a fragile Eskom always nearby, embracing power-savvy technology – which translates into low running costs – has become paramount.

From a connectivity perspective, the CloudGate Xs has 802.11b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4.2 and 1Gig Ethernet. Despite its sleek form, the device boasts three USB 3.0 ports and several others that include VGA, HDMI, RJ45, one DC 12V 2A power input and one 3.5mm audio port. Users will benefit from 4GB DDR4 High-Speed RAM, 64 GB EMMC Solid-State Storage, and an SD card reader. Moreover, storage capacity can be upgraded with an extra 128GB or 256GB m.2 SSD.

“This is an extremely powerful and adaptable computing solution, with UHD and 4K screen support, running all Microsoft software with access to Internet, email and social media,” adds Nel. “Organisations can harness business-critical apps like Pastel, Salesforce and Dynamics CRM, and it is wall and screen mountable – making it ideal for business and educational use.”

The CloudGate Xs ships with a power adapter, VESA Screen Mount, HDMI cable and instruction booklet. Ranging in cost from between R3 499 and R5 199 (depending on the chosen configuration), the CloudGate Xs delivers on several use cases across industry sectors.

“From call centres to businesses, school computer laboratories to universities, the CloudGate Xs is a highly flexible and efficient computing solution. Indeed, by supporting various operating systems, we are giving customers the freedom to choose the platforms they are most comfortable with. As it is a proudly South



African innovation, we provide extensive local support and can easily customise the device to user requirements”.

#### What is CloudGate?

CloudGate was founded in 2010 by Frans Jacobs and Brian Timperley. This proudly South African technology company develops and distributes edge-computing devices, namely the CloudGate X and CloudGate XS. Designed for business and education use, these palm-sized mini-PCs enable sophisticated computing – at a fraction of the cost and using less power than an energy-saving light bulb. CloudGate offers a powerful replacement solution for most tower computers, with extensive local support. ▲

#### Website

<https://www.cloudgate.co.za>

Tel: 010 140 4426

## Why climbing a tree is better than watching a screen...

It is all over the news! How much screen time is too much for young children? What is it about this age of technology and the need to understand the dynamics of our changing world? Are we bringing up a generation of children who are comfortably able to live in a world of humans and computers? Are we allowing little bodies to develop fine and gross motor skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, imagination and creativity? Or are we choosing to remain blind to the negative effects that screen time is having on the physical and cognitive development of our children? Or is it just easier to give in and ignore the very real possibility that too much time on electronic devices is stifling our children's ability to learn effectively?"

According to Cindy Glass, Founder and Owner of Step Up Education Centres these are critical questions and, unfortunately, the answers are not particularly favourable.

### She offers the following important points for consideration:

- 1. Children learn by doing, not by having things done for them.** Building puzzles, creating imaginative games, playing in the sand or climbing a tree require active involvement from children. They need to think, solve problems and use their innate creativity to enjoy these activities. Furthermore, they develop important motor skills. In a nutshell, children learn how to use their bodies and minds effectively. Sitting for hours in front of a screen involves mindless pressing of 'buttons' and instant gratification. This is clearly not ideal for growing and developing children.
- 2. We live in a world of other human beings.** Playing games with other children, be it siblings or friends, involves learning essential emotional intelligence skills. Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills are learned to a great extent, through interactive play. Parents who spend time playing games or making things with their children enjoy positive relationships and wonderful connections that cannot ever be experienced on a computer.
- 3. Children who spend time outdoors enjoy the benefits of natural light, the warmth of the sun, exercise and heartfelt laughter.** Their developing bodies can enjoy the freedom of running, climbing, riding bikes or sitting in the



shade of a tree observing the little creatures that make up their world. There is no computer-generated game or activity that can mimic these essential, healthy lifestyle activities.

We live in a world of increasingly demanding technology – that is a fact that we cannot ignore. But Cindy argues that it does not mean that we should deprive young children of essential life and developmental skills by allowing technology to override their natural and innate need to learn through active engagement with their world and all that it offers.

"In short, little children do not need devices; they need trees and building blocks, puzzles and crayons," Cindy concludes. ▲



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## Hospitality graduates shine

After studying and working hard during their four-month fully-funded learnerships at The Peermont Hotel School, a CSI initiative of the Peermont Community Benefit Trust, which is funded by Emperors Palace, these youngsters were rewarded for their efforts graduating as either chefs, waitrons or housekeepers at a ceremony at the Palace of Dreams' Red Roman Shed earlier this month.



These youngsters from Germiston and Katlehong were rewarded for their efforts graduating as chefs, waitrons or housekeepers. The thrilled graduates are pictured here after the ceremony with Chef Lehan Botha, their mentor and Director of Celo, the accredited training provider for the school. Local residents between the ages of 18 and 25 who have their sights set on becoming a chef, waitron or housekeeper can apply for a sponsorship, which will give successful applicants the opportunity to complete a four-month course at the school in one of the above-mentioned skills programmes.



This group of graduates from Boksburg and Vosloorus recently graduated from the Peermont Hotel School (PHS) having successfully completed skills courses and can now look forward to a brighter future. Fully-funded by the Peermont Community Benefit Trust (PCBT), a CSI initiative of the Palace of Dreams, these students, along with other youngster from Ekurhuleni, spent four months getting theoretical and practical training to give them a qualification and a better chance at employment and a career in the hospitality industry. The happy graduates are pictured here celebrating their achievements with Chef Lehan Botha (suit) and Jeanne Visagie (yellow dress), the Directors of Celo, the accredited training provider for the school.



After studying and working hard during their four-month fully-funded learnerships at The Peermont Hotel School, a CSI initiative of the Peermont Community Benefit Trust, which is funded by Emperors Palace, this group of Benoni and Daveyton students were rewarded for their efforts.

## Royal visit for hospitality students

The Queen Mother of the Royal Bafokeng Nation, Her Highness Mmemogolo Semane Molotlegi was a special guest at the Peermont Hotel School's (PHS) latest Friday Live Luncheon held on 1 March 2019.



The school hosts luncheons on a regular basis to give students who have fully-funded scholarships to the PHS an opportunity to hone their skills in a "live environment". Here waitron student, Koketso Mmotong of Crystal Park serves the he Queen Mother a meal prepared by the school's students learning to be chefs. The school is a CSI initiative of the Peermont Community Benefit Trust and is supported by and based at Emperors Palace.



On hand to welcome the Queen to the school were the Directors of Celo, the accredited training provider for the school, Jeanne Visagie (left) and Lehan Botha (second right) and Peermont Community Benefit Trust Manager, Jenny Findlay (right). The school hosts luncheons on a regular basis to give students who have fully-funded scholarships to the PHS an opportunity to hone their skills in a "live environment".

(All photographs by Yolanda van der Stoep)

## Teachers encouraged to enter national ICT in education competition

The nonprofit Digital Education Institute (DEI) has issued a call for the country's teachers to enter the 2019 ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Competition by visiting [www.ispasuperteachers.co.za](http://www.ispasuperteachers.co.za)

Registration for one of South Africa's longest-running annual ICT (Information & Communication Technologies) in education competitions is open – and will close on 3 May 2019.

Following registration, competition hopefuls must then apply cutting-edge ICT thinking to lesson plans and submit their final award entries by 28 June 2019.

ICTs are bringing a new age of education to South Africa. A new era of Open Education Resources (OERs) is dawning to supplement the use of textbooks as learning resources in the classroom. This worldwide OER movement is rooted in the human right to access high-quality education.

This year, for the first time, the ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Competition requires educators to create innovative curriculum-aligned ICT-infused lesson plans. This is to showcase their prowess in using technology to enhance classroom teaching and learning.

### Partners and sponsors

- The prestigious ISPA SuperTeacher Competition is funded by South Africa's Internet Service Providers' Association (ISPA).
- The Mighty Pen Education Magazine ([www.themightypen.co.za](http://www.themightypen.co.za)) is the media partner for the competition. This digital magazine can be viewed across a range of devices.

Held every year since 2001, the ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Awards have emerged as a much-anticipated fixture of the annual iWeek Internet industry conference and exhibition. The iWeek event takes place around September each year and this year's conference and exhibition will be hosted in Johannesburg.

According to project manager Milford Malunga at DEI, "The ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Awards are well-respected in education circles, both for their longevity and for the huge role they have played in encouraging teachers to pioneer ICT."

ISPA's project has equipped over 5 000 teachers with ICT skills thanks to continued support from ISPA's members who pledged their further support at iWeek in 2018.

In previous years, only educators who had participated in ISPA's 'Train the Teacher' ICT skills programme were eligible to submit projects for adjudication by the ISPA SuperTeacher judging panel. Opening the competition up to all educators currently teaching at schools throughout South Africa recognised that tremendous strides have been made in equipping local teachers with the kind of ICT skills that they may want to showcase, even though they may not have received these skills through ISPA and the DEI's ICT in education interventions.



The 2018 ISPA winners

There are two competition categories this year and each of the ISPA SuperTeacher award-winners will receive a trophy as well as various sponsored prizes.

Please visit [www.ispasuperteachers.co.za](http://www.ispasuperteachers.co.za) to register for the competition. You will find more information here on the two award categories as well as detailed competition entrance requirements.

For further information contact Sharon Ries at the Digital Education Institute on 074 743 8984. ▲



Digital Education Institute  
[www.dei.org.za](http://www.dei.org.za)



## PROCESS FOR INFORMATION PRESENTATIONS AT SCHOOLS

Al-Anon Family Groups regularly give information presentations at rehabs, clinics, corporates, schools, and to groups of professionals such as doctors, police, social workers, educators and more.

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, also speaks, on request, at schools to learners, educators, parents and other family members.

To request an information session at your school, a few simple steps should be followed:

1. Decide when – date, time – and duration of the presentation is required (we usually like at least 45 mins for a presentation)
2. Please put your request in an email and send to [publicoutreachza@gmail.com](mailto:publicoutreachza@gmail.com). This goes to Bette, our National Public Outreach Co-ordinator. Please give at least 30 days notice. Otherwise we also accept a telephonic request to Bette at 082 576 9739, or our local Al-Anon Information office - [alanontvl@absamail.co.za](mailto:alanontvl@absamail.co.za), or 011 867 0731 (the Office is open Mon, Wed, Friday)
3. We will confirm via email that your request will be placed in our calendar
4. Please also provide us with details of the audience (age spread), numbers, how many educators will be there & a contact person's details.
5. On the day:
  - a. The Alateen team will arrive 30 mins (at least) before the session to set up & test our laptop, audio & data projector, and to bring pamphlets for learners to take away
  - b. At start, one teacher should introduce us to the learners
  - c. We allow questions from the kids, but often find they are too shy to put up their hands. So we offer to stay behind for 30 mins or so to answer questions.
  - d. We will also bring a few small posters to display, and pamphlets for educators
6. There are no fees for any of the above

We are excited at this possible opportunity to speak at some schools and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards



Bette Kun

Al-Anon Family Groups: National Public Outreach Coordinator, South Africa

082 576 9739: [publicoutreachza@gmail.com](mailto:publicoutreachza@gmail.com) : [www.alanon.org.za](http://www.alanon.org.za)

## FOR EDUCATORS & PRINCIPALS

### What is Alateen?



#### Alateen is:

...a fellowship of young Al-Anon members, usually teenagers, whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

#### Purposes of Alateen

##### Young People Come Together to:

- share experience, strength, and hope with each other
- discuss their difficulties
- learn effective ways to cope with their problems
- encourage one another
- help each other understand the principles of the Al-Anon program

##### Alateen Members Learn

- compulsive drinking is a disease
- they can detach themselves emotionally from the drinker's problems while continuing to love the person
- they are not the cause of anyone else's drinking or behaviour
- they cannot change or control anyone but themselves
- they have spiritual and intellectual resources with which to develop their own potentials, no matter what happens at home
- they can build satisfying and rewarding life experiences for themselves

#### Sponsorship & Supervision

**In order to be registered as an Alateen group, there must be TWO Alateen Group Sponsors at each meeting. These sponsors – Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service (AMIAS) – are experienced Al-Anon members, certified through the Alateen Service certification process, prior to serving, and are in possession of a SAPS Police Clearance Certificate, renewed annually.**

#### 2019 UPDATE

During 2018 we operated 2 Alateen Groups in Gauteng & 2 in KZN. Supported by our friends in AA, they brought their children to us and have reported amazing results both at home and in school through regular attendance at Alateen meetings.

For 2019 we are focusing on bringing our message to schools – to both learners & educators. We KNOW there's a need. We know families are in pain. If you'd like an information session at your school, call our helpline 0861 252 666

\*\*\*\*\*

We believe alcoholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control our parents, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.



We do not discuss religion or become involved with any outside organisations. Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics.

## UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECT OF ALCOHOLISM ON CHILDREN

For nearly 70 years, Al-Anon Family Groups, globally, has helped the families who live with the disease of alcoholism.

The disease of alcoholism in a family member or friend affects children and teenagers in many ways that impact on their behaviour and ultimately, their school work.

Frequently, students and educators do not realise that a relationship with an alcoholic could be a factor in poor performance, disruptive behaviour and other problems.

*Alateen helps young people understand how alcoholism affects the lives of all who are associated with a problem drinker.*

#### Alateen in South Africa

We have learned that learners are very cautious about attending Alateen meetings at their schools.

In some areas Alateen meetings are held in the evenings in a nearby church hall, community centre or somewhere secure.

Parents/guardians must give written permission for Alateen attendance.

Alateen South Africa has groups across the country.

A list of Alateen meetings may be found on our websites:

<http://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>  
<http://www.alanongauteng.co.za/>  
<https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/>

**alanongso@iafrica.com –  
24 hr Helpline – 0861 25 66 66**

Literature & more information is available. Just call us.

# The many wrongs of the right to education

By Jackie Carroll, CEO of Media Works

Human Rights Day offers us the chance to assess the Constitution. It's a day on which we consider whether this pioneering document is living up to its promises, weighing up the ways in which it is serving us and the ways in which it is failing. An evaluation of the Constitution's right to education reveals stark results. It is a difficult report card to read.

## Quantity, quality and the perils of their imbalance

In recent years, the government has taken important strides in improving South Africa's education system, of that there is no doubt. Significant funding has been allocated to ensuring improved access, and to good effect: there are more children in school now than ever before. More learners are graduating with a matric, too. For the past eight years, the National Senior Certificate pass rate has consistently stayed above the 70% mark. At 78.2%, the 2018 pass rate was 3.1% higher than that of 2017.

But these numbers belie the realities on the ground. With many schools still battling inadequate teacher training, infrastructure, resources and technology, the rise in the number of learners has had an impact on the quality of education they receive. And while more learners are leaving with a matric, this has been fuelled by subject choices and the adjustment of standards that leave them lacking in the knowledge and skills they need to enter tertiary institutions or the formal economy.

To graduate with a higher certificate – the lowest matric level – learners only need to obtain 40% in their home language, 40% in two other subjects, and 30% in four other subjects. The government has also recently announced the possible introduction of a fourth level, a General Education Certificate. This below-Grade 12 qualification is intended to facilitate the move between school and college. In reality, it might further inhibit learners with another poorly regarded piece of paper.



Jackie Carroll

## Perceptions and misconceptions

In this quantity-over-quality environment where standards are arguably being compromised, the value of the South African matric qualification has been compromised for some time. Today, many companies are reluctant to accept a matric at face value. Literacy and numeracy assessments are becoming common components of recruitment and screening processes. Universities have been running these assessments among applicant first-year students for years.

But there are alternatives to a matric, and the formal economy is largely at fault for failing to recognise their value. The National Qualifications Framework's Level 4 is one such equivalent qualification, as are various technical N courses. In many sectors, these certificates are of greater relevance as they include practical experience. Businesses whose entry requirements simply stipulate the need for a matric rule out applicants with worthwhile alternatives in hand.

## The right to a basic education, including adult basic education

The provision of adult basic education is carefully enshrined in Section 29 of the Constitution. But those who don't manage to complete matric are in a worse position than those who do. Adults trying to achieve the equivalent of a Grade 9 qualification or higher are



referred to adult education and training (AET) colleges, as mandated above. These colleges, however, rarely have the funding they need to be effective. Many battle with lack of infrastructure and face continuous evictions, have insufficient and out-of-date resources, and depend on minimal access to teachers

These adult learners also tend to be caught between the budgetary and bureaucratic spats that take place between the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education. While a matric qualification is the responsibility of the former, AET learners technically fall under the latter. As each department tries to relinquish custody, many learners simply fall through the cracks.

## Righting the wrongs

The government is not unaware of the challenges at hand. Of the six thematic areas the Department of Basic Education addresses in its work, five deal with improving quality. There are plans underway to reinvent community colleges and to provide additional support to the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions that equip students with useful skills.

As these efforts continue, dialogue between education institutions, both secondary and tertiary, government and the formal economy also needs to be

## 21 March 2019

This year, the country commemorates Human Rights Month under the theme: **"The Year of Indigenous Languages: Promoting and Deepening a Human Rights Culture"**.

Human Rights Day in South Africa is historically linked with 21 March 1960, and the events of Sharpeville. On that day 69 people died and 180 were wounded when police fired on a peaceful crowd that had gathered in protest against the Pass laws. This day marked an affirmation by ordinary people, rising in unison to proclaim their rights. It became an iconic date in our country's history that today we commemorate as Human Rights Day as a reminder of our rights and the cost paid for our treasured human rights.

Human rights are rights that everyone should have simply because they are human. In 1948, the United Nations defined 30 articles of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It established universal human rights on the basis of humanity, freedom, justice, and peace.

South Africa has included indivisible human rights in our own Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The articles of our Constitution can only be changed by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, which means it is difficult for anyone, including the government, to take away the basic rights of a citizen. ▲



improved. Are there learners who would benefit from a matric alternative? These learners need to be guided on their options. Are there technical positions that corporate is struggling to fill? This information should be filtered to schools, community colleges and TVETs.

In addition, subject choice counselling needs to be improved at Grade 9 level, at the point where learners are selecting the subjects that will either broaden or limit their tertiary and employment opportunities. By the time many learners reach matric, they are stuck with subjects in which they either have no aptitude or no interest – the economic consequences of this are real and dire.

The intentions are there, and the plans are in place. All that remains is to invest in and implement the strategies and systems that have already been developed. The goal post shifting that has defined the past few years is preventing any goals being scored for the Constitutional rights of our children.

# Planting the seeds of your children's future

Proficiency in mathematics is a requirement for the majority of demanding tertiary educational programmes including medicine, engineering, computer science and airline pilot training for instance.

In the past, parents and some teachers may have held the belief that some children have an affinity for maths and others do not. However, research has now shown that the mindset that kids have towards the subject plays a big role in how well they do in it.

In fact, a study of primary school students by Stanford University School of Medicine found that a positive attitude about mathematics significantly enhanced their ability to tackle calculation problems, as their positive mindset enabled the hippocampus (memory centre of the brain) to function better. Additional research has also been done to demonstrate the vital introductory role parents play in their kids' math education.

Mampho Langa, head of schools at Future Nation Schools has compiled a number of ways through which parents and care givers can cultivate a love for maths in their children and build a vital foundation for their future arithmetic skills:

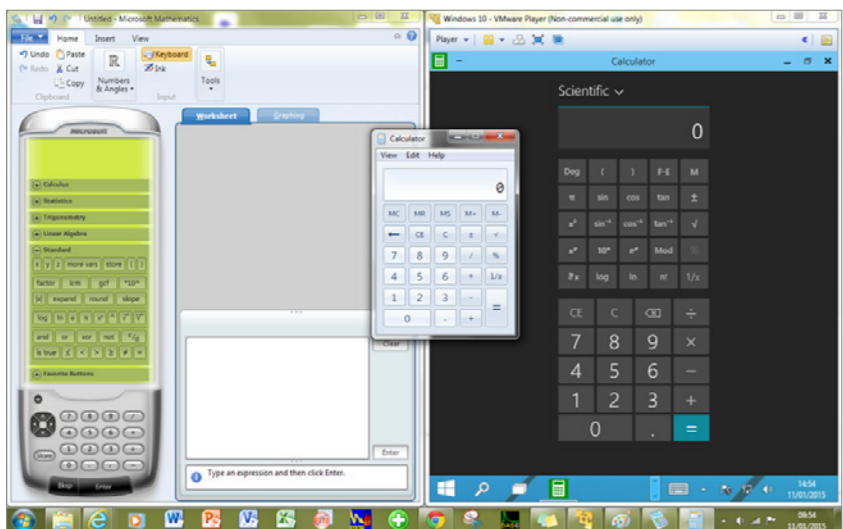
- All parents frequently purchase toys for their children and when they do, they should opt for math and STEM inspired educational toys. These toys will not only help to get the kids comfortable with arithmetic, but will also teach them useful skills in a fun way such as counting, learning different shapes, and colours.
- Collect episodes, YouTube videos, and games of their favourite children's programmes that contain math inspired songs, activities and stories such as the count the numbers song with Barney, Mickey's Number Roundup episode, and Vampirina's Learn Math with Vee game.
- If they or you have a smart mobile device such as an iPad, you can employ educational apps such as Microsoft Math and Minecraft: Education Edition to advance and boost their mathematical skillset. These feature fun math



activities as well as kids' games that helps foster an affinity for mathematics in kids while enabling them to get to grips with concepts such as number counting, addition, subtraction, writing out numbers, the sequence of numbers etc. These apps have also been gamified, meaning that they also help foster a sense of competition and achievement within the children, since they can earn badges for completing tasks and move up in the rankings, if the app is used by the whole class for example.

- Playing old school card games such as Uno or Maths 24 as a family will also help advance their counting and arithmetic skills.

Using these ideas to help foster a love for maths and build the foundation of their future mathematics skills as early as possible, will lead to greater academic success and ultimately, the opportunity to study a greater range of subject matter down the line. ▽



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# High Court rules in favour of private higher education institution's law degree

**Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development has one year to change the Legal Practice Act**

In a case that has significant implications for registered and accredited Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa, the Pietermaritzburg High Court ruled in favour of The Independent Institute of Education's LLB Degree.

On 22 February 2019, Acting Judge (AJ) Carol Sibiya found that students currently studying towards The IIE's LLB degree at Varsity College are as qualified to enter the legal profession after graduation as students at Public Universities. Varsity College is a brand of The Independent Institute of Education (The IIE), whose other brands include Vega and Rosebank College.

In passing judgement, Sibiya (AJ) declared section 26 (1) (a) of the Legal Practice Act (LPA) constitutionally invalid insofar as it only allows LLB graduates from Public Universities to enter the profession and precluded students from Private Institutions from doing so.

The ruling, to be ratified by the Constitutional Court, is suspended for 1 year in order to give the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development opportunity to change the problematic sections of the Act.

The application by The IIE – which was opposed by the KZN Law Society – to have the offending section declared invalid arose in 2018 following an enquiry by a parent of a student at The IIE's Varsity College to the KZN Law Society. The Law Society's response was to say that only graduates from "Universities" could be permitted to become candidate attorneys and therefore The IIE's qualification would not be recognised for this purpose.

Sibiya (AJ) could find no rational basis for differentiating between persons with an LLB degree, particularly given that the Council for Higher Education (CHE), the highest educational authority in the land, confirmed that there was no difference in the quality and outcomes of The IIE's 4-year LLB and that of Public Universities.

She found that the distinction created by Section 26 created an unnecessary and unjustifiable limitation to entry into the profession.

The IIE's LLB degree was accredited by the CHE in 2017 and was offered for the first time in 2018. The judgment ends a period of anxiety for over 400 law students and for The IIE, who were perplexed by a seeming conflict between the Higher Education Act, through which degrees at Private Higher Education institutions are deemed equivalent to those from Public Universities, and the LPA, that drew a distinction.

"We were always confident of our position," says Dr Felicity Coughlan, Director of The Independent Institute of Education.

"However, the uncertainty that existed in the law created a great deal of unnecessary consternation for our students and their parents. The issue has its roots in the old Attorney's Act of 1979. When the new LPA was promulgated the offending clauses were merely carried through, when the word 'University' ought to have been updated to read 'Higher Education Institution'."

Dr Coughlan says further confusion arose as a result of the fact that while previously private institutions in South Africa were not allowed to be called 'Universities', amendments to the Higher Education Act in 2017 now permit this.

"However, the criteria for an institution to be recognised as a University have not yet been communicated by the Minister of Higher Education or included in the amendment, which effectively means that it remains impossible for any Private Higher Education Institution to be called a University, despite equivalent qualifications. This was a matter also dealt with in the judgment."

The IIE's Varsity College Managing Director, Louise Wiseman, says they are celebrating the outcome.

"Our graduating students will be able to apply with confidence to any law society, to be admitted as candidate attorneys anywhere in South Africa." ▲





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# Can a student loan be the right finance vehicle to open the doors of opportunity?

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today” This quote by *Malcom X* shows there is no doubt that education impacts on one’s future career and lifestyle, opening doors of opportunity. However, with the challenge of daily living expenses, it can be difficult to take up the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of tertiary education.

## So where can you go from here?

There are the lucky few who can afford to finance their education or receive a bursary, but for many a tertiary education is a pipe dream. A very real option that most seem to shy away from however, is taking out a student loan where a parent or guardian services the loan during the student’s term of study. The instalment payments typically become the student’s responsibility after graduation. Generally, loans are obtained from a bank which gives a grace period of up to 6-months after graduation, allowing the graduate to find employment before repaying the loan.

“Student loans can be an effective solution to getting the necessary education, setting you on a path which facilitates financial independence,” says Nkazi Sokhulu, Chief Executive Officer at Yalu, a company disrupting the credit life insurance market, facilitating insurance cover that pays your debt if the event of disability, getting retrenched or passing away of the policy holder.

Although it is better to start one’s workplace journey without a loan, the advance of a student loan provides you with an essential key to establishing a secure foundation of education and future employment in the workplace. While in some cases taking out a student loan is seen as an unaffordable luxury, most people don’t do the homework to see how much a student loan would actually cost them



Nkazi Sokhulu

and what alternatives are available to make this option a more affordable one, “Start by checking the fine print of the loan to see if you are being charged credit life insurance as part of the loan amount. Most Student Loan providers make Credit Life Insurance mandatory and add the insurance premium onto the loan instalment amount. Consumers have the option to shop around for alternative credit life insurance to get the best deal,” says Sokhulu.

Credit Life Insurance gives one the peace of mind of knowing that should anything happen to them, the loan would continue to be serviced – this policy protects both you and the credit institution in the event of disability, retrenchment or passing away of the policy holder.

It is also important that consumers read the policy carefully to find out what they are covered for and under what circumstances the policy will pay – this is not always easily understandable. It is because of this that Sokhulu and his partner Tlalane Ntuli, felt strongly about creating a policy that is transparent and easy to understand.

The pair drew a lot from their own experiences to design a credit life insurance product that they believe to



be the best in its class. Both having had the privilege of studying and graduating at UCT, one of South Africa’s most respected tertiary institutions, they have first-hand experience of just how financially challenging getting a tertiary education can be. Designing a credit life insurance policy therefore that is not only affordable and transparent but also gives 10% premiums back at the end of the loan, is for Yalu a way to reward the right behaviour for young adults who are starting their first jobs and often tempted to get into even more debt.

## Tips on how to get through the student loan phase of your life

1. Pay extra each month, over and above your instalment amount on your student loan. This reduces the interest and payment period of the loan;
2. If possible, remain at home as your first choice during your studies and in your first years of working so that you don’t incur additional costs on accommodation. However, if your institution or workplace is far away, you should consider sharing accommodation as a way of reducing expenses;
3. Take on a part-time job such as waitering or tutoring. While it may add extra pressure to your time and studies, it can help cover expenses, plus you have

- the added benefit of starting to earn your own money;
4. Look around for a credit life insurance that will help you pay less on your monthly student loan instalments;
5. Search online to find out the different loan options and repayment plans so that you can select the one best suited to your requirements.

“It is important to plan ahead to anticipate future circumstances,” says Sokhulu. “This applies especially to living expenses and for when the student loan money is deposited into your account. Because it is a lot of money which can be used at your discretion, it may be tempting to use on items other than studies.”

Pay the institution first and potentially put the rest away into a 32-day call account from which you can draw when funds are needed for living expenses related to your studies.

“Keep in mind why you are getting the loan in the first place – to provide you with education and access to better life opportunities. In this way your loan becomes your passport to your desired future, transforming you into a seasoned traveller of the workplace with the world of a successful career at your feet,” concludes Sokhulu. ▲



## New programme to embolden development workers as scholars

Cornerstone Institute in partnership with Community Chest in 2019 introduced a programme unique to the sector and in South African higher education to capacitate community development workers as recognised scholars and practitioners in the field.

As a selective programme, this two-year higher certificate only has 30 places available with each student receiving a full scholarship to complete the programme. Applicants undergo a rigorous selection process, which focuses on deserving community development workers who do not hold accredited qualifications, but have a significant number of years of experience in serving communities.

“When the students complete this course they will be able to establish community resource projects and facilitate learning programmes that will lead to community upliftment and increase the capacity in their respective organisations” explained Joan Daries, Community Chest programme manager.

“What sets this programme apart is that it will strengthen students as reflective practitioners – change agents that use the scholarship of community development to embolden the daily practice of local community transformation”, said Dr Rudi Buys, Dean of Humanities at Cornerstone.

The first cohort of students commenced with classes on 18 February and represents a diverse group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from across the Western Cape. These include NGOs engaged in youth development, auxiliary social work, home based care, violence prevention, conservation, and social justice programmes.

Commenting on the cohort of students selected for the programme, Noel Daniels, CEO of Cornerstone Institute, said, “I am happy with the diverse class we have and that these students and respected colleagues in the field will be qualified Community Development Practitioners when they finish this programme. It is our purpose as higher education institution to serve as a platform for education and for our youth to deepen their resilience and unleash their full potential. We aim to enable a next generation to be role models and agents of positive change. This group will serve that purpose admirably.”

Urging the students not to drop out of the 2-year programme, Susan Thevar, CFO of the Community Chest, said, “Your commitment will reflect your accountability to the community. The training programme is structured well. No-one of you must drop out of this intensive Programme. We pride ourselves in this partnership with Cornerstone Institute, and with you, as it will benefit the communities we serve.



All the knowledge and skills you will learn will be ploughed back into your organisation and the community.”

Lorna Nobula, 26, one of the selected students and part of the NGO, YMCA Cape Town, said, “We need to stand up as active citizens and not subject to what we see in this country. To be selected is great hope and opportunity to raise up as a future leader. I want to bring hope, change, unity, cooperation and I believe together we can do better.”

Themba Sizani, 34, one of the selected students and part of the NGO, I AM PASSION, said, “I am just glad to be at Cornerstone and knowing what I’m expected to do. The knowledge that I will gain will improve my work and the service we offer to the community. I am so happy that I would be attending more effectively to the needs of the community. I really expect to learn a lot about community development and ethics”.

Accredited at the NQF 5 level, the two-year Higher Certificate forms part of the suit of programmes ranging from certificate to honours degree levels offered by Cornerstone Institute’s Department of Sociology and Community Development.

The programme consists of 120 credits and spread over the key learning areas of Sociology, Development Studies, Leadership Studies, Information Skills and Project Management. ▲

## The 3-month upskilling programme that charts a new course for many careers

Although it is the norm today for people to change direction a few times during their career, many are terrified of starting from scratch in a new field. For those people, there is a little-known option for further study – becoming a moderator or assessor – which will allow them to continue moving up the ladder, while also moving in an entirely new direction in their chosen field.

“There is a huge need for technically proficient and qualified professionals in a range of fields to supervise and train others in line with required standards. A moderator or assessor course is a quick and effective way to earn the credentials to move into this new line of work,” says Danette Heyns, Vice-Principal of Oxbridge Academy, which serves more than 20 000 South African distance learning students every year.

Assessors and moderators are required in almost all careers, but there is a particularly high and rising demand for these professionals in the education sector, says Heyns. She says it is also helpful to explain what they do, using education as an example.

“In the context of education, for instance, an assessor determines whether a learner or student is competent in relation to the criteria or outcomes for a particular unit standard or qualification on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). An assessor will be responsible for explaining the assessment process, as well as the required outcomes to the learner, assessing the learner’s competence, giving constructive feedback on the assessment to the learner, and recording the outcomes of the assessment,” she says.

But assessors and moderators are in demand in most fields and professionals such as auditors, estate agents and those in the banking sector often obtain these qualifications. Assessors and moderators are generally hired by skills development providers to assess unit standards and qualifications that are registered on the NQF.

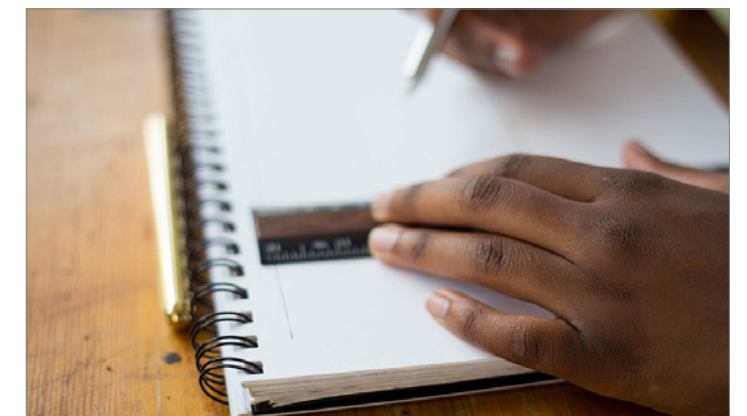
“Skills development providers can include organisations that provide training to their employees in the workplace. Assessors and moderators can either work as employees of skills development providers, or they can work as independent contractors. If you already have a relevant diploma, degree, or occupational qualification, and you want to become a qualified assessor or moderator, you are literally able to qualify to do so within 3 months of study,” says Heyns.

She explains that moderators are those professionals who provide oversight over the work of assessors, and who are responsible for quality assurance in relation to the assessment process. This means that a moderator will make sure that learners are assessed in a consistent and well-designed manner and those assessments are

carried out fairly. Moderators also handle appeals by dissatisfied learners and evaluate the performance of assessors while providing assistance where necessary.

“Becoming an assessor or moderator in your chosen field is a brilliant way to make yourself more employable and promotable,” says Heyns, “because you can build on your existing qualification without having to take years off for further study, or starting from the bottom in a new field.”

“In addition to improving your career prospects, being a qualified assessor or moderator also enables you to earn a parallel income because you can continue in your existing position while doing freelance work in your spare time. So, if you need a quick solution where you can leverage and build on your existing expertise, it is well worth a look at the current and potential future demand for assessors and moderators in your career.” ▲



## Different routes for tackling Matric through distance learning

Thousands upon thousands of learners who fail Matric every year are either unable or unwilling to return to school to complete their National Senior Certificate examinations, forcing them to join the relentlessly growing pool of South Africans who have little prospect of landing even an entry-level position.

Some of the reasons for not returning to school include a lack of funds, an unwillingness to go back to the benches with younger learners, the stigma some may feel as a result of failing, and a sense of futility over one's ability to successfully complete Grade 12.

"There is hope, and good news for young people facing these circumstances, as well as those who had long ago given up hope," says Nomawabo May, Team Leader: Student Advisor Department at Oxbridge Academy.

She says young people who either failed, or didn't gain university exemption in the past three years, still qualify to do rewrites of papers this year – provided they move quickly to meet registration deadlines.

"If you've been sitting at home since receiving bad news about your results last month, and don't know where to from here, you should seriously consider heading back to the books sooner rather than later, as you are still in a great position to earn your Matric despite your earlier setback," she says.

May says the benefit of doing Matric subject rewrites via distance learning, is that it is affordable, that it can be done via the comfort of one's own home, that learning materials are user-friendly and easy to understand, and that there will be excellent tutor support available both telephonically and online if one is signed up with a respected institution.

"If your attempt to finish school in 2016, 2017 or 2018 was unsuccessful, you are still well positioned to grasp the bull by the horns this year, and we'll advise anyone falling into this category to consider their vision for their future and to turn their goals and dreams into reality," she says.

May says those who were unsuccessful in completing Matric during or before 2015 should also not despair, as there are a range of options available to them, including completing a bridging course or equivalent qualification, or attempting the Senior Certificate (as amended).

"Unfortunately, people are not always aware of their options, which means that they may become despondent too early, and give up because they simply don't know that there are routes to qualifying that will suit their pocket and their circumstances.

"Some people still think going to school is the only way to finish Matric, and if you weren't successful, you have to resign yourself to this outcome. Nothing can be further from the truth, as home study – distance learning – is recognised worldwide as an effective way in which to further your education. It is the ideal option for older students, those who live outside of the main metros or even in



rural areas, those who have work or family responsibilities preventing them from attending full-time contact classes, and those whose budgets don't allow for travel and high accommodation costs."

May says one of the big inhibitors for these students, however, is the fear of failing again.

"That is why you need to ensure you speak to a student counsellor at a respected institution, who will help you devise the best strategy for you and your studies. These advisors will be able to help you determine exactly what the best course or courses are for you, how you need to pace your studies, and also what additional support you may need.

"Our message to the hundreds of thousands of South Africans sitting at home, unable to see a light at the end of the tunnel, is that there is indeed hope. All it takes is for them to take the first step, and to make contact with the people whose mission in life it is to help people like them realise their dreams and aspirations. Then, to take the next baby step and the next baby step, until these dreams start taking shape and are realised." ▲



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