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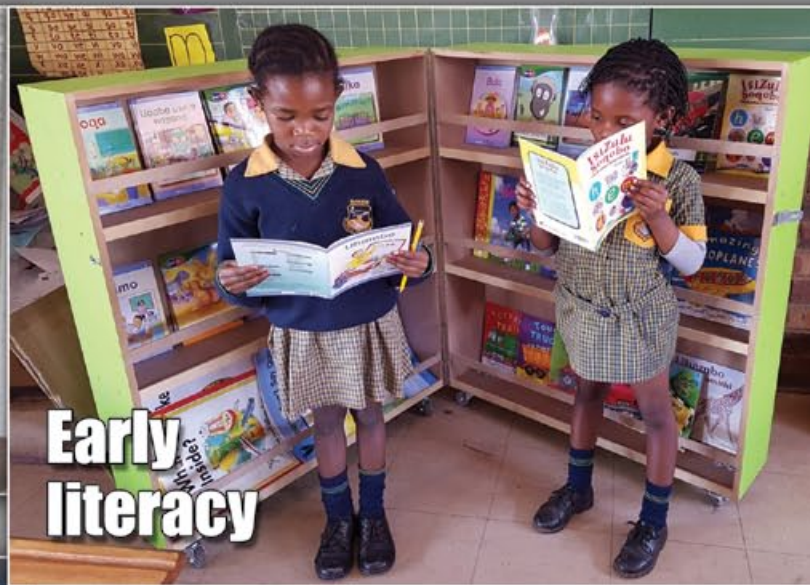


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## Editor's column

### Religious Studies is still an optional subject in most schools

Public schools may not teach religion, although teaching about religion in a secular context is permitted. The Bible may be taught in a school, but only for its historical, cultural or literary value and never in a devotional, celebratory or doctrinal manner, or in such a way that encourages acceptance of the Bible as a religious document.

What distinguishes “teaching religion” from “teaching about religion”? Religion may be presented as part of a secular educational programme. Programmes that “teach about religion” are geared toward teaching learners about the role of religion in the historical, cultural, literary and social development of the civilisation. These programmes should instil understanding, tolerance and respect for a pluralistic society. When discussing religion in this context, religion must be discussed in a neutral, objective, balanced and factual manner.

Teaching religion amounts to religious indoctrination or practice and is clearly prohibited in public schools. A public school curriculum may not be devotional or doctrinal. Nor may it have the effect of promoting or inhibiting religion. A teacher must not promote or denigrate any particular religion, religion in general, or lack of religious belief. A teacher must not interject personal views or advocate those of certain learners. Teachers must be extremely sensitive to respect, and not interfere with, a student's religious beliefs and practices. Students must not be encouraged to accept or conform to specific religious beliefs or practices. A programme intended to teach religion, disguised as teaching about religion, will be found unconstitutional.

The Bible may be studied as literature, but not as religious doctrine. The lesson must be secular, religiously neutral and objective. Classes on the Bible as literature should be optional.

Schools may indeed and should teach secular values such as honesty, respect for others, courage, kindness and good citizenship. These values, however, must not be taught as religious tenets. The fact that most religions also teach these values does not change the lawfulness and desirability of teaching them. It is also appropriate for school officials to instil in students such values as independent thought, tolerance of diverse views, self-respect, maturity, self-reliance and logical decision-making.

If religion is discussed, great care must be taken to discuss minority as well as majority religions. The inclusion of only the major religions in a classroom discussion does not reflect the actual religious diversity within our society and the world. cursory discussions will subtly denigrate the validity of minority religious beliefs held by some individuals, regardless of whether adherents to minority beliefs are represented in the class. If they are present, these learners may feel excluded or coerced.

The teacher may not establish a “religion of secularism” in the sense that the subject may not affirmatively oppose or show hostility to religion, thereby preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe.

#### Yours in education

**Janos Bozsik**  
Editor

## ICT in education awards for pioneering teachers

Dimakatso Sefora of Saron Primary School in Rustenburg, Northwest Province, was named as the 2019 ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year on the first day of iWeek (Monday, 26 August) at the Indaba Hotel and Conference Centre in Bryanston, Johannesburg.

Joining Ms Sefora at the winner's podium was 2019 ISPA TechTeacher of the Year, Matthew Hains, of Saheti Secondary School in Senderwood, Gauteng. The two were amongst ten finalists competing for SA's longest-running ICT in education accolade.

**The eight other finalists** were Louise Fullard of Hoerskool Bergvliet, Fiona Beal of The Rock Academy, Peggy Jona of Bakuba Primary, Lyneth Crichton of Brescia House, Anel Flack of Hoerskool Standerton, Mabore Lekalakala of Mapudithomo Primary, Lady Hadio Mei of Moedi Secondary and Leanne Bishop of Grantleigh School.

**Members of the Judges Panel** who attended the awards event included Shadi Mathosa (ICT in education specialist), Deon van Vuuren (branch co-ordinator for Curriculum in Mpumalanga), Megan Rademeyer (programme manager at SchoolNet SA), Dorcas Tabane (ISPA) and Gerald Roos (Directorate: LTSM Policy Development and Innovation – Digital Learning Framework)

As Mr Roos remarked: “These awards are very apt for rewarding teachers that are achieving high levels of competence in digital learning. They encourage a transformation of pedagogy and a deeper awareness and use of digital tools and resources for learning. It is therefore with great satisfaction that the judges congratulate all finalists in the ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year competition, and especially 2019 ISPA SuperTeacher, Dimakatso Sefora, and 2019 ISPA TechTeacher, Matthew Hains.”

Ms Sefora is a longtime participant in the ISPA SuperTeacher Awards and teacher training programme while this is the second time Mr Hains has been named ISPA TechTeacher.

**The sponsors of the prizes** included the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) who donated R25 000, SANParks, *The Mighty Pen Education Magazine* and ZADNA (The ZA Domain Name Authority).

The winners each received an ISPA trophy, a cash prize sponsored by the Industrial Development Corporation, four nights' accommodation for four people at any national park in South Africa sponsored by SANParks, a subscription to the online magazine for teaching professionals, *The Mighty Pen Education Magazine* and a laptop and projector sponsored by ZADNA. Each finalist also received R1 000 each from the IDC.

“We congratulate the winners and all the participants in this year's competition. We are very grateful to the sponsors for their support of teachers pioneering ICT in education and assisting learners to prepare for their adult lives as they navigate the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” said Milford Malunga, project manager at the competition administrator, the Digital Education Institute (DEI).



**2019 ISPA SuperTeacher winners with some of the Judges**  
(From Left to Right) Deon van Vuuren (Branch Co-ordinator for Curriculum, Mpumalanga), Megan Rademeyer (SchoolNet SA), Dimakatso Sefora (2019 ISPA SuperTeacher), Shadi Mathosa (ICT in education specialist), Matthew Hains (2019 ISPA TechTeacher), Gerald Roos (Directorate: LTSM Policy Development and Innovation – Digital Learning Framework)

Mr Malunga also thanked Andile Tlhoale for his valued services as Master of Ceremonies, as well as Peter Madavhu (acting CEO for ZADNA) and Moloko Malahlela, Deputy Chief Education Specialist (Gauteng), for presenting the prizes.

To be selected as finalists in the ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Awards, teachers were required to register online and submit ICT-related lesson plans for consideration by the panel.

Many of the teachers had participated in the ISPA Sponsor A Teacher programme, focusing on ICT training managed by DEI and sponsored by the Internet Service Providers' Association of SA (ISPA) and its members.

The finalists' closing projects were judged to be the best amongst the many received that demonstrated the value of the teachers' newly acquired ICT skills.

The ISPA SuperTeacher Awards are an annual feature of the iWeek Internet industry conference and exhibition. Details on iWeek and its line-up are available at [www.iweek.org.za](http://www.iweek.org.za). ▲



# Zoom In interactive content now available through Snapplify

Snapplify given exclusive distribution rights to Oxford University Press South Africa innovative digital study series, Zoom In



An exclusive partnership between leading local educational publisher, Oxford University Press South Africa, and global edtech company, Snapplify, has made the publisher's interactive content series, Zoom In, easily available to thousands of learners.

Covering the major South African subjects for Grades 10 to 12, in both English and Afrikaans, the Zoom In interactive products are designed to help learners tackle tough exam concepts, giving them the confidence to conquer all their exam questions. Interactive resources are integrated throughout, providing opportunities for self-assessment, as well as increased engagement, leading to deeper understanding of the subject matter.

For those signed up to Snapplify's e-learning platform, Engage, free samples are downloadable, with all additional content available to check out via the digital library. The full series is also available to purchase by individual learners (through Engage or Snapplify's online store), or in bulk via a school-wide licence.

'Snapplify is committed to improving access to quality digital educational content, so we're especially pleased to be distributing the Zoom In series, which really takes digital study to the next level. Using a range of interactive features, such as simulations, animations, games and activities with immediate feedback, videos, and more, Zoom In truly provides learners with the opportunity to get to grips with key concepts in the curriculum,' said Snapplify's Operations Director, Mark Seabrook.

The launch of the series comes at an exciting time, following President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement that all public schools will adopt digital education over the next six years – a project in which Snapplify and other stakeholders have been actively involved. While Snapplify's suite of digital education solutions already aids independent study and provides parents and educators with the reassurance that learners are accessing curated, quality information, content like Zoom In provides additional features to facilitate learning and engagement.

To date, Snapplify has worked with over 1 000 schools across the African continent, providing award-winning e-learning solutions and access to a catalogue of over 280 000 titles from leading local and international publishers.

Snapplify has been internationally recognised by prestigious third parties – like the Reimagine Education Awards and the London Stock Exchange's 'Companies to Inspire Africa' reports (2017 and 2019) – for their unique and diverse innovations in education.

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## About Snapplify

Snapplify is at the forefront of edtech solutions in Africa, and specialises in enabling digital learning for individuals and institutions by establishing a marketplace for digital education content, related educational services, and devices. As a pan-African edtech company, Snapplify strives for radical inclusion to level the playing field and equip individuals across emerging markets with the world-class tools they need to collaborate, innovate and thrive. Since its establishment in 2012, the company has grown and expanded into new markets in Africa and the United States, with offices across South Africa, as well as in Nairobi, Amsterdam and New Jersey. ▲

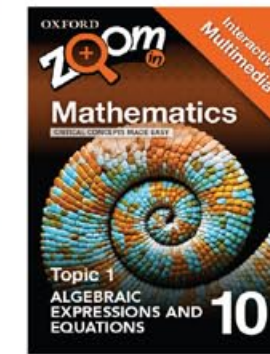
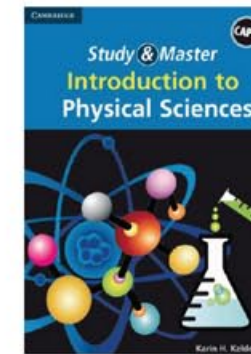
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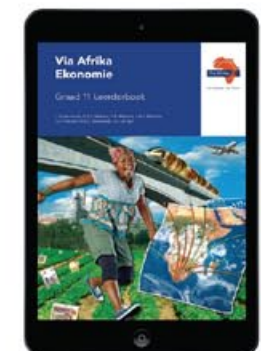
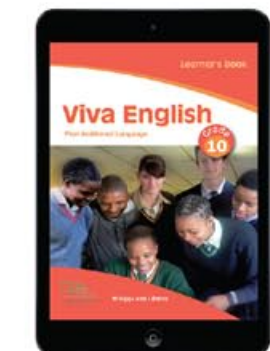
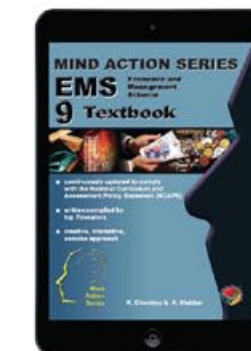
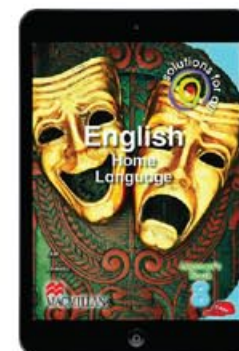
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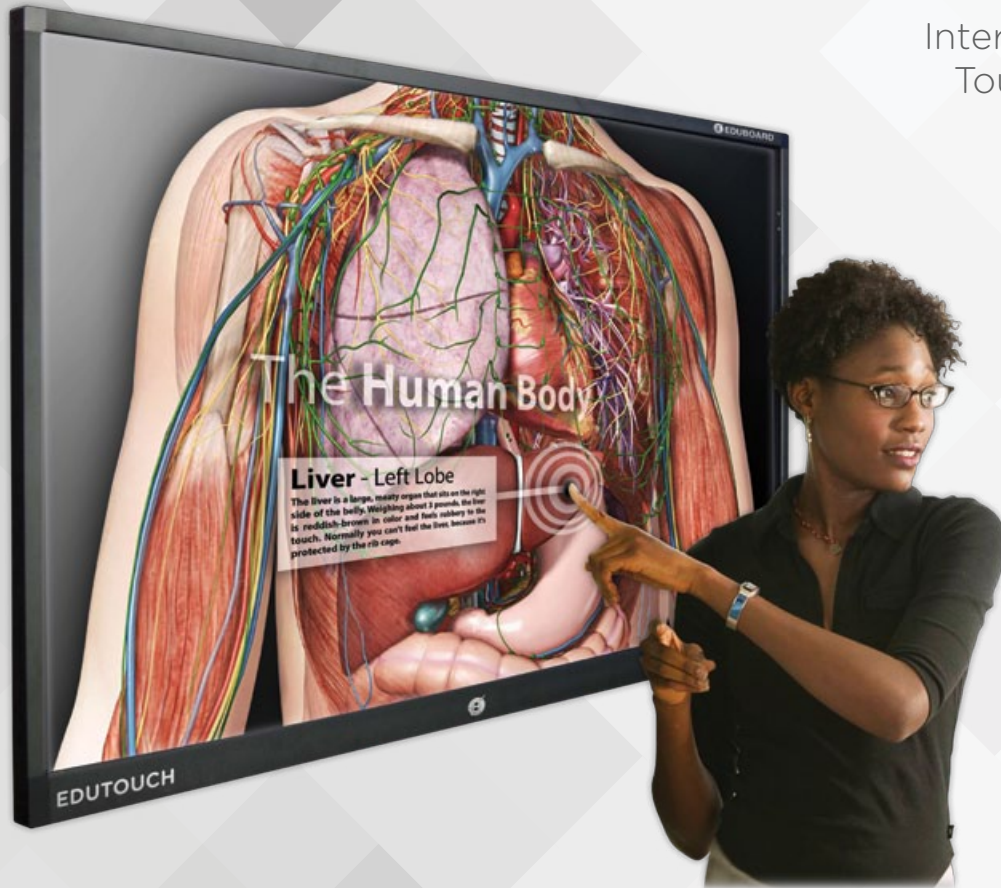
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This interactive device can pair with an existing data projector to convert regular whiteboards into interactive whiteboards. The system can remain portable or be mounted to the ceiling if a permanent solution is required.





# Making inroads to improved literacy: Rally to Read

It was President Cyril Ramaphosa himself who recently declared that, “Early-grade reading is possibly the single most important factor in overcoming poverty, unemployment and inequality.”

According to the “Progress in International Reading Literacy Study” report, 78% of grade 4 pupils cannot read for meaning in any language. This survey, recorded in 2016, also indicated that reading scores had not improved since 2011. The ability to read in Grade 4 is regarded as crucial: from Grades 1 to 3 you learn to read, and from grades 4 to 12 you read to learn.



Children supported by the Rally to Read initiative

Unisa expert Nkidi Phatudi said in many township and rural schools, teachers trying to introduce English were at a disadvantage because of their own lack of proficiency in the language. In that way, literacy cracks grow into canyons.

“The value of literacy extends beyond the classroom, and should ideally equip children with the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate actively in society,” researcher Ursula Hoadley said. “Good reading skills enable children to learn much more than their teachers might offer, and it enables them to learn independently”.

At a lecture given by education expert Professor Mary Metcalfe in Cape Town this year, she noted that only 29% of the poorest primary schools in the country had access to in-school libraries. She continued by saying that KwaZulu-Natal had been the hardest hit by the literacy crisis, where only 45.4% of pupils had their own reading textbooks.

## Rally to Read: improving literacy outcomes

Rally to Read is a non-profit organisation with one goal in mind: to improve literacy at grassroots level, in remote rural communities across South Africa. For 21 years, together with The READ Educational Trust, this organisation has worked tirelessly alongside corporate and private sponsors to deliver books,

teaching aids, educational toys and other much-needed resources to these schools. Remarkable headway has been made. To date, over R91-million has been raised for rural education. Over 1 000 schools have been reached through the programme, and the fruits of Rally to Read’s efforts are evident during repeated annual visits to each Rally to Read-selected school. A three-year period is assigned to each school, and in addition to resources donated, teachers are mentored to promote literacy effectively.

## Coming to KZN: Rally to Read 2019

Rally to Read is looking forward to hosting rallies in KwaZulu-Natal this year on the weekend of 14 and 15 September. We are inviting sponsors to pay it forward by sponsoring a rally. Not only are all sponsored amounts tax deductible; sponsorship fees include joining us on an unforgettable journey to rural KZN to meet the learners and teachers whose lives are enriched through Rally to Read.



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# Women need to be empowered to lead our schools

As South Africa commemorates Women's Month it provides communities an opportunity to reflect on the inequality of women in society. There are areas of progress that have been made and other areas where the gender inequality gap remains unbridged. The role of women in today's society is critical; they lend a perspective to government, business and the social fabric of our culture. International research has demonstrated that the role of women in top executive positions has a profoundly positive effect on profit, people and planet – the three prized outcomes of good organisations.

The ILO Global Wage report of 2018/19, published in May 2019, has some depressing figures about the gender pay gap in South Africa. Covering 70 countries and 80% of wage employees worldwide, the report shows that on average, women continue to be paid 28% less than men are. In South Africa, South African women who are permanently employed earn 22.7% less than men do and those who work part-time earn 39% less than men do.

When coming to basic education the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) coordinated by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) conducted an international education survey to assess the state of education amongst countries of which South Africa was the only participant on the African continent. The findings on gender distribution of teacher and principal workforce showed a degree of gender imbalance and disparities in the scope of promotion to leadership positions. In South Africa, only 22% of principals are women, compared to 60% of teachers. This can be benchmarked against the OECD averages of 47% of women among school leaders and 68% among teachers.

The acceleration of school districts supporting instructional leadership is one of the interventions that can empower more female teachers and principals to be well equipped to take-up leadership positions.

Ms M. E. Nkhi, Principal at a KST school Tsimatsima Primary in the Motheo district in the Free State Province is one of very few female principals. "Women should be given the opportunity to stand up and showcase their strength, female educators need to start embracing technology and apply critical thinking and decision making", said Nkhi. Tsimatsima Primary is part of KST District Whole School Development programme and has received curriculum educator support in Mathematics and English for foundation and intermediate phase. This intervention will benefit four educators of which three are women and the 31 learners in school. At a handover ceremony the learners received school uniform donated and collected from KST's partner entities as part of the school uniform collection drive.

"Key to gender equality later in life is the provision of schooling for girls that encourages them to begin and pursue science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects from an early age. There is no basis to the idea that girls cannot do technical subjects, indeed the opposite is true; they often excel against boys until their mid-teens. The drop could be attributed to a societal pressure to be more 'womanly'", concludes Nkhi. ▲



(From left to right) Ms Thabisa Vili KST Motheo District Manager, Ms M. E. Nkhi, Principal at Tsimatsima Primary School, Educator from Tsimatsima Primary School and the Grade 1 Learners from Tsimatsima Primary School

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# Prelim to perfect: how to optimise your Matric final prep time

The National Senior Certificate exams countdown clock on the Department of Basic Education's website shows that the Class of 2019 will sit down to their last school exams in about 60 days. With little more than 8 weeks left, Grade 12s are starting to feel the pressure, and should now be strategising how to best use their time before these watershed assessments, an education expert says.

“Your approach to studying shouldn't be random or haphazard at this stage, but should leverage the learnings from your prelim exams, to build on your strengths and to identify and address weaknesses,” says Nola Payne, Head of Faculty: Information and Communications Technology at The IIE.

“Prelims play an important role in finals preparation – beyond generating marks which contribute to your overall year-mark,” says Payne.

She says the act of sitting down in a similar environment and under similar conditions to final exams would have provided learners with valuable lessons about their performance under pressure.

“In addition, prelim exams would have highlighted the important sections of your work, as well as potential areas where you may have gaps in your knowledge. So as your finals preparation starts, using insights gained during your prelims will provide useful information and structure which will allow you to organise your thoughts and integrate the lessons learnt for each subject,” she says.

Payne says there are a number of steps Matric learners can now take to optimise their learning gained from prelim exams, to performing their best during the finals. These are:

- **Reviewing prelim exam papers**  
Determining where you did well and where you went wrong during the penultimate Matric exams can be a great confidence booster.
- **Completing past exemplar papers**  
It should by now be common knowledge for most Matrics that completing past exam papers is one of the best and most efficient ways to prepare for exams. The reason for this is because you apply what you have learned, you replicate the time constraints you'll encounter during the actual exams, and you get used to different formats of questions, and ultimately gain a more thorough insight into your work than what you would have achieved through simple reading and re-reading of textbooks.
- **Mapping the questions asked to the work covered in class & textbooks**  
When revising – whether by reviewing classwork, textbooks, completing past papers or looking at prelim exam papers – take note of which questions are asked time and time again. There is an excellent chance these questions will be making their appearance in your own final exams, albeit potentially in a different format, so ensure that you pay extra attention to them.
- **Highlighting sections & questions that were problematic or challenging**  
If you constantly find yourself struggling with specific questions or sections of work, and if these consistently arose in previous papers, it is time to do



the hard work and face down the challenge. Compile a document for each subject, summarising the hardest to conquer sections, and keep this close by at all times. Go back to it over and over, and in 2 months' time you will be much more confident when faced with previously problematic work.

- **Creating a document summarising the sections with which you feel comfortable**  
Focusing only on the hard stuff, without occasionally going back to the easier stuff, could lead to an out-of-sight, out-of-mind situation. You need to maintain a good balance.

“Using this time optimally and strategically can bring about a substantial improvement in your results. But the key is to get going, and get going right now. While two months may feel like a long time, procrastinating for a day or two can have a snowball effect, and you may find yourself left with little time to do more than cramming.

“But if you get started, today, on the steps above, you will be reaping the rewards of being confidently prepared when you step into the exam room in October.” ▲

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# 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



# You can still make this academic year a success with the help of home education

By Louise Schoonwinkel, GM of Impaq

With mid-year exams at schools having ended and results being released, some learners across the country may feel that they need extra help in improving their academic performance for the rest of the year.

Examination results can be a particularly big wake-up call – especially for those learners who fear that they're at risk of failing the academic year. Many of these learners and parents might start to lose hope, but one alternative viable solution involves that of home education (also known as homeschooling).

Home education in South Africa has appealed to a variety of academic needs, from schoolgoing learners who need extra help mastering specific concepts to those who feel that their full potential is not being reached in a mainstream set-up.

What's important to note is that learners who join an accredited home education provider follow the same CAPS curriculum as their school-going peers. They also fall under examination bodies overseen by Umalusi, such as the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) or the IEB.

Because of this, a home education learner can exit and return to a traditional school at any point in time if they wish.

For parents who are thinking about taking control of their child's education, home education is an option. But it's important for them to consider several key factors that can make such an endeavour work.

## Making home education work

The first key point to consider is that as a parent you'll need to be prepared to take on more responsibility in terms of your child's day-to-day learning needs.

You will be taking control of your child's education, and it might seem like an impossible task. However, the correct provider will give you a schedule and structure that tells you exactly what you need to do and when.

In such a setup, you'll receive the books you need, including the assessments that have to be completed by your child. You will further receive extra services such as video content, examination preparation tools and online tutoring for specific subjects.

Home education parents also get very detailed facilitator guides, which tell them how to teach a subject. These guides don't just communicate what a learner needs, but also what the parent needs to know about teaching a particular subject.

It's essential that home educated children practise the concepts that they are learning. If your child is doing this, you'll pick up very quickly if there's a concept that they're not grasping.

Many parents find it easier to teach an early grade syllabus such as Grade 1, but as children progress to higher grades, most parents will typically need to seek the assistance of a tutor. There are hundreds of tutors across South Africa and they are independent of curriculum providers.



While tutors offer greater assistance, it's important to remember that you as the parent have to take responsibility for your child's education right up until Grade 9 level. This means that your tutor is there for supplementary support, but they cannot take responsibility for everything.

According to law, you also have to register your child with the Department of Education and we strongly advise that home education parents ensure that they do this.

Doing home education doesn't mean that your child misses out on crucial social and integration activities either. In fact, this can be boosted by home education as children can have more time to engage in several extra-curricular activities and interact with a variety of peers.

For example, there are home education communities that organise sports and even other activities such as debating. There are even matric farewells for these learners too.

All in all, home education can be an enriching experience for parents and learners, but it does require a mind-shift.

Before making the jump, make sure that you are ready as both parent and child to take on the responsibilities that this type of learning entails. ▴

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# Women need to play a pioneering role in female empowerment

By Jackie Carroll CEO and co-founder of Media Works

This Women's Month, as we remember the women who built our democracy and celebrate those who contribute to it every single day, we need to acknowledge the responsibilities women carry as well. Women have a critical role to play in helping other women succeed in the workplace, and in calling for and facilitating reform where inequalities exist. In doing so, we need to make active use of the tools at our disposal.

After all, who better to drive the empowerment of women than women who are already in positions of authority? Our unique insights into the challenges women face – politically, economically and culturally – make us ideally suited to address these areas and help women thrive professionally.

## The need for a female network

Recent research published by the *Harvard Business Review* indicates that men and women require different networks in order to access executive leadership positions. While men benefit primarily from occupying a central role among their peers, women, in order “to achieve the executive positions with the highest levels of authority and pay, *also* [have] to have an inner circle of close female contacts, despite having similar qualifications to men including education and work experience.”

Women with a strong female network are able to access valuable information, such as insights into a company's stance on female leadership or starting a family, which can be useful in interviews and promotion negotiations. Women who are both pivotal in their groups and have an inner circle of up to three women, the study reveals, secure “leadership positions that [are] 2.5 times higher in authority in pay than those of their female peers lacking this combination”.

In business, who you know matters, and if the people you know are individuals who can empathise with the systems that prohibit your success, can inspire you to set your sights higher, and can create processes that support this trajectory, you're well on your way.

## The steps to female success

In order to secure high-authority and high-pay positions for female employees, businesses – and the women at their helm – have to establish pathways to success that consider their needs and help them grow.

These pathways need to incorporate processes that benefit all employees, but which are particularly valuable to women. Flexible working hours and the option of working remotely, for example, often reduces the prevalence of physical ailments, mental health disorders and absenteeism, and fosters company loyalty among employees. Women who are balancing their working lives with the demands of motherhood are likely to work more effectively and efficiently if they can structure their time according to their needs.

A second course of action might involve implementation of key performance indicators (KPIs). Clearly defined and accurately measured indicators level the



professional playing field and help to prevent workplace discrimination. Women who have delivered against their KPIs must be considered for promotion along with their male counterparts – having the data on hand that defends these decisions promotes female empowerment.

Women who are already in positions of authority need to ensure that these processes are firmly in place at their organisations. They should also rely on external resources, such as courses and development programmes that fuel the growth of their female colleagues.

Of course, the responsibility that women carry to empower women goes hand-in-hand with the responsibility men carry. If we are to create sustainable transformation in South African society – an essential component of our economic growth – we all need to play our individual and collective parts every day, every week and every month. Not simply during a few days in August. ▲



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### COMPULSORY SUBJECTS (20 CREDIT SUBJECTS)

1. English (Home) – 5 Hours per Week
2. Afrikaans (FAL) – 5 Hours per Week
3. Maths – 10 Hours per Week
4. Science – 10 Hours per Week
5. Life Orientation – 2 Hours per Week

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6. <b>ACCOUNTING</b>	
7. Business Economics	
<b>OR</b>	
Economics	

6. <b>LIFE SCIENCES</b>	
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