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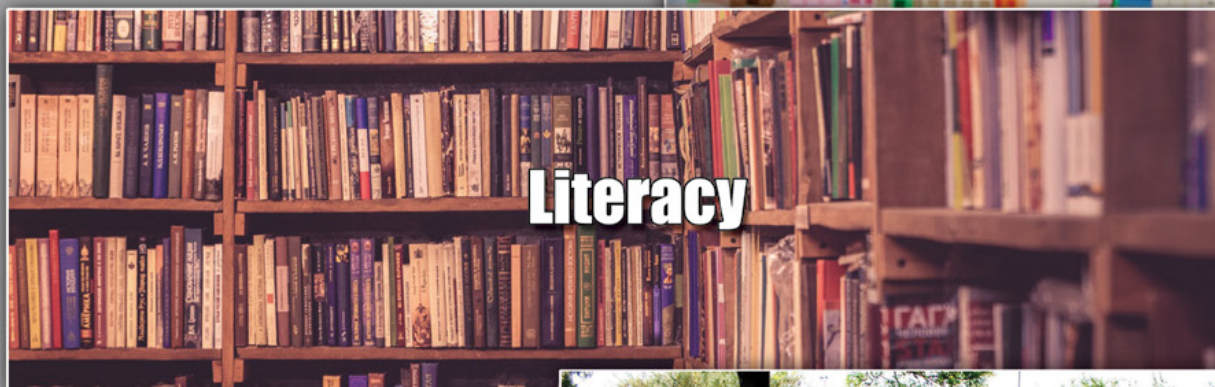
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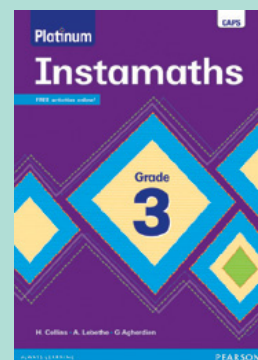
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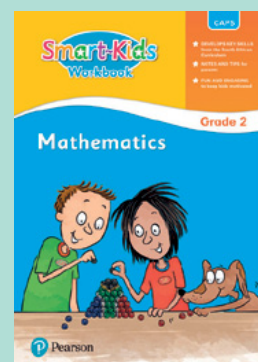
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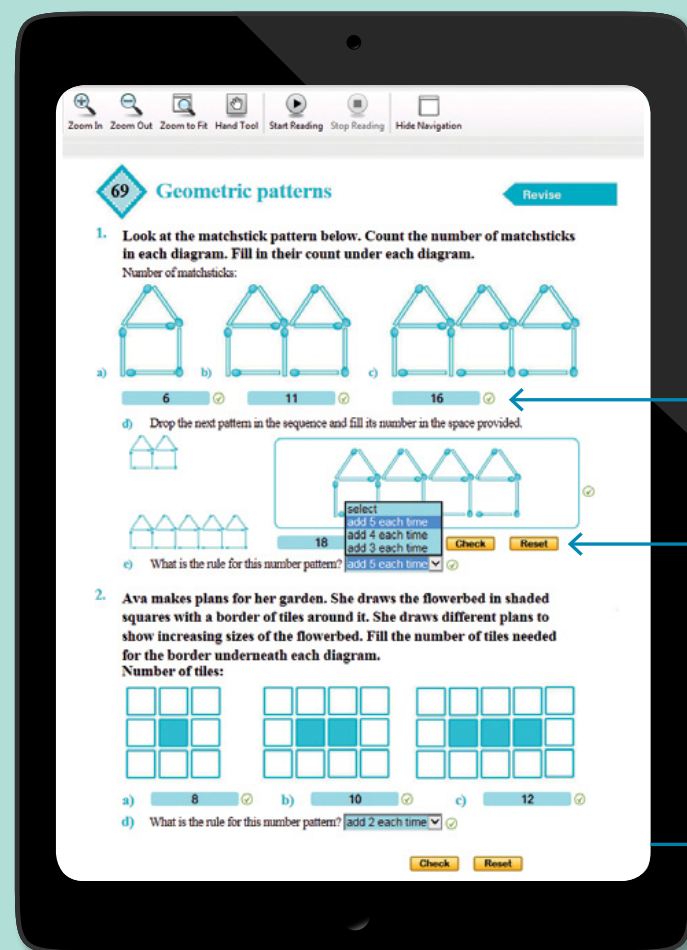
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Editor's column

Corruption in schools – many principals are no better than crooked politicians

Corruption in South African schools is one of the areas of concern with only 15% of complaints being reported. This was revealed by civil body Corruption Watch at the release of its 2017/2018 corruption report.

Maladministration and miss-use of funds are some of the biggest issues facing schools.

Over 5 000 complaints were lodged in 2017/2018. The Education sector is the main culprit, with 1 750 schools nationwide having been accused of acts of corruption and collusion.

“We found that a significant volume of reports come from parents who reported corruption in management of schools resources,” says Executive Director of Corruption Watch, David Lewis.

The Department of Basic Education has welcomed the release of the report. “Where there are reports of corruption and mismanagement that is a problem we need to tackle so we appreciate the work done by Corruption Watch because they elevate issues we otherwise wouldn’t know about,” says Basic Education Spokesperson Elijah Mahlangu.

I surveyed over a dozen articles on the topic from the past two years and the most common headline is: *Corruption in schools: principals identified as the main culprits*.

According to Corruption Watch’s research, 55% of complaints showed that the principal was the primary culprit, while 14% of complaints showed collaboration between principals and school governing body (SGB) members in corrupt activities.

SGBs and principals hold a lot of power in schools, and are able to manipulate parents who have limited knowledge of school financial policy. While parents of learners in the schools that were audited are not privy to the findings of the audits, they have limited power to pressure the GDE into prosecuting guilty individuals.

The main types of corruption were theft of school funds and financial mismanagement, which accounted for 29% and 28% of claims respectively.

A significant percentage of cases involve employment fraud, which often “slips under the radar” and goes undetected by parents. These include principals providing jobs for friends and family members, creating positions for favours, contracting family and friends as service providers for superfluous maintenance and repair works, organising school fee exemptions for “favourites” and adding meaningless job titles such as “manager” in order to justify top-up salaries for family and friends – all from school fee moneys paid by the parents.

Gauteng accounted for the highest percentage of all complaints of school corruption.

According to the South African Schools Act (SASA) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the school fund is a combination of school fees, the fundraising money and donations. It is the responsibility of the SGBs to ensure that all these funds are kept and managed in one bank account. No public school should have more than one account.

A learner cannot be excluded from participation in any official school programmes due to non-payment of school fees by the parent. A school may not retain a learner’s report because the parent does not pay school fees.

Yours in education

Janos Bozsik
Editor

Learners represent South Africa in tech education challenge world finals

Team Rhino SA, a team of an all-girls team of 17-year-olds from Pietermaritzburg Girls’ High School, KwaZulu-Natal together with The Insomniacs, a team of 16 and 17 year old boys from Roshnee Islamic School, represented South Africa in one of the world’s top education challenge world finals.

The Land Rover 4x4 in Schools World Finals 2019 was held on 14 and 15 April and brought together national champions from around the globe to compete for the World Champions title. The competition was held over two days at the University of Warwick in Coventry, UK, close to Jaguar Land Rover’s headquarters and students also participated in a visit to the company’s Gaydon Design and Engineering Centre to learn about its automated, connected and electric innovations and career opportunities.

The learners have used software coding to design and build a remote-controlled scale model four-wheel-drive all-terrain vehicle capable of negotiating obstacles and road surfaces including water dips, a rope bridge, and rocks – all on a bespoke Land Rover track replicating the capabilities of a full-size SUV. The teams also present their work and knowledge of vehicle design and engineering to a panel of expert judges drawn from industry and within Jaguar Land Rover.

Tanita Lakram, 17 of Team Rhino said: “We are out to show that engineering is for girls too. With very little engineering knowledge at the outset, we have developed our vehicle through sheer hard work. Our modular design with recyclable and reusable parts makes our car unique. We’ve developed our confidence from doing the challenge as well as expanding on our classroom learning. We’re excited to show the South African spirit to the UK.”

“We have a great passion for science, technology and learning in general and we were keen to do the challenge as an opportunity to put our knowledge and skills against others in a competition all the while learning even more,” said Sulaimaan Chamda of the Insomniacs. “Our car is made from an experimental material and we have incorporated plenty of technology into it. We are looking forward to meeting new people and learning through this experience.”

Over 15 000 young people have taken part in the Land Rover 4x4 in Schools Challenge competition since it was established in 2006. The competition was launched globally in 2015 and now operates in 20 countries.



Team Rhino from Pietermaritzburg Girls’ High School, KwaZulu-Natal



The Insomniacs, a team from Roshnee Islamic School

About Land Rover 4x4 in Schools Technology Challenge

The Challenge involves three to six team members working together to design and build a radio-controlled four-wheel-drive vehicle, to set specifications. The vehicle must be able to successfully negotiate a specially designed test track emulating real life and it must perform as a full-size SUV would do off-road.

The two-day World Finals competition include judging sessions with car scrutinising, pit and portfolio displays, verbal presentation, research, design and engineering assessments, as well as a coding challenge.

The engineering industry requires creative, multi-disciplined individuals who are capable of problem solving through individual tasks and working in motivated teams. This project replicates a ‘real-life’ work situation where specialists come together to share intellectual and practical ideals to resolve a complex problem. The Challenge is an excellent opportunity for students to work in teams to gain awareness and understanding of project management and other key skills, as well as linking with engineering companies. ▲

How digital technology can enhance SA's freedom to learn

By Dennis Lamberti

South Africa's dawn of democracy in 1994 brought about hard-won freedoms that included critical human rights such as access to the free flow of information and quality education.

It's interesting that in 1994, the internet landscape in South Africa was also only just getting started with the country's first commercial Internet Service Provider (ISP) only being a few months old at the time.

Like the rest of the world, internet access has grown quickly in South Africa since then with an estimated 67% of the country's population – or just over 33 million people – being connected in 2019.

This growing level of connectedness presents great opportunities for rolling out high-quality e-learning to more South Africans than ever before.

But in order to truly unlock the opportunities that the internet brings to learning, there are five key considerations to bear in mind when it comes to the South African education space.

Reducing high data costs

Making data cheaper in South Africa will obviously help drive up the adoption of the likes of e-learning.

In recent years, the #datamustfall movement has put the issue of high internet data prices under the spotlight in South Africa.

When it comes to lowering data costs, it's been encouraging to see new market players seeking to disrupt in this regard, even though they are primarily limited to urban areas at this stage.

Added to this, new regulations that seek to curb the expiry of data among mobile networks have also been encouraging.



Dennis Lamberti

However, South Africa has a long way to go as the country still ranks just 143 out of 230 countries when it comes to its data costs, according to recent research released by broadband market analyst firm Cable.co.uk.

By actively working to reduce these costs, more South Africans can benefit from the incredible learning power that the internet possesses.

Making data completely free for learning

There's no doubt that reducing data costs over the long-term will be essential to making digital learning more accessible to more South Africans.

Yet there is another solution that involves going one step further by encouraging local mobile networks to make data costs completely free for specific e-learning websites.

We've become accustomed to seeing local networks over the years 'zero-rating' several online services such as WhatsApp, Facebook and even Wikipedia.

It's clear then that mobile networks have the capability to roll out this free access



to a niche set of applications and platforms while still earning revenue from all other online offerings.

By zero-rating selected e-learning websites and apps, such an initiative could form part of these mobile networks' Corporate Social Investment (CSI) initiatives and make a massive difference to millions of learners across the country.

Taking online learning offline with apps

Interestingly, e-learning smartphone apps also have a role to play in boosting education by taking online learning 'offline'.

By using e-learning smartphone apps, learners can update their content when they are in a free Wi-Fi zone, such as at their school or even a shopping mall.

Many e-learning apps out there enable this capability and allow learners to download and even upload content via their smartphones.

Once at home, these learners can then run that content directly off their smartphone.

Structuring unstructured e-learning content

Making e-learning as cheap as possible is just the first hurdle to overcome in order to empower the digital learning experience in South Africa.

This is because there is a further need to create more structured e-learning platforms in South Africa and across the globe.

While there is a lot of learning material for many school subjects on platforms such as Khan Academy and even YouTube, it can still be difficult to find exactly what you're looking for.

It can be challenging, for instance, when it comes to searching for content part of a CAPS aligned curriculum.

Then there's also the risk of being distracted by adverts and other content on these platforms.

In an ideal world where data costs are falling or even free, the case for using paid-for e-learning options – which structure this content – becomes more feasible.

Rethinking learning and the classroom

Finally, teachers need to have a good understanding of what's out there when it comes to e-learning so that they can direct learners in the classroom to relevant online content which will help them enhance their learning experience.



Teachers also need to understand the power of apps and which apps can deliver the most value to their learners.

E-learning can also assist in supplementing learning in the classroom by providing lessons from other top-quality teachers in the country.

Taking all of this into consideration, it's clear then that internet technology can bring unlimited benefits to learners in South Africa.

But it will be critical that in the next 25 years we move to truly unlock this medium for more South Africans and make the best possible use out of it.

The benefits will be that we can help create a better-educated country and citizenship that can fully make use of their hard-won democratic freedoms.

Dennis Lamberti is Development Director at Media Works, which has been South Africa's leading provider of adult education and training for over 22 years. Dennis' particular expertise has been in heading the take-up of technology-driven solutions for Media Works, including the rollout and implementation of learning management system tools such as Moodle.



Education merger to boost tech-based learning in SA

Two leading players in South Africa's education space are combining forces in a merger that is set to bolster tech-driven learning solutions in the country.

FutureLearn and ITSI – which both fall within the PSG Group – have concluded a merger on 1 April 2019.

FutureLearn provides accessible education solutions to schools, tutors, parents and learners. It is well-known for brands that include South Africa's largest home education provider Impaq as well as the country's leading adult education and training provider Media Works. Learning software specialists CAMI, examination preparation workbooks provider Quanta and on-demand tutoring service Tuta-Me are also part of the FutureLearn Group. Within the schools market, FutureLearn also provides teacher and learner solutions through Teach360.

Meanwhile, EdTech company ITSI is a pioneer in delivering school curricula digitally by transforming printed textbooks into interactive platforms for mobile, desktop and tablet devices. ITSI has achieved this by using its patented e-learning solution, which is used by more than 200 clients that include several top schools. The solution works with any e-book.

ITSI has recently further branched out to provide e-learning solutions to tertiary institutions and individuals. In addition to South Africa, ITSI's offerings are also available in Namibia and the UK.

FutureLearn sees the merger with ITSI as augmenting its integrated learning ecosystems and boosting individualised guided learning.

Stefan Botha, CEO of FutureLearn, says: "We have identified exciting synergies between the two companies. ITSI's innovative use of technology enables us to expand on our current offering to learners, teachers, corporate clients, parents and tutors."

Botha goes on to say: "With this merger, we aim to provide truly accessible learning to learners in any environment and at any stage of their lives. We believe that we are creating a unique learning ecosystem where any learner will have access to quality, personalised education. We are passionate about enhancing education in South Africa, and we believe that our combined expertise will deliver quality solutions within the education industry."

Lieb Liebenberg, CEO of ITSI, says: "The merger with FutureLearn will enable us to expand into new markets and better serve specific customer needs through a more comprehensive portfolio of products. The merger will further help to continue improving our state-of-the-art teaching and learning solution."

ITSI's history stretches back to the year 2000 when it was first launched as IT School Intellect – a business that provided an integrated IT curriculum to private and public schools across South Africa.

In 2006, it rebranded as IT School Innovation (ITSI) when it incorporated all school subjects into its offering. In November 2013, financial services group



Stefan Botha



Nico de Waal



Lieb Liebenberg

PSG acquired a significant share in ITSI Holdings.

FutureLearn's history dates back to 2002 when it started life as home education brand Impaq (previously known as Impak). After PSG Private Equity acquired a majority stake in Impaq in 2012, the business evolved into the FutureLearn Group which subsequently acquired Tuta-Me and CAMI, Teach360 and the Arrow Academy model school in Centurion. In 2018, FutureLearn also merged with Media Works.

According to Nico de Waal, CEO of PSG Alpha: "FutureLearn's vision is to provide accessible guided learning at scale. We believe that by joining forces with ITSI, we will be able to make a bigger positive impact in helping solve the challenges around education in South Africa. The two businesses have complementary technology and we believe all clients will benefit through the joint-effort going forward." ▲

Smart-Kids

Make the smart choice for a brilliant future!



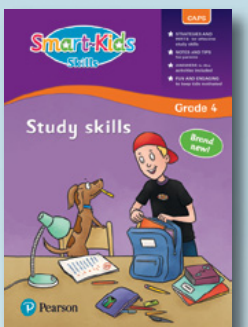
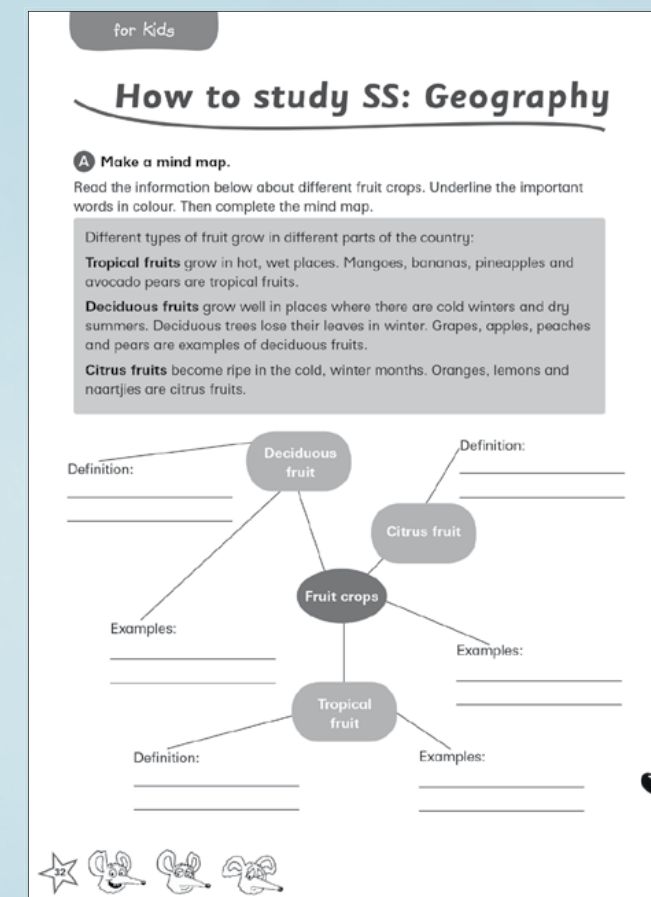
Brand new!

Smart-Kids makes learning to study fun

Smart-Kids Study Skills, written by specialists, helps learners practise essential studying skills and lead them to academic independence. This handy guide also helps parents support their child through the changes from Foundation Phase to Grade 4.

Smart-Kids Study Skills include sections for all Grade 4 subjects and helps learners to:

- ★ Learn how to take notes, make summaries and mindmaps and revise
- ★ Get exam fit with fun activities and sample questions
- ★ Acquire good study habits and homework tips
- ★ Manage time for homework and exams
- ★ Understand roles and responsibilities for homework and projects



LEARNERS WHO BENEFITED FROM THE ALATEEN PROGRAMME

Below are some comments from South African school children in the Alateen programme

(Names are changed to protect members' anonymity)

Feedback

Teacher

In February this year Alateen visited Sunward Park High School in Boksburg and spoke with 1 800 learners. The coordinating teacher, Ms Juanita Engelbrecht, said that for days after the talk by Alateen learners were going on the website and asking questions. "This service is a blessing and affects many of our children," said Ms Engelbrecht. "We should have this in every school."



Patience

Ally

I was constantly angry with my mother. We always fought and never talked. Two years after my mother joined Al-Anon, I finally decided to come to Alateen. I didn't realize what I was doing. After eight meetings I realized how easily I could talk to my mother. Although it is hard to admit, I also see how much we are alike. I have learned about patience in Alateen and how important it is in communication, because I must wait and think about what I want to say. Now I can let my anger simmer down. My sister, who is the alcoholic at home, told me the importance of asking questions. Whenever I need an answer, I ask. Communication has definitely made an impact on my life. I couldn't have done it without Alateen.



Communication

Kirsten

My communication skills have improved since Alateen. I used to play the role of the shy girl who waited for people to talk to her. If there was something I wanted to say, I held it in. Now I have the courage to introduce myself to others. Because I am working the program and going to meetings, I know how to establish limits. I can confront someone if I need to without getting uncomfortable feelings. Thanks to Alateen and the tools I have gained, my relationships with my family and friends are strong, healthy, and happy. I am so grateful to Alateen for all the positive things I have received in my short life. Without this program, I wouldn't be the person I am.

Forgiveness

Anonymous

I've learned to communicate much better with my parents. Before I joined Alateen, my mom and I fought a lot because I felt we didn't understand each other. Alateen showed me we are similar in more ways than I could have ever realized. Alateen also gave me the tools I needed to forgive my dad and remake my relationship with him.



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.


Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

Manufacturing industry bursaries

Thirty eight students received financial assistance from FUCHS Lubricants South Africa (FLSA) for studies in 2019 through the FLSA Bursary Scheme and FUCHS Foundation Trust.

“The idea is to facilitate access to education for deserving students who otherwise will not have the opportunity or whose chances of success may be compromised due to inadequate financial resources. Academic merit is an important criterion in allocating the bursaries as well as financial circumstances, with the less financially well-off students being prioritised over less needy counterparts,” explained Esther Seabi, Transformation Executive, Fuchs Lubricants South Africa.

“Both bursary schemes are open to the public, and are one of FUCHS initiatives focused on economic empowerment. It is the company’s ambition to be a catalyst in economic transformation, partnering with stakeholders to support building a robust and deracialised economy,” she said.

“The other consideration is FUCHS Lubricants’ talent pool requirements, where those studying in fields that are relevant are preferred over those studying in unrelated fields.

FUCHS is a global company with German roots that has developed, produced and sold lubricants and related specialties for more than 85 years covering virtually all areas of application and sectors. FUCHS Group is the leading independent supplier of lubricants.

In close contact with its customers, FUCHS develops holistic, innovative and custom-made solutions for the most diverse applications. As a lubricant manufacturer, FUCHS stands for performance and



Part of the group of students who received FUCHS Lubricants’ bursaries for 2019

sustainability, safety, reliability, efficiency and cost savings.

FUCHS represents a promise: technology that pays back. The FUCHS product programme comprises more than 10 000 products and related services in six key categories: Automotive Lubricants, Industrial Lubricants, Lubricating Greases, Metal Processing Lubricants, Special Application Lubricants and Services.

“We wish all our bursary students well in their studies,” concluded Ms Seabi.

Furniture for rural school

Khanyeng Intermediate School is situated in Bohlokong, and has 80% of their learners coming from farms. The school consists of 265 children and they were in need of school desks and chairs.

Frontier Inn Dihlabeng Community Trust donated 90 chairs and 40 Double school desks to the school, in an effort to improve their conditions in receiving of education. It amounted to a total value of R45 675.00. ▲



Lizelle Karsten from Frontier Inn and Casino with Mr. Tshele Lucas Mofokeng, Principal of Khanyeng Intermediate School



The class in celebration of all the new tables and chairs that were donated to their school



On the handover of the Project, the following parties were involved. Back from Left: Mr. Mokgasi Benjamin Tsoela, Lizelle Karsten (Frontier Inn and Casino), Mrs. Maditaba Hilder Ntono, Mr. Tshele Lucas Mofokeng (Principal of Khanyeng Intermediate School) and Alice Moteotsane (Frontier Inn and Casino), Front from the Left: Raymond Mahlaba (Frontier Inn and Casino), Mr. Unathi Gwama and Tseko Mosamo (Frontier Inn and Casino).

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

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) 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 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



Mossel Bay alumna shoots for the stars, reaches Harvard

When Lara van Rooyen from Curro Mossel Bay scored an esteemed 92.86% average, it was clear that South Africa is dealing with a prodigious academic mind. Van Rooyen's talent has been recognised by one of the foremost academic institutions in the world, with Harvard University accepting her as a student for its next academic year.

This Ivy League university, situated in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States, consistently ranks as one of the top three learning institutions worldwide. As such, Van Rooyen is one of only 1 950 students accepted into Harvard College, the undergraduate programme of Harvard University, for the year. Starting in August, she hopes to major in Biology or Biochemistry, after which Van Rooyen will consider either going to medical school or becoming a research scientist.

Although accepted into seven other renowned American universities, the road to Harvard was a difficult one. "Realistically, I didn't think there was a chance at all that I would get accepted," Van Rooyen says, considering the number of learners that apply to study at Harvard from across the globe. After completing her application, she had to attend an interview in Cape Town which lasted for three hours. When she eventually heard about her acceptance into Harvard at the start of April, it was with as much relief as it was with excitement. "It's quite crazy, but an absolute blessing," she notes.

Van Rooyen has some sage advice for learners, stating that, "Just because you come from a small town or go to a small school, it does not mean your dreams



Lara van Rooyen

need to be small. As long as you put the effort in, and do the planning, you can make it happen." Hailing from one of the smaller towns of South Africa – George, Van Rooyen knows all too well about not just dreaming big, but also fulfilling it. ▲

Thohoyandou children to benefit from Khoroni's R122 000 donation

Khoroni Hotel, Casino and Convention Resort has donated R122 000 to Divhani Learners Support and Youth Development, an NPO that assists underprivileged and orphaned children in the community with food, clothing and educational programmes. The donation will fund the building of the Tsia-Mutsha Drop-In Centre in the Thohoyandou region of Limpopo, which will include classrooms and facilities allowing the children to come and enjoy a meal. Through this centre, social services for those in need of mental, spiritual and emotional support will be readily available.

The purpose of the centre is to create a safe space and refuge for vulnerable and at-risk youth, who are in need of a place to spend their time productively. And we are very humbled to be part of this project," says Yolanda Bester, Marketing Manager at Khoroni. Bester continues to say that the centre aims to assist and accommodate as many as 60 young people between the ages of five and 21, with the goal of offering young people a space to learn, grow and feel supported until they are old enough to leave and make their own ways in the world.



"We expect the project to be completed by June 2019, and learners and youth will be relocated to Tsia-Mutsha once the building and its facilities are ready. We are incredibly excited about the possibilities this new project will bring for the community, and can't wait to officially announce the opening," Bester concludes. ▲

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Teaching children empathy

Nelson Mandela famously stated that education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. At the same time however, our education system is in crisis. According to Cindy Glass, Co-Founder and Owner of Step Up Education Centres, “Negative behaviours such as aggression, bullying, disrespect toward teachers and peers, intolerance and demotivation seem to be hindering our children’s ability to learn effectively and this has resulted in the learning experience, in general, becoming one of distrust, anxiety, stress and misery. Our innate need to learn is being destroyed by negative human behaviours and relationships and this equates to an ever-increasing lack of empathy skills.”

She adds that it takes a village to raise a child and it is time that parents step in and step up to help change the way their children see themselves and the people in their world. The one life skill that she believes can change this is empathy. “This all-important life skill is the ability to identify with another person’s feelings and experiences. Empathy essentially allows children to ‘walk’ in another’s shoes and it teaches them to genuinely have respect for others, even in difficult circumstances. It teaches kindness, compassion and listening skills. Empathy teaches children to seek the good in others and to embrace differing beliefs and cultures. Empathy helps children to seek positive solutions to difficulties and challenges, without intending hurt for another. Just imagine the possibilities in learning if our children could master the skill of empathy!”

Cindy gives 5 helpful tips to teach your children to become more empathetic

- 1. YOU are your child’s first and longest-lasting teacher:** Your child is more likely to do what you do, rather than what you say. It is up to you to model, instruct and expect your child to care about and behave respectfully toward others.
- 2. Teach your child to express himself in a positive way:** If he is upset, teach him to express the feelings he is experiencing in words so that a positive solution can be found. Allow uncomfortable conversations that need expression. Avoidance will lead to feelings of shame and even anger and this could lead to your child making negative choices in a bid to deal with suppressed emotions.
- 3. Teach your child to allow others to express their feelings in the same way:** This leads to listening skills. Teach your child to learn to listen to understand the other person without the need for defensive responses. Listen with an open, non-judgemental mind. Genuinely hear what others are saying.



- 4. Strive to create a meaningful, face-to-face connection with your children:** Social media has desensitised us in so many ways that meaningful, wholehearted human relationships are becoming rare! People make-up and break-up over the phone. Some of the most misunderstood arguments and hurtful words are given over a digitised device. Nothing can replace face-to-face positive human connection and relationships.
- 5. Teach your children to value themselves, their strengths and their weaknesses:** Remember that we are only able to treat others based on how we feel about ourselves. Teach them of their worthiness to love and be loved. Teach them the value of each human being walking the earth with them – do we not ALL share the same human spirit? Do we not all bleed, cry, smile and breathe in the same way? Just as you teach your children to respect themselves, so we MUST teach them to respect others, to choose kindness and to master the skill of empathy. ▲

How to instil a love of books in children

The building blocks that children need for language and literacy form in their first three years, and developing early literacy skills makes it easier for children to learn to read in school. Given that reading is a vital life skill, and in celebration of World Book Day on 23 April, author and senior lecturer at Embury Institute for Higher Education, Nicole Rimensberger, shares her tips on how to instil a love of reading in young children.

Rimensberger recently self-published her first children’s book, *Witchfield*, an adventure story with a magical twist. She believes that books should be everywhere in the home (not just neatly stacked on bookshelves) – on coffee tables, on beds, on the couch, on the kitchen counter, even on the floor. “It may seem obvious, but when children see books everywhere, they become part of their daily lives, which is more likely to foster a love of books later on,” she explains. “They will learn that when they are bored, in need of distraction or just curious – all they need to do is to grab their nearest book.”

Rimensberger cites Emilie Buchwald, who said, “Children are made readers in the laps of their parents.” She says that this sums up the powerful role parents play in establishing a love of reading in young children. “Books represent quality time with mom or dad, be it with cuddles before bed or to calm down and bond after a tantrum, or to giggle and laugh about together during the day. It’s about so much more than just a book or a story at this stage, it’s about fostering the relationship as well as a love of books,” she says.

“Young children, in particular, relate to books as objects first before they fully understand how they work or what they do. They are attracted to the bright, cheerful covers, they want to explore them in a tactile way – what do they feel like? Are they heavy or light? Perhaps even, what do they taste like? There is nothing wrong when toddlers treat books like objects to play with. Learning how to treat a book gently comes later, so for now, books are about fun, exploration and learning. This is where tactile books, books with holes, pop-up books or books with flaps become very popular and can provide endless entertainment for curious fingers and curious minds.”

Rimensberger advises that reading to toddlers and young children should be about the interaction, and suggests parents and teachers get creative for story time. “There’s no need to stick to the script – much amusement can be had

when a familiar story is told with a new twist. The ensuing argument is a great opportunity for language development,” she says, “Repetition, rhyme, word play and prediction are all part of the parental tool box when it comes to story-telling and language. The child can complete sentences, guess what will happen next, think up reasons why something happened, repeat words or phrases and, in a general sense, let story-time become more of a conversation than about making it from beginning to end.”

She adds that probably the most important, yet often forgotten, element of fostering a love of reading in children is for parents to show an interest in books themselves. “Little eyes are always watching and they notice the objects that occupy the hands and minds of the adults around them – is it a cell phone or is it a book? What fascinates mom or dad is more likely to draw the attention of children too. Parents should remember, however, that buying lots of books doesn’t automatically encourage reading; becoming a reading role model does.” ▲



What employers look for in graduates?

Social media is awash with pictures of proud graduates, degree in hand and ready to embark on the next stage in their lives: searching for their first job and building the career of their dreams. Unfortunately, too many of them will soon be confronted with the realities of the job market. With the economy remaining sluggish, the political environment volatile, and the risk inherent in making a new appointment high, many employers elect to play it safe rather than recruit at this stage.

But there is a way for businesses – from consultancies, small enterprises and startups to big companies and even multi-nationals – to take the gamble out of appointing new graduates, an expert says.

“It is understandable that employers are hesitant to appoint graduates fresh out of university with little or no work experience, given the current constraints we face,” says Nola Payne, Head of Faculty: Information and Communications Technology at The Independent Institute of Education, SA’s largest private higher education institution.

“But the benefit to a business of appointing someone fresh out of higher education, who has a solid understanding of a specific industry and the most recent trends and developments in this industry, who also has the ability to implement what they have learned in the real world of work, should not be underestimated,” she says.

“Growth does not happen without appointing the best people to make it happen, and young recruits are uniquely positioned to bring fresh insights and opportunities to a business,” she says.

However Payne says this would require many employers to review their approach to recruitment, to ensure they are not stuck in past ways of doing things, which may be the reason for their inability to land the candidates their business really need.

“Just as we advise prospective students to thoroughly investigate their options before settling on a qualification and an institution, so we also advise companies to thoroughly do their homework to determine which institutions are likely to



produce graduates who are work-ready, who bring more than theoretical knowledge to the table, and who are ready to make a contribution from the very first day on the job.”

She says the best way to do this, is for employers to first determine to what degree an institution, whether it be a public university or a private one, invests in the work-readiness of graduates beyond mere academics. Additionally, a good sign would be if an institution and a qualification is closely linked to its related industry.

To determine this, there are a number of questions employers can ask, for instance:

- Have an institution’s lecturers only been standing at the front of a class for the past 30 years, or are they still active in the industry?
- Is the curriculum of a specific qualification aligned to current best practice in an industry?
- Does it incorporate work-integrated learning and is it career-focused rather than just theory-intensive?
- Do students get real-life work experience as part of their studies, with real-life challenges to solve?



- Do they exit their institution of higher learning with a portfolio of evidence?
- Does the institution ensure that all graduates are not only equipped for their industry, but also with the soft skills they will require when stepping into the workplace?
- Does an institution develop the student’s ability to creatively solve problems and continue learning, rather than simply closing the book after their initial 3 to 4 years of study?

“The higher education sector has changed dramatically over the past decade, and as recently confirmed by the High Court, a registered and accredited qualification from a registered and accredited private institution is at the very least on par with one attained at a public university.

“So one has to go beyond what the papers say, and determine from where the most capable and empowered graduates are emanating in 2019. This takes time, but the initial investment of speaking to and even partnering with quality

institutions of higher learning, beyond the traditional focus on a handful of public universities, has the potential to pay off well into the future for companies seeking to grow well into the future.

“The most important thing is to find those candidates who have demonstrated that they will and want to continue growing. Employers must not simply appoint graduates to complete tasks – they must look for those people who they can see sticking around for five years or more, who can help them grow their business beyond what is currently envisioned.”



Academic qualifications may get you an interview, but at this stage something else takes priority: showing you have the right ‘soft skills’ for the role. In most cases, this will involve showing qualities such as self-motivation, professional communication, team work and problem-solving abilities.

The core soft skills that employers look for include

- Literacy and numeracy
- Time management and organisation
- Oral and written communication
- Teamwork
- Creative problem-solving
- Initiative and enterprise
- Critical and analytical thinking
- Ability to apply discipline, knowledge and concepts
- Information gathering, evaluation and synthesis
- Emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
- Adaptability

It may also be worth doing some specific research into what values are most important for the graduate jobs and companies you’re applying to.

What soft skills are most relevant? Will you be communicating with clients regularly face to face, or spending most of your time analysing data? Does the role require you to work as part of a closely knit team, or will you have to operate mainly independently?

These 7 work skills can make you more marketable to employers

- Problem solving
- Data analytics
- Social media literacy
- Creativity
- Resiliency
- Good business sense
- Willingness to learn
- Prove your worth from the get-go

University open days: look beyond banners & balloons to make the best choice

In coming weeks, public universities and private institutions across South Africa will host a series of Open Days – events meant to showcase their offering to prospective students from the Matric Class of 2019. An education expert says it is essential that learners intending to study next year attend as many Open Days as possible to ensure they make an informed study choice, but more than that, they need to go with a strategy in hand to ensure they look beneath the surface to understand what their likely experience may be at a particular institution or campus.

“This is a very exciting time for Matrics, who for the first time will be able to get some real-life insights about life on campus and what their future might be like in coming years after school,” says Wonga Ntshinga, Senior Head of Programme: Faculty of ICT at The Independent Institute of Education, SA’s largest and most accredited private higher education institution.

“So we advise Grade 12s to determine without delay when various institutions will be hosting Open Days – an online search will suffice – and then make the effort to attend as many as possible.”

Ntshinga says there are many benefits to attending an open day, including:

- to get greater clarity on an institution’s offering,
- to visit different faculties at an institution,
- to speak to representatives of the institution who will be able to help you determine which qualification is a good fit if you are still uncertain,
- to get a feeling of life on a specific campus, and
- to weigh up the offering – academic and otherwise – of different institutions.

But he says there is one thing that prospective students must remember when attending Open Days, and that is to keep a level head and not get too starry-eyed by the fanfare of the day.

“Open Days are the perfect opportunity to get first-hand experience of a campus and its students, staff and academics. But the first rule of Open Day is to remember that Open Day might not be representative of every other day. Universities put their best foot forward to impress and attract future students, but you have to be savvy and ask the right questions, as well as make the



observations that will help you with this major decision.”

Ntshinga says prospective students should spend enough time on a campus to get a good look around, and listen to their gut feel while doing so.

“Look at the campus grounds, visit the library and the IT lab, note the condition of sports facilities, lecture rooms and even the toilets. If, for instance, an institution’s restrooms are questionable on an Open Day, chances are that they will be the same or worse during the rest of the year.

“If lecture rooms and the general environment look tired, dilapidated and unkept on this day, it is unlikely they will look better any other day of the year.”

If you get a good feeling about what you observe on campus, the Open Day then presents an opportunity to ask the important questions of university representatives, to gauge whether your degree will help you make a smooth transition to the workplace post-graduation, Ntshinga says.



To make that determination, learners should ask the following

1. **WORK-READINESS:** How much practical, work-integrated experience is incorporated into the curriculum? Any good institution, whether public university or private, must have adequate practical learning integrated into the curriculum, and not focus purely on academics.
2. **INDUSTRY-RELEVANCE:** Is there close cooperation between the faculty and lecturers, and is current industry practice reflected in the curriculum? Employers look for graduates who they know will be able to make a contribution from the first day on the job, which is why they recruit at those institutions that best prepare students for the real world of work.

3. **STUDENT SUPPORT:** What can you expect in terms of support – administratively, academically and post-qualification? Good institutions will have excellent student support from before you sign up until after you graduate, and this support can make a real difference in your higher education experience as well as your career.

“Doing your groundwork in the coming months, by identifying and attending Open Days at institutions you’ve been considering, as well as others you may not yet have considered but which may well turn out to be the right fit, will make a huge contribution to your ability to evaluate your options properly,” Ntshinga says.

“Additionally, you may be exposed to opportunities and qualifications you have not considered before, and which may resonate with you. Open Days are essential to making the best choice for your aspirations and provide insights that desktop research rarely does, so make the best of this limited window of opportunity.”

What is a university open day?

This is when a university opens its doors so you can visit and experience it first-hand. They are there to help you make decisions on what and where you’d like to study. Open days show you what is on offer, and can usually tell you more about a university than you’ll glean from a prospectus.

You have the chance to see what the campus and local area are like. You can talk to staff and current students and discover what your future university life could be like. You can use open days as a way to compare universities and courses to see which would suit you best.

Who are university open days for?

They are mainly for hopeful university students. Open days also provide the chance for parents and guardians to visit universities, so that they can help young students make the right decisions.

What is the point of a university open day?

The reason for an open day is to give you the opportunity to visit a university and be happy with the decisions you make when choosing a course and place to study.

What should I expect from a university open day?

There will be plenty of staff and student ambassadors on site to ensure the open day runs smoothly, and to answer any questions you may have about the university. You can attend talks and presentations about the university, departments, courses, student finance and more. There will also be tours around the campus including visits to available student accommodation. ▲





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