

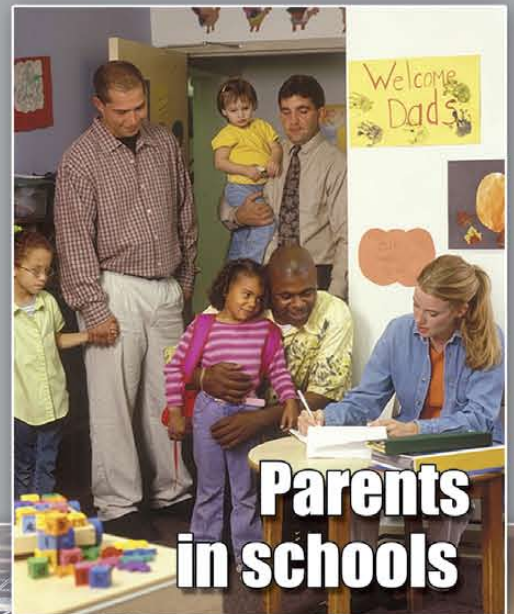


# Magazine EDUCATION

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### Our front cover

Snippets of our February issue stories.





## Editor's column

### New partnership for ethical business in education

We are honoured to announce a strategic partnership as exclusive media with ADESSA, the Associated Distributors of Educational Supplies in Southern Africa.

Formed in 2003, ADESSA is a body representing educational suppliers in their dealings with government departments, educational institutions and other interested parties. It is independent of government, and is funded by subscriptions from member companies.



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ADESSA aims to promote sound and ethical business practices, ensure high quality and good value in products and services for education, communicate effectively with government, fellow members and educational institutions, encourage and foster strategic partnerships.

It assists its members to build good relationships with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and schools.

Schools, universities and other educational institutions benefit from the services of ADESSA in the following ways:

- Products and services can be purchased from ADESSA members, knowing that its members are committed to reliable service and support
- The member companies are established, ethical companies (not "fly-by-night" operations)
- Member companies understand the needs and requirements of education in South Africa.

ADESSA members benefit from membership in the following ways:

- They enjoy enhanced credibility with government and educational institutions
- As a result of the close ties that ADESSA has with government, members have access to up-to-date information about educational needs in South Africa
- They can be assured of being part of the "voice" with the decision makers of education in South Africa
- Special discounts (at times no cost) opportunities to exhibit at trade shows and events arranged by government departments.

Government (the National Department of Basic Education, as well as the provincial departments of education) also benefits as they can use ADESSA as a single channel of disseminating information to industry.

The DBE is assured of ethical behaviour and good quality products and services from member nations and it values the input of member companies when determining policies.

ADESSA is aiming to strengthen the voice of the industry in order to support government and also to influence it in decision making. It is important for all those who are involved in e-education to become united in this process. ADESSA is a neutral body, promoting the common interests of education.

#### Yours in education

**Janos Bozsik**  
Editor

# Great career opportunities in engineering as SA shifts to a knowledge economy

**By Monica Luwes, Manager of Graduate Centre at Sasol Corporate Bursary Services**

With South Africa moving towards a knowledge economy and its government spending billions of Rands on infrastructure projects, we're seeing strong demand for people with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills and qualifications. From accountants responsible for ensuring the financial health of our companies to engineers solving challenges such as power and water supply, STEM professionals are key to the country's growth.

If you have strong marks in physical science and maths, and you're keen on numbers, good at problem-solving, and curious about the world around you, engineering could be your dream job. Here a few potential career paths in the diverse and exciting world of engineering:

#### Mechanical engineer

Do you love tinkering with machines and gadgets? If so, a career in mechanical engineering might be for you. This discipline is about applying engineering, physics, and materials science to make better mechanical systems.

#### Electrical engineer

This is all about the science, technology and engineering behind electricity, electronics, and electromagnetism. As an electrical engineer, you might work on components and systems that range from microchips to power station generators.

#### Civil engineer

A civil engineer focuses on the design and maintenance of roads, bridges, dams, and other infrastructure we use every day.

#### Chemical engineer

This diverse field encompasses the science of turning raw materials and chemicals into a range of products, as well as the design and operation of plants and equipment used to make industrial chemical products.

#### Mining engineer

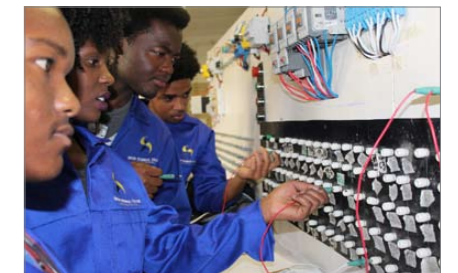
A mining engineer uses science and engineering skills to extract minerals from the earth as safely and efficiently as possible.

#### South Africa's skills crunch

According to the Engineering Council of South Africa, we have only one engineer for every 3 166 people compared to 227 people per engineer in Brazil and 543 people per engineer in Malaysia. That means choosing a career in engineering means your skills will be in high demand with some of South Africa's top employers – in addition to the intellectual satisfaction this field of work and study has to offer.

To find out more, why not do some research into the many excellent engineering degrees and qualifications on offer from South African universities

and universities of technology? Employers like Sasol are eager to recruit and develop STEM professionals and offer bursary programmes for top Matric achievers looking to study in these fields. ▲



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## South African teachers urged to enter national ICT in education competition

The Internet Service Providers' Association of South Africa (ISPA) and the Digital Education Institute (DEI) have issued a joint call for the country's teachers to enter the 2018 ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Competition.

Registration opens on 01 March 2018 and will close on 30 April 2018. Amongst other requirements, competition entrants must submit a completed ICT in Education project that outlines the successful implementation of ICT skills and technologies within the schooling environment. All pertinent details are available on [www.ispasuperteachers.co.za](http://www.ispasuperteachers.co.za).

One of the country's premier ICT in education accolades, the ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Awards are a much-anticipated fixture of the annual, long-running iWeek Internet industry conference and exhibition and have been held every year since 2001. The iWeek event will take place in August this year in Cape Town.



Last year's ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year Awards Gala Dinner saw the crowning of Amandla Vinjwa as ISPA SuperTeacher of the Year, Marina Myburgh as ISPA TechTeacher of the Year and Mokhudu Machaba as ISPA MobileTech Teacher of the Year for 2017.

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 the Awards have played in terms of encouraging teachers to pioneer ICT in their classrooms."

The teacher 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 2017.

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 three ISPA SuperTeacher award-winners each 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, for more information on the three award categories and detailed competition entrance requirements. ▲



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# ICT skills survey

By Adrian Schofield, JCSE's manager of Applied Research

In its eight consecutive year, the 2017 JCSE ICT Skills Survey by Wits University's Joburg Centre for Software Engineering (JCSE) says economic pressure, a delay in policy implementation and lack of improvement in South Africa's basic education are key concerns. The report says the situation is further plagued by a lack of current, coordinated data about the ICT sector in South Africa, which is leading to fragmented policy initiatives that cannot be properly measured.

With an objective to identify the most pressing skills needs from the corporate perspective, balanced with the view of current skills capacity of practitioners and future skills development, Adrian Schofield, JCSE's manager of Applied Research and author of the report, says that the 2017 JCSE ICT Skills Survey report highlights the increased demand for cybersecurity practitioners as well as the growth in software development: "In some respects, it is more of the same, but there is an undeniable urgency to make progress if South Africa is to benefit from the impending global upswing in the ICT market, which is estimated to reach US\$4 trillion in 2018. In this scenario, demand for relevant skills will continue to outstrip supply, giving South Africa an opportunity to empower its Black youth to fill the gap, boost the economy and extend these benefits into the broader continent."

The Survey further outlines that while the stagnant South African economy continues to restrict growth in the demand for ICT skills due to limited budgets, the global recession of recent years seems to be abating: "Demand in Europe and the United States for ICT skills is generally strong, yet despite this upswing, South Africa is lagging its peers in Africa (notably Kenya, Nigeria and Egypt) who continue to seek the value that technology adds to economic growth and social development," says Schofield.

According to MICT SETA 2017, the ICT sector is estimated to contribute more than R250 billion (approximately 6%) to the country's R4 trillion GDP. Schofield says that South Africa, and all its stakeholders, need to recognise their dependence on ICT and what needs to be done with a greater sense of urgency: "We as a collective body need to actively address and acknowledge the need for investment in teaching and training; the potential contribution to society that filling the ICT skills gap will make; the benefits that can come from better coordination and planning; and also the urgent need to move plans from discussion to execution."

Another concern according to Schofield is the delays in implementing policies, such as the migration from analogue television signals and the rollout of broadband networks. This, he says, continues to frustrate the potential contribution of the ICT sector to the overall economy.

Professor Barry Dwolatzky, Director of the JCSE, says that the report yet again emphasises the concern at the lack of improvement in South Africa's basic education for the majority of pupils: "Exposure to and familiarity with ICT for all learners is essential, in order to equip them to adapt the modern tools to their



Adrian Schofield

daily lives. Some laudable initiatives have appeared, such as the use of tablets in Gauteng schools, but they have yet to reach a sustained, critical mass for all grades of learners."

He says that there are some successful initiatives and interventions noted in the skills development pipeline. Children are benefitting from technology in the classroom, such as VastraTech's 'Wired for Life' project, and training programmes from companies like Google and SAP: "Young people can engage with activities in technology hubs, such as the Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct in Braamfontein, where they can acquire not only technical skills, but also get exposure to entrepreneur development and business incubation."

The 2017 JCSE ICT Skills Survey is available online at <https://www.jcse.org.za/research/2017-jcse-ict-skills-survey>

For more information, contact Adrian Schofield, Manager, Applied Research Unit by emailing [research@jcse.org.za](mailto:research@jcse.org.za)

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2. **Submit** your final manuscript digitally on the WritePublishRead website between **1–7 March 2018**.
3. **Agree** to the rules of the WritePublishRead Assisted Self-Publishing programme.
4. **Only typed electronic submissions** submitted on the WritePublishRead website will be considered.

### When?

Submissions open midnight **1 March 2018** and close at **23:59 on 7 March 2018** on [viaafrika.com/writepublishread](http://viaafrika.com/writepublishread)  
No late submissions will be accepted.





# Online learning vs. traditional formats

## The big 4 benefits of eLearning

By Nikos Andriotis, international informatics & education expert

The debate to compare the differences and similarities between online and traditional learning environment is as old as 1999. After all, this was when institutes started to include the Internet as a medium for “distance education”. And while differences still exist, we must realise that the differences are being narrowed down due to the prevalent emerging technologies. But how do traditional and online learning formats actually differ, and what can you expect from a transition to eLearning?

The decision whether to study online or in a traditional environment is not as conflicting as before. Online learning is no longer the “easy way out”, as one might have thought in the past. In fact, online learning environments are more rigorous.

A person can be physically present in the classroom, but mentally absent, and no one would know. But in an online environment, especially during live discussions, each participant has to be mentally present to progress towards the learning goal of the discussion. Let alone the fact that most learners express themselves better in text form than in verbal form.



Of course, there are many other differences between the traditional and the online learning environment that will be discussed in this article. But this comparison is to be emphasised both on the instructor and the student who are crossing over from a traditional learning environment to eLearning, to enable them to fine-tune their expectations from the eLearning environment.

### Online learning can be synchronous & asynchronous

Synchronous or LIVE activities are real-time activities that require the online presence of all learners and the instructor. These activities involve commenting and

forming opinions on a concept presented by the instructor. This is very similar to a traditional class discussion activity.

The instructor puts forth an argument and the learners participate in the debate. The instructor also moderates and redirects the conversation towards the desired goal. But they do not correct any language semantics used by the learners. Similarly, in the online environment, the instructor reminds the eLearners to stay on topic, but refrain from correcting their typed language.

The difference in this aspect lies in the capability to hold a similar discussion in an asynchronous environment. Learners and instructors log in at their convenience and add their comments (according to the commenting rubric). The instructor and peers provide feedback on their



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>> from page 8



own schedule. This creates a self-paced learning environment. Hence, it is no longer about who knows the most at the current time, rather, who prepared the most for a given time.

This format is highly favourable for adult learners who juggle work and home, and enjoy the flexibility of submitting their opinions online. The quality of discussion might also prove to be greater than live discussion, simply due to the fact that we reveal more and form better ideas, when we write.

A greater deal of self-direction and discipline is required for a successful online education. These characteristics can be instilled or stimulated in the learner through several personal development tutorials. The learner holds greater responsibility towards their learning. They are conscious of their time and schedule, and try to meet deadlines they have signed up for, by accepting the course.



A traditional learning environment, on the other hand, does not require a similar degree of self-discipline nor is it flexible in terms of deadlines and class meeting times.

**Online learning has greater reading requirements**

A lot is said and done in a traditional classroom through language, facial expressions, and body language. To make up for such clues and ideas, online courses have greater reading requirements.

It is safe to project that the online learning environment is a 100% reading environment. For first, the instructor posts a lesson and related readings. Moreover, the assignment has more directions and a deadline to adhere to. As for the learners, they complete the assignment and upload it to the learning management system.

By contrast, a traditional environment has a lecture in progress that is recorded through notes. Presentations can also be made face-to-face. But in an eLearning environment, reading and writing are the main activities. Polishing writing skills is mandatory in an online endeavour. Furthermore, interacting with peers and an instructor requires emotional writing skills that portray the message as accurately as possible.



Don't forget that the best thing about online collaboration is the vast volume of peers that can be reached out for opinions and feedback.

**The instructor becomes a mentor in online learning**

In a traditional classroom setting, the instructor is a dominant authority, the know-it-all, the one who leads the learning process. In an online classroom, however, this authority shifts towards a mentor who guides on the side.

A particular consideration in this setting is the quality and response time for feedback given by instructors. In a traditional setting, feedback is prompt. But in an online setting, feedback can take at least 24 hours. This lag time can be shortened if the instructor enables at least four peers to comment on an assignment. The instructor then provides feedback in the end, and this way, the learner feels a greater sense of community support.

**Online learning requires digital literacy**

A traditional classroom setting requires physical presence and communication skills. But an online environment requires tech savviness. Learners should be able to navigate, evaluate and create information using a variety of technologies. They should be able to use basic word and numerical processing software.

While this does not mean that the learner should be fluent in programming languages, they are required to adapt to emerging applications and information management trends readily.

One helpful strategy for the online instructor is to provide tutorials on how to use an emerging technology tool that is required to create an assignment. The instructor can also offer several software options to choose from in order to create the assignment.

Successful online students are prepared for the dynamic technical environment and strive to enhance their expertise in using technical tools.

A great way to introduce technology in an online environment is to create a social media page for the course. The instructor can, for example, create a Facebook page of the course and invite all learners as "friends". This will break the technology ice for the less confident learners, and encourage them to collaborate freely with peers. Also, the introverts in the course will be able to express ideas better as compared to a traditional networking scenario.



Reduced instructor supervision leads to increased student autonomy, and let's not forget that online learning is all about individualised learning. This is the leading difference and advantage of eLearning vs. traditional learning.

The learner experiences a one-on-one, tailored instruction that is not possible in the traditional environment. A shift from a curriculum-centred to a learner-centred environment makes eLearning a winning proposition.

eLearning presents a ton of advantages over traditional formats of training. This fact is even more so true for busy professionals, who are pressed for time and responsibilities. And with the always-on, always-connected culture most businesses embrace, online learning will soon become the standard method of learning. ▲



# Entries open for SAIPA National Accounting Olympiad – interest rising

Following a clear rise in interest in the South African Institute of Professional Accountants' (SAIPA's) National Accounting Olympiad (NAO) last year, the institute has again invited entries from Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners that are currently taking Accounting as a school subject, and who wish to follow a B.COM degree as further study.

The entries will officially close on 25 April 2018 with no limit on the number of entries per school and a registration fee of R50 per learner. However, it will be free for any learner from a no-fee school.

Zobuzwe Ngobese, Marketing and Business Development Executive at SAIPA notes that since the competition's inception in 2002, the Institute had opened it to Grade 11 pupils for the first time last year.

The aim with the Olympiad is to make Accounting a subject of choice for learners and to expose them as early as possible to the Accountancy profession. SAIPA also invests substantially in positioning the NAO to provide learners with a foot in the door with future employers.

"We want to reach even more schools to make the subject of accounting popular again because our economy needs more accountants in order to grow," Ngobese adds.

## Competition schedule

The first-round exam paper of the 2018 competition is scheduled for 16 May 2018 at the learners' respective schools. All learners who qualify for the final

round will be invited to participate on 1 August 2018. The final round will determine the top provincial and national winners.

The top performers, as well as their teachers and schools will receive great prizes of which more information will be communicated at a later stage.

Ngobese further points out that SAIPA plans to open the Olympiad to pupils from Grade 10 to Grade 12 in the future.

He says in many instances pupils have already made their career decisions when they reach their final school year.

## How students can get involved with SAIPA

Did you know that CEOs of some of the biggest companies in SA are SAIPA members and hold the designation of Professional Accountant (SA)?

This might come as a surprise to you, but there are lots of different types of accountants. Each area in the accountancy field has its own designation, and specialises in its own set of skills, but most share the same basic qualification: an accounting degree.

Only after you've earned your qualification from your university can you apply with one of several professional bodies to earn your professional designation, like a Professional Accountant (SA).

Each professional body has its own requirements that you will need to comply with.

At SAIPA, we promise to help our student members as much as possible in the time they will take to earn the Professional Accountant (SA) and in doing so becoming full SAIPA members.

## If you can tick all the options below you qualify for SAIPA student membership

- I am between the ages of 18 and 25
- I am enrolled as a full-time student for a relevant bachelor's degree with a registered tertiary institution
- I understand that I can only be a SAIPA student member for two years. Thereafter, standard membership fees, terms and conditions will apply. ▲

For more information on the National Accounting Olympiad, or to request an entry form, please send email to [saipa@provero.co.za](mailto:saipa@provero.co.za), or visit the SAIPA website <https://www.saipa.co.za/saipa-national-accounting-olympiad-2018/>

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SPHS E-learning project nominated for the African Association for Public Administration and Management Awards (AAPAM)



# How to stop the culture of complaining in schools

**A Grade 4 teacher offers practical ways to turn schools and classrooms into no-complaint zones**

Wherever we look in our schools, we can find complaining: in classrooms, hallways, offices, and teachers' lounges. Participating in such talk is easy because there is a lot "wrong" in our schools, but this kind of dialogue is destructive and often spreads quickly.

**W**hy do people complain so much in the first place? An honest answer is that it feels good to complain and blame someone or something else when things are not going our way. Complaining takes the responsibility off of us and, according to researchers, often engenders the comforting response we crave when we fail or are disappointed.

This is not to say that there isn't a time for complaining. Quite often we might be dealing with injustice or unfairness in our schools that give us good reason to complain. But complaining should not be the end goal; rather, it should serve as an impetus to rally others to help us change an unfair situation.

However, there are times when no matter our circumstances, we get into a funk or always look to the dark side of life – and this gets telegraphed to others through our complaints. Stuck in a rut of complaining, we often hold the belief that we don't need to change anything about ourselves. Worse, we remain stuck and spread our toxic attitude to others, sapping our motivation to change and making the problems seem even more difficult than they are.

Gratitude is an antidote to complaining as it enables us to change and reframe the way we look at and interact with the world. Instead of focusing on the negative aspects of education, we replace this destructive viewpoint with gratitude and find the positive things about teaching. When we flip our own attitudes, we can also change the culture of our classrooms, which elevates students' attitudes and increases learning and engagement. Fuelling our teaching, gratitude can propel us into a positive flow in the classroom and spark our passion about education.



If your school has been invaded by the pernicious virus of complaining, here are three simple gratitude practices to encourage staff members and students to spread the antidote of positivity.

## 1. Create a no-complaint zone

To promote a positive culture among teachers, make the faculty lounge an area of "No Negativity." If a teacher starts complaining or talking negatively about someone who isn't in the room, gently remind him or her in a neutral tone, "It is not fair to speak about that person when they cannot defend themselves."

This ground rule for the teachers' lounge creates a safe and supportive environment. Teachers may comment that they feel they've become more aware of how much they were complaining about others and they may start to change their behaviour. With this ground rule in place, gossiping, as well as complaining, can be greatly curtailed.

To further counter the negativity in the faculty lounge, one interesting idea is to put up a gratitude board where staff can write messages of gratitude to each other. Teachers can utilise this creative tool by taking the time to write a quick



gratitude note about a colleague on the board. When educators actually see their gratitude posted on the board, positive changes in attitude and behaviour are more likely to follow. In fact, this gratitude can be contagious and start to spread throughout the school.

In classrooms, we can dialogue with students about complaining and how it contributes to negative attitudes. We can also ask them for ideas about keeping complaints out of the classroom. One powerful rule that has emerged in our classroom is that no one (including the teacher) is allowed to complain. If someone does complain, they are asked to say three things they are grateful for.

At this point, we can even delve a little deeper into "why" we are grateful for these things. For example, instead of saying, "Thank you for my friends," we could say, "Thank you for my friend Mike who helped me through a rough time last week." With this activity, gratitude may again replace the pessimism generated by complaining as we are "re-programming" our negative bias.

## 2. Break the habit with a "Complaint Bracelet"

Unfortunately, some days it is easy to slip back into old habits and complain. One helpful tool to try to get back on track is to wear a complaint bracelet on our right wrist. If we notice we are complaining, we have to take it off and put it on our left wrist for the rest of the day and restart the process the next day. If we go three weeks without complaining, we can be freer of this harmful habit just by bringing complaining into our conscious awareness.

In reality, it may take more than three weeks to successfully learn a new habit. Nevertheless, it is a novel way to redirect our behaviour. Don't be afraid to ask students to create an exercise to try to curtail complaints.

In addition, we can "recalibrate" our perspective with gratitude daily. In our routine, like when we drive into the school parking lot or every time we walk into the classroom, we can simply take a few moments to reflect on our outlook, attempting to recalibrate our attitude about our students and the teaching profession, looking for gratitude.

For students, we can start each class with a few deep breaths and ask them to mindfully ponder a few things they are grateful for as it pertains to their learning. This will help establish a positive perspective to take through the day's events and keep us from slipping back into the habit of complaining.

## 3. Challenge students with "The Complaint Challenge"

Start by asking students: "Can you go all day without complaining?" Have them carry around a 3 x 5-inch card and write down any instance when

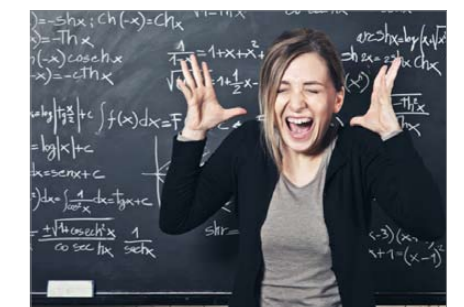
they complain or even feel like complaining. Then, instruct them to write a gratitude statement or something positive on the other side of the index card. For many students, this action develops a new awareness they may utilise their entire lives as they cultivate the ability to choose a positive attitude in any situation.

For example, one student noted that he complained every night and never really thought about how often he said, "I hate doing my homework!" But then, as this experiment progressed, he turned this statement into a gratitude statement and wrote, "I am grateful I get to learn by doing my homework. It will help me get a good job someday."

Another student wrote that she did not like setting the table every night at dinner. When she flipped that to a gratitude statement, she started saying, "I get to eat dinner with a loving family and I am thankful for that."

As this experiment moves forward, if students feel the complaints coming back, have them pull out the index card and read the gratitude.

Whenever possible, students and staff alike should try to turn our complaints into statements of gratitude. When we string together a few days without complaining and instead focus on what we're grateful for, we might notice other positive things going on, like our relationships improving and feeling more energy to put into teaching. We may even find we are enjoying life – and school – a little more. ▲





# Lonely learners – children with no friends

We all have a need to love and be loved. Our lives feel happier and more fulfilled when we enjoy positive human relationships. Having friends who we can laugh and cry with, be serious or a little crazy with, and with whom we can feel completely comfortable is one of the most fundamentally important needs of the human race. This is why it feels so heart-breaking when we discover that our children may be struggling to make friends at school.

**C**indy Glass, Co-founder and Director of afterschool remediation franchise, Step Up Education Centre says “There are a number of reasons why a child may struggle to form positive friendships – negative behavioural choices, low self-esteem, personality differences, differing belief systems and unintentionally negative body language or tone of voice. Escapism from social interactions through over-use of technology also plays a big role in this.”

“We need to note that all behavioural choices are based on how we feel about ourselves as a person and the inevitable fears that dominate these beliefs. Creating meaningful personal relationships is rooted in positive self-belief. Negative, self-defeating thoughts and behaviours often repel friendships and, unfortunately, this re-enforces the feelings of unworthiness and low self-value that created the negative behaviours in the first place” Cindy goes on to say.

## If your child is struggling to form friendships, you may want to consider the following helpful tips

1. Ensure that you keep the lines of non-judgemental communication open. Chat about what happens at school, openly and honestly. Emotional intelligence skills of self-awareness and self-regulation are key here. Make sure that you do not re-enforce your child's belief that he/she is less! Focus on their strengths and what others will like about them. They may, indeed, be a little different, but never less.
2. Chat to your child's teacher with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of your child's behaviours at school.
3. Friendships cannot be forced. It takes positive mind-set and behavioural changes in your child if changes are to be enjoyed at school. Teach your child

to focus on his/her choices and not on the choices of others. It takes patience and time but you will be amazed at the results.

4. People enjoy the company of positive happy individuals. Teach your child the joys of uplifting others. This will change the energy that your child gives off and other children will start looking to your child for a friendship that feels good to be in.
5. Emotional intelligence's empathy and social skills will play a vital role in changing the way your child perceives himself/herself to be. Invest in these courses.

“Finally, remember that children copy your actions, not your words! Set the example of how to treat others in positive, uplifting ways. Teach your children to own who they are-mistakes and all – and to value others because they value themselves first.” Cindy concludes. ▲



Ongoing research over the years has found that increased levels of meaningful parental involvement have a knock-on effect. Not only does it positively impact the child through improved academic outcomes, but it also lifts the school's reputation in the community and enriches parents' relationship with their children.

## School-based parental involvement

Kannapathi's study took place at a marginalised primary school in Mariannhill, KwaZulu-Natal and saw parents and teachers of Grade 4 pupils partake in a number of workshops. The workshops' programme was designed for parents and school staff to work collaboratively towards identifying meaningful participation standards. An important focus of the programme was that empowerment was not a method imposed on parents, but rather a process of self-discovery through collaborative dialogue.

The workshops involved themed dialogue sessions between the facilitator and parents, which were aimed to provide parents with relevant knowledge as well as the opportunity to develop practical skills through an environment of shared learning. The learning sessions also facilitated activities, which included the design of a homework schedule and study timetables, and having a daily checklist to make sure learners are ready for each school day. Parents were able to practice these activities with their children at home and provide feedback at the next session.

## At the end of the programme it was evident that parents displayed three qualities

1. **Consciousness**  
Parents had a clearer understanding of their role in education and the benefits of their involvement. Post-programme data revealed that participants began implementing a range of practices such as setting a homework routine and regularly discussing school experiences with their children. Parents also became more aware of their role in their children's school life, and identified aspects of their culture that they thought could impact education positively. For example, a grandparent who attended the programme expressed that she felt that there is a degeneration of morals and community spirit in the children of today. She offered to spend time with the youth to address this matter in a fun and culturally-relevant activity such as teaching children how to make beaded products.
2. **Competence/Self-efficacy**  
The feedback sessions revealed that parents were taking active control of their own level of empowerment by implementing strategies that they were exposed to during the programme. Parents discovered that they are instrumental in developing a plan to build a stronger community-school partnership. Their school-community engagement led to them forming a WhatsApp group for ongoing motivation and encouragement.
3. **Self-determination**  
Over the study period, the level of parental engagement increased as the programme progressed as parents became more comfortable around each

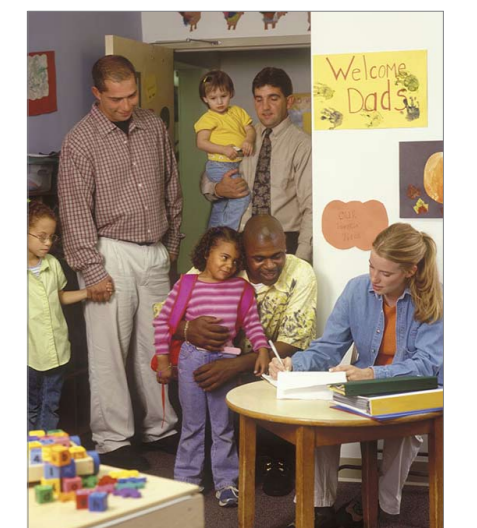
other and the educators. During feedback sessions the level of empowerment became evident as parents started asking questions and gave each other advice on how to deal with problems encountered during their own involvement practices.

Kannapathi believes successful parental involvement programmes such as the one achieved in the study, places participants in the best position to develop a relationship that meets the needs of parents, the school and most importantly, the child.

“High levels of parental involvement in South Africa are not a practical reality, especially for parents who view the school as intimidating. This study proves that involvement can be fostered, leading to not only a much stronger relationship between the parents and the school, but also impacting on the bond a parent has with their child.

“For education to truly flourish in South Africa, it is not just up to our educators to make the difference. Rather, it is this shared relationship between parents and teachers that needs to be cultivated and nourished,” she concludes.

**For more information about the study, please contact Kathlyn Kannapathi, lecturer at the Embury Institute for Higher Education on [kathlynk@embury.ac.za](mailto:kathlynk@embury.ac.za)** ▲



# The power to participate

**A study by Kathlyn Kannapathi, lecturer at the Embury Institute for Higher Education**

The benefits of parental involvement in a child's education are obvious. However, participation should extend beyond a mere interest in the child's home activities, to active involvement in the learner's school life.

**P**arents often feel disempowered when dealing with schools, encountering obstacles such as a lack of knowledge of school procedures and communication barriers. Furthermore, school staff often view parental involvement as an imposition. A recent study done by Kathlyn Kannapathi, lecturer at the Embury Institute for Higher Education, found that parental involvement programmes are an effective strategy for empowerment, allowing parents to become active participants in the learning process, who are consulted and communicated with on important school issues.





## Consider your tertiary study options in Grade 11 – now

Grade 11 learners could be tempted to make relaxing their only priority before the whirlwind year that is Matric. However now is precisely the time they should be investigating and even pinning down their further study plans, an education expert says.

“Once you’ve started your Matric year, you will have very little time to focus on ensuring you choose the right course and the right institution for you, because of the workload, endless rounds of revision and exams, and all the fun and functions that go with your last year at school,” says Peter Kriel, General Manager at The Independent Institute of Education.

Kriel says many Grade 12s get so caught up in the social and academic demands of their final year, that they don’t spend enough time ensuring they investigate all their options and apply timeously to university or private higher education. This could lead to them missing out on a space, settling for second best, and diluting their Matric study efforts with stress and anxiety about what they are going to do after school.

“Another thing that Grade 11s are often not aware of, is that they can submit applications on the basis of their Grade 11 marks, which means that they can then focus wholly and completely on Grade 12, without further concern or distraction about what happens the year after. In addition, knowing what you want and where you are going at the start of the year, will also help you focus your study efforts, as you’ll know exactly what you need to achieve during the year and at your final exams.”

Kriel says that the changed Higher Education landscape in South Africa means that prospective students now have many more options than what they had in the past, when the default approach was to enter a public university for a 3-year degree.

But he warns that because there are so many more options now, prospective students also have more work to do to ensure that they find the right course and right institution for their unique goals.



“Finding the right study direction should be on top of your priority list when finding out about what and where to study,” he says.

“In addition, selecting an institution that will meet your needs is the most important aspect of helping you prepare for your future.”

Kriel warns that while the websites and brochures of institutions may provide one with the basic information about which programmes are on offer, the process of applying and cost, merely looking at brochures and websites may not give you the type of information that would really allow you to make an informed decision.

“In fact, all institutions would provide you with course information, but no institution will state that the size of the Business Management 1 class is over 500 or that it is really challenging getting academic support on campus. Therefore, the only way to find out about such underlying aspects is to ask the right questions. And to do so thoroughly takes time – time which you are not likely to have next year.”

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Kriel says when evaluating institutions, future students should attend open days, physically visit the campus, and make telephonic or written contact.

“These actions and the way your inquiries are handled will provide a solid indication of what you can expect from an institution going forward.”

**For Grade 11s who are serious about getting their ducks in a row before jumping in the Matric pond, Kriel has a handy checklist that will help them determine which institutions will be able to provide them with the highest quality education. He says prospective students should ask institutions the following questions**

1. How do your class sizes in this particular programme compare to other institutions or universities? (Keep in mind that the institution may not have in-depth information about the class sizes at other institutions, but you want to hear about this particular institution).
2. How is classroom contact time and self-directed study balanced? (Self-directed study is an integral part of higher education and therefore as important as classroom contact).
3. How is technology supporting the learning experience of students at this institution? (Merely having a data projector in classrooms or lecturers making presentations available electronically is not the response you are looking for).
4. How important is employability of students after studying at your institution? (You want to listen out for responses that relate to industry ties, industry input into curricula, work readiness programmes, career centres, as well as the lecturing staff’s industry experience and relationships with industry).
5. If I get stuck with an assignment or project, which resources and courses of action are available to me? (Only talking to your lecturer is not an ideal response. You want to listen for reference to, for example, library support and resources, writing centers and other forms of student support).

6. Even if not applicable to you, it may also be a good idea to ask about the institution’s policy and support for students with special needs, for example needing extra time in assessments. (If they stumble in answering this question, it may be an indication that they are not really focused on this aspect of student support, which may be a sign about their overall student centeredness).



- UK: 73
- Germany: 58

For South Africa, the University of Cape Town sits just outside the top 100, followed by the University of Witwatersrand, which placed 216th overall.

There are a host of university rankings throughout the course of the year, with UCT usually featuring at the top of the list locally.

However, Wits University was ranked as the top university in South Africa for the fourth year in a row in the 2017 Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR). ▲

### Global university rankings

US News & World Report has released the 2018 Best Global Universities rankings – which includes a list of the top 11 tertiary learning institutions in South Africa.

The overall rankings evaluate 1 250 universities – up from 1 000 last year – across 74 countries and are the largest and most comprehensive assessment of research universities worldwide, it says.

The US leads the rankings again this year, with 221 universities making the overall list. The top four spots are held by US schools, with Harvard University at No. 1. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology comes in at No. 2, followed by Stanford University at No. 3 and the University of California – Berkeley at No. 4. The United Kingdom’s University of Oxford rounds out the top five.

Behind the US, the following countries have the most ranked institutions out of the 1 250 schools on the overall list:

- China: 136
- Japan: 76



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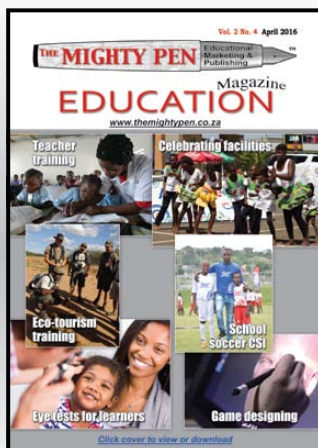
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