

Vol. 8 No. 1 / 2 January / February 2022



Magazine EDUCATION

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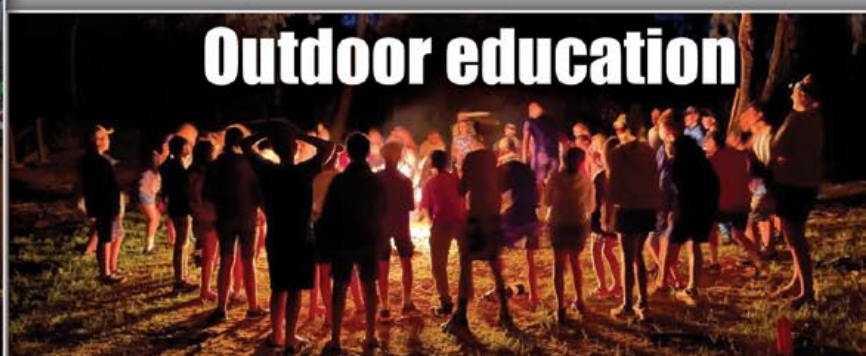
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in STEM**



Literacy



**Online
schools**



Outdoor education



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THE MIGHTY PEN Educational Marketing & Publishing
Magazine
EDUCATION

Publisher

The Mighty Pen (Pty) Ltd
The Mighty Pen EDUCATION magazine

Branding

TheMightyPen.co.za

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Editor's column

COVID-19 still affecting schools in 2022

The Department of Basic Education has gazetted updated lockdown restrictions for schools in South Africa following the government's decision to end rotational timetables.

Under the regulations, all primary, secondary and special schools from both public and independent schools resumed full-time attendance on Monday, 7 February. Taking into account the resumption of full-time schooling, the regulatory provision for one-meter social distancing in schools has been removed with immediate effect.

However, the wearing of non-surgical face masks by all learners, teachers, non-teaching staff and visitors is compulsory. Learners may have 10-minute mask breaks in outdoor areas.

Placing 70% alcohol-based hand sanitisers in each classroom, at entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms as well as halls so that sanitising of hands should be done when entering and leaving these venues.

Maintaining good ventilation by opening doors, windows and/or using fans for air circulation.

School buildings and equipment must be cleaned thoroughly and regularly by following the environmental health cleaning and disinfection protocols. Household bleach is recommended for this purpose. No fogging and spraying of buildings as part of environment cleaning should be done. Instead, surfaces should be wiped with a wet cloth.

Strangely though, individuals who have tested positive for Covid-19 and their contacts are no longer required to isolate. Only people who have symptoms or are advised by a health care worker should isolate for not more than seven days.

The following activities may resume with spectators, subject to compliance with the hygiene and safety measures on Covid-19:

All contact sport and non-contact sport, including training, intra-school and interschool games. All arts and culture intra-school and inter-school activities. All co-curricular and enrichment programmes.

All teachers, non-teaching school staff and officials who were vaccinated using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in June/July 2021, are now eligible for a booster vaccination and are encouraged to visit their nearest health facility, pharmacy or vaccination site for this purpose.

Those who received the Pfizer double dose vaccine will qualify for the booster dose 6 months after the second dose.

All learners aged 12 to 17 years and older are also encouraged to vaccinate at their nearest vaccination sites. Parents are urged to take their children for vaccination or use the opportunity of vaccinating their children in schools when the opportunity to do so arises, the department said.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is working with the Department of Health (DoH) to introduce an in-school vaccination programme, and an official announcement in this regard will be made in due course.

Provinces are however allowed to introduce in-school vaccination in collaboration with their provincial departments of health. In-school vaccination will require parental consent in line with the procedures of the integrated school health policy.

Yours in safe education

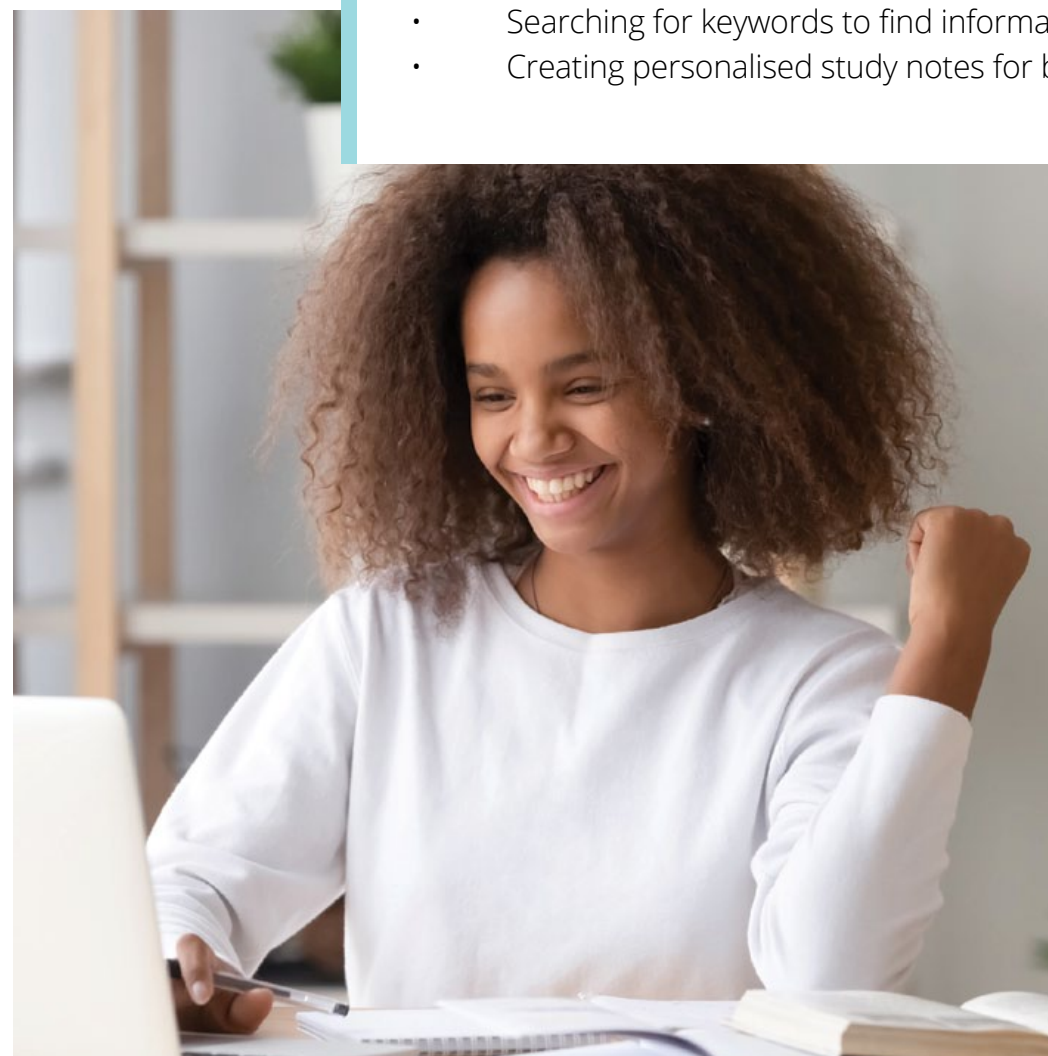
Janos Bozsik
Editor

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Online schools need government support for growth

Most experts say they support government's intentions to create the conditions to regulate and quality assure the establishment and maintenance of online schools in South Africa, and look forward to working with relevant authorities to ensure measures introduced will lead to an improved and quality educational experience for all online students.

In the last few years, the online school offering in South Africa has grown significantly. This continues to be the case, with an even greater increase in new online schools in the wake of the introduction of pandemic response measures in 2020," says Chaile Makaleng, Head of Schools Compliance and Regulation at the ADvTECH Group.

"While it is fairly easy for parents to assess the legitimacy of a physical school and escalate problems where they happen, this has not been the case with online schooling resulting in the risk of families being misled by ostensibly exciting novel offerings, which are not built on the foundation of excellence and integrity that all students deserve," Makaleng says

"Education is too important not to safeguard learners against opportunistic operators."

Makaleng says when evaluating the merits of an online school, parents should consider the same considerations they would if they chose an in-person learning institution. Of course, parents must ensure that the school is able to technologically rise to the challenge, but old-school considerations should still factor into the decision.

"New online schools do not have a track record, and parents must therefore look for other indicators of what performance is likely to be. A school that is part of a network – especially one whose schools were able to continue offering the highest quality of academic excellence during lockdown – is easier to assess, as the success of other schools in the group should be replicable in the online environment.



"Another important thing to check is whether this is a school that can and will make arrangements for formal assessments in the final years and how these results will then lead to or hinder access to post schooling opportunities. There are online offerings that are curricula only, that are used for instance by home schoolers, and then there are online schools that provide clear leadership on this liaison for you for school leavers. Families need to understand which ones they are accessing. Before the regulations are finalised, this remains a difficult area to navigate – for both the online schools and the families."

Makaleng says the Department of Basic Education (DBE)'s framework for virtual schools, proposed by government, should also assist in addressing concerns around so-called fly-by night schools and online schools that are not able to deliver on a quality education.

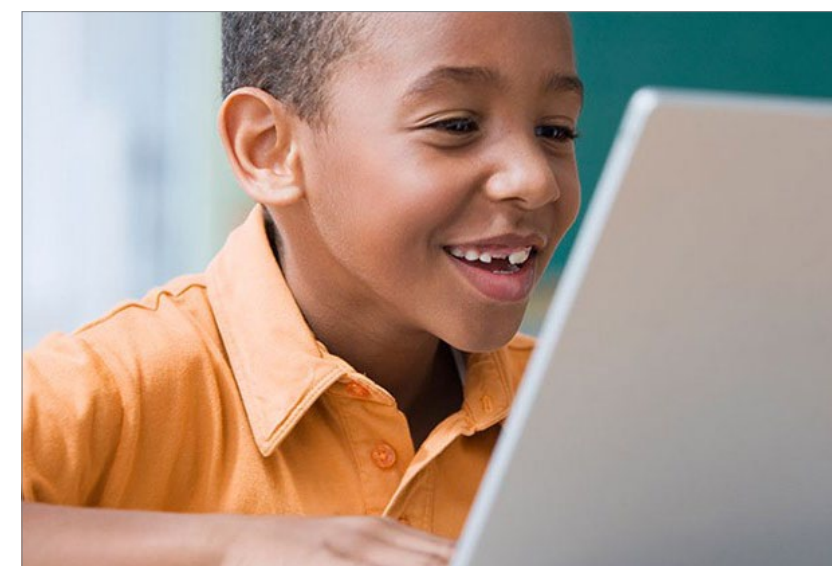
"Although in its initial stages, we appreciate the DBE's long awaited regulatory support for a rapidly growing alternative to institutional types of teaching and learning in this country. We therefore urge the department to move with speed to ensure the requisite regulatory certainty regarding the establishment and maintenance of online schools."



Some of the issues that now need to be addressed include the following, Makaleng says:

- The process and timing for moving from guidelines that are out for comment to regulations and even legislation.
- Details related to how registration, reporting and quality assurance like accreditation will happen, and this includes the roles of provincial and district offices when these schools are not really "located" in districts.
- The link between these schools and higher education in SA.
- Clarity about the impact on home schoolers and their support centres, and those families who still opt to remain outside of formal school-based education (online or physical) will be impacted.

"Given that many online schools follow international curricula leading to international examinations and certification, there should be measures in place to monitor the integrity of the type of curriculum that is offered by providers, to ensure unsuspecting parents and students are not left with certification not recognised in our higher education system," Makaleng says.



"On the other hand, with regards to CAPS alignment and mapping, online schools should be expected to meet the key curriculum outcomes and it is not yet clear how this will be monitored by Umalusi and others in the context of the rights and responsibilities of independent schools."

Students must also be able to move between online and in-person schools, and between home-based education and formal schools of both types, without being negatively impacted by lack of clarity on the status of schools and curricula and assessment bodies.

"In order to strengthen, where appropriate, synergies between online schools and in-person schools, the former must be required to be able to demonstrate how they comply with key assessment standards and protocols, mindful of the rights and responsibilities for independent schools in this regard," Makaleng says.

Makaleng also believes that as with in-person schools, teachers at online schools should be thoroughly vetted, as contemplated by the Children's Act in that all teachers must be officially cleared for appearance on the National Register for Sex Offenders (NRSO) and the National Child Protection Register (NCPR). All teachers must be academically and/or professionally qualified, and appropriately registered with SACE to ensure integrity and safety of online teaching and learning.

Makaleng says all online schools should also be legally registered as a company or other legal entity and should be urged to establish and belong to a recognised association of online schools, particularly as this formal education mode is new in South Africa.

"We look forward to the swift finalisation of the proposed framework, and the improved educational outcomes for all online students." ▲

Are you preparing your learners to live successfully in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)?

A lot is being said about the **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)** and the need to be ready for it. While there are lots of frightening statistics and scary stories, there is not a great deal of understanding of what the Fourth Industrial Revolution is exactly, and what we need to do to be active participants in it. Education is meant to be the way to facilitate a positive future for our youth; but, what does that mean for you the Educator?

Via Afrika’s online course, **Teaching for the Fourth Industrial Revolution**, has been written specifically for educators to help you prepare yourself, and your learners, for successful and effective lives as we continue deeper into the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As part of Via Afrika’s Digital Education Academy, this course consists of **nine two-hour sessions** that you can do online in your own time.

The first session, Getting to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, provides a key understanding of what an industrial revolution is, and why we are talking so much about the Fourth Industrial Revolution right now. This session provides an insightful look into the key elements of the first three industrial revolutions to lay the foundations for a detailed look at what the 4IR is, how it has already had an impact on society and what this means for an educator. Finally, in this session, a very brief overview of the key technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will give you insight into what the technological changes are for you as an individual, and you as an educator. This session is an excellent introduction to anyone who wants a firm grasp of the 4IR.

Each of the key 4IR technologies is covered in a session on its own. These technologies are:



These six sessions above develop the knowledge and skills needed to appreciate and evaluate the specific technology. You will learn more about its purpose, application and the opportunities it creates. You will also experience a basic introduction to using the technology within an educational context. Of course, as an Educator you will want to be able to apply these learnings in your classroom.

While each of the previous sessions gives insight into the application of the technology, the session GenReady for the 4IR will offer you various teaching and learning strategies, as well as personal and professional development concepts needed to bring 4IR into your classroom.

The final session in the course explores some of the other 4IR technologies, like 3D printing and cloud computing, for example, that have an impact on our lives in the 4IR.

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Women in STEM: Why it matters and how to improve the status quo

Interview with Phemelo Segoe, an education specialist at Tuta-Me

In South Africa, only 13% of graduates leaving tertiary institutions with qualifications in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are women.

Despite the massive strides made in increasing the representation of women in higher education, they are still under-represented in these future-critical disciplines – disciplines in which South Africa is already experiencing a skills shortage.

This disparity points to opportunity. In many ways, women are the answer to this shortage, which must be addressed if we are to stay relevant as we live through the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We need to be armed with a diverse range of people equipped in STEM-related skills if our economy is to thrive. The contribution of women is essential, and every effort needs to be made to ensure that their role and contribution is encouraged, rather than neglected.

We caught up with Phemelo Segoe, an education specialist at Tuta-Me, a brand that provides impactful online tutoring for academic success, at both school and university. Tuta-Me is a key offering of Optimi Workplace, one of South Africa's leading education and training providers.

1. What can we do to ensure that more women in South Africa study STEM at tertiary level?

I think that girls need to be exposed at a young age to the different careers available to them within STEM. To this day, career opportunities tend to be gendered: boys become doctors and girls become nurses. Young girls need to know what's available to them, and should be guided on pursuing the subjects necessary to work in these fields from primary school onwards.

2. Why is it important that girls be encouraged to pursue STEM?

In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, STEM industries run the world. If these sectors are to develop solutions that cater to a wide variety of people, they need to be similarly inclusive and diverse. Girls need to know that the worlds of engineering, coding, software development and biological research are theirs too, and STEM subjects are the gateway.

3. What are the barriers holding girls back from fully engaging and progressing in STEM?

While girls are just as capable as boys of excelling in STEM, gender inequality affects performance. I think gender stereotypes, environmental circumstances, levels of support and social beliefs determine how likely girls are to perform well and retain their interest in STEM.

4. What has your experience taught you about what helps girls excel at STEM?

Equal learning opportunities, such as ProMaths Online, make a huge difference to helping girls succeed. Girls and boys have to be afforded the



same opportunity, access and support. If these processes are in place, we see girls performing just as well as their male counterparts.

5. How can girls be encouraged by parents, teachers and peers when it comes to STEM?

Support. Support. Support. Maths and science require time, so affording girls the opportunity to study after school instead of being socially obliged to complete chores is important. Parents and teachers should also encourage girls to receive tutoring before opting to replace maths with maths literacy.

6. How can girls prepare themselves for careers in STEM?

Young girls need to know that the world needs them. We need their unique perspectives and insight. The sooner that girls become comfortable and confident taking up space in STEM classrooms, the better. That's

when they'll learn to use their voice and trust that they have something to offer. Of course, the support of their teachers, parents and fellow learners (especially boys) is an important part of this transition.

7. Since the pandemic, how has Tuta-Me adapted to help learners?

Tuta-Me has expanded from an online learning platform offering academic resources, content and tutoring, to include online classrooms. We call this the Mobi-Tuta Campus, an all-inclusive online learning and teaching platform that bridges the divide the pandemic created. It allows teachers to stay in touch with their learners and resume learning safely and conveniently. It is particularly valuable for learners studying complex STEM subjects.

8. What excites you most about the work that Optimi Workplace is doing in STEM?

There's real impact. At the end of the year when we do feedback sessions with our learners, I get to see the real difference our services have made, like seeing a learner who was struggling with a subject not only pass, but excel.

Women in STEM globally

Girls and women are systematically tracked away from science and math throughout their education, limiting their access, preparation and opportunities to go into these fields as adults.

Women make up only 28% of the workforce in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and men vastly outnumber women majoring in most STEM fields in college. The gender gaps are particularly high in some of the fastest-growing and highest-paid jobs of the future, like computer science and engineering.

Engineering and computer science – two of the most lucrative STEM fields – remain heavily male dominated. Only 21% of engineering majors and 19% of computer science majors are women. Read AAUW's research report for ways we can stop steering girls away from math and science, and make these fields more welcoming for women.

Giving women equal opportunities to pursue – and thrive in – STEM careers helps narrow the gender pay gap, enhances women's economic security, ensures a diverse and talented STEM workforce and prevents biases in these fields and the products and services they produce.

A typical STEM worker earns two-thirds more than those employed in other fields, according to Pew Research Center. And some of the highest-earning STEM occupations, such as computer science and engineering, have the lowest percentages of women workers.

The Confidence Gap

The myth of the math brain is one of the most self-destructive ideas in education – research shows no innate cognitive biological differences between men and women in math.

Many girls lose confidence in math by third grade. Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to say they are strong in math by 2nd grade, before any performance differences are evident.



9. What message do you have for girls and women wanting to pursue a career in STEM?

Pursue your dreams. Don't turn away from anything because you haven't seen a woman do it before you. Believe that you can break the ceiling yourself.

A gendered math gap exists in elementary school – but it is really only evident among boys from higher-income and predominantly white areas performing significantly higher in math, even compared to girls attending those same schools.

Girls score higher than boys in math in lower-income, predominantly Black areas (representing around one-quarter of school districts), but their scores are still disproportionately low compared to scores for white boys in high-income areas.

By the time students reach college, women are significantly underrepresented in STEM majors – for instance, only around 21% of engineering majors are women and only around 19% of computer and information science majors are women.

The skills girls learn in STEM classes make them marketable employees in a wide range of careers. These skills, sometimes referred to as computational thinking, are focused on logical, creative, and complex problem-solving skills that employers are increasingly seeking in potential hires. ▲

Championing literacy starts at a grassroots level

According to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 8 out of 10 children in South Africa cannot read properly. Pearson South Africa has partnered with The Community Chest of the Western Cape, who, through their education key deliverable, makes books and educational resources accessible to children in under-resourced schools across the Western Cape.

Both Pearson and Community Chest began this literacy drive on 18 July 2021, Mandela Day, by handing out thousands of books to 20 schools and learning centres. This created access to books and reading material for more than 6 900 children. These books formed the creation of start-up libraries that predominantly focused on Grade R to Grade 3 learners.

After a brief delay due to the Omicron COVID-19 variant, the drive is gathering momentum once more with 17 packs of books and calculators distributed to schools and NGOs on Monday 17 January 2022.

Dr Benadette Aineamani, Director of Product & Services at Pearson South Africa says, “The key to learning begins with reading. We tend to take for granted the access we have to simple things like books and other reading resources. But I know that the introduction of these mini libraries has sparked the beginning of many bright futures.”

Keeping up the momentum, in August and September 2021, the Community Chest used the opportunity of Women’s Month leading up to National Reading Week, to visit more than 15 Primary Schools in the Western Cape and surrounding areas. The mini-start up libraries we helped to create were especially welcomed by teachers as the packages included many relevant and current themes that align with the school curriculum.

Eltena Rethman from Community Chest says, “Our key focus during the month of August 2021 was the Girl Child – and how girls can use reading as their #superpower to empower themselves. For many young girls walking to the local library is not an option and on top of this, lockdown has kept many children restricted.”

Considering that literacy should always be championed, Pearson and the Community Chest are planning to continue their collaboration into 2022 to see how they can make an impact on learners’ educational journeys on the Cape Flats. “Our purpose is to help everyone achieve their potential through learning and make books accessible at the earliest age possible. We do it because we



Thomas Whilscot School

are here to help people achieve their potential because we know that when we demonstrate the value of learning, we demonstrate the value of transforming lives,” says Aineamani.

“The cause for literacy knows no bounds. Wherever we can seed it, we want to watch it grow. It takes partnerships and passion to get there.”

Going forward, Rethman says Community Chest’s goal is to continue to support and campaign for sustainable literacy interventions. This is done through donating and building start up libraries in local communities with community-based projects, NPOs, schools, after-school interventions and tertiary institutions. “This, we can only do through the help and support of partners like Pearson. Literacy is a critical component for building the future of young South Africans and we are proud to play our part in closing the gap.”

Pearson continues to ensure South Africans have a bright future with educational inspired programmes and partnerships, which are aimed at providing people with the tools and support they need to educate themselves. ▲



Moravian School – 19 August 2021



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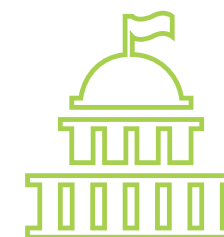


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The Importance of Outdoor Education

More than 20 years ago, Somerset College learners undertook the school's first Trek. The advantages observed highlighted the importance of outdoor learning and the school, based in Somerset West, now offers dedicated experiences for all age groups from Grade 1 to Grade 11.

Why outdoor education?

A number of studies over the years have documented improved performance when children are exposed to outdoor education. The demonstrated results of learning in and about nature include higher scores in standardised tests, enhanced attitude about school, improved in-school behaviour, better attendance records and overall enhanced student achievement. Outdoor education draws on and develops a greater range of intelligence and many researchers attribute improvements shown in performance in in-classroom work to the relevance and hands-on experience of learning outdoors.

Quentin du Toit, Head of Outdoor at Somerset College's preparatory school explains that outdoor education can be defined as experiential learning in, for or about the outdoors. "The term 'outdoor education' describes a range of organised activities delivered in a variety of ways, mostly outdoors. It has always been important, but it is a critical offering in this digital age. At Somerset College we focus on experiential learning through carefully designed activities specific to the various age groups."

Outdoor education is not a new concept. Most schools understand its importance and implement it in a number of ways. Methods and resources vary but range from activities like germinating seeds to planting a vegetable garden, day outings to school camps.

"There are a number of schools in South Africa that offer an extensive outdoor education focus, but others struggle to implement an effective programme," says Alwyn Brink, Head of Outdoor Education at Somerset College high school.



"It requires a whole-school buy-in and the support of parents, teachers and the board. Unfortunately, what so often happens is that the school offers a once-off experience for the students. Although it's fun and a great team-building exercise, schools are missing out on the real impact a well-designed, comprehensive programme can have on students.

"Outdoor education can support emotional, behavioural and intellectual development," he continues. "Studies have shown that students who learn outdoors develop a sense of self, independence, confidence, creativity, decision-making and problem-solving skills, empathy towards others, motor skills, self-discipline and initiative. All of these benefits are visible in the programmes we offer from grades 1 to 11."

The outdoor component of the offering at Somerset College has been carefully designed to incorporate progression and each phase builds on the previous outcomes set for every age group. Students are exposed to different learning activities at sites across the Western Cape, from close to home, to Sedgefield on the Garden route and the Cederberg. "The focus is the development of knowledge and life skills



but it's also wonderful to watch over the years a growth in our learners' true appreciation for the fauna and flora of our region," says Du Toit.

There are many highlights, like the grade 7 experience, the grade 10 Cederberg camp and the leadership camp in grade 11. But the experience that everyone talks about is the Grade 9 Trek.

Why Grade 9? "At 15, kids are starting to ask questions about themselves," Brink explains. "Very often Grade 9s are referred to as rebellious, as they are testing a lot of things at school and at home. Trek gives them time to think, learn, discover and, powerfully, to confront their true selves. Over the years we have seen how it enhances critical thinking skills and encourages personal growth and life-building skills, but the real gains are in confidence, autonomy, and leadership."

What is the Trek?

Somerset College is 25 years old in 2022 and its outdoor Education programme began in the school's second year of existence. Then-headmaster Dave Wynne attended a conference in Australia that included a lecture on observations from a five-week expedition undertaken by a girls school. When Wynne returned to Somerset West, he started investigating the merits of a similar excursion and a school-wide outdoor programme for learners at his own school. In 1998, the first groups walked sections of the current route. The first Trek took place in 1999, and has since become a full four-week learning and "stretching" experience.

"Trek is actually a mental activity experienced as a physical exercise, as are all our programmes," Brink notes. Trek is about self-discovery and overcoming challenges. Those intentionally included in the programme vary from physical to mental challenges, and from individual to group activities. Unplanned setbacks can appear when there is conflict within the group or the weather turns bad and groups need to make an alternative plan.

What about students who are already dealing with physical challenges? "We have had many students with physical difficulties who could not walk or cycle on the Trek. Special arrangements were made for them and they too had a journey of discovery," Brink confirms.

The route is secret but what we do know is that it is 360km long, starts from the school, ends on the beach in the De Hoop Nature Reserve and includes walking, cycling and paddling. The Grade 9s are away from home for 27 days, without their phones. (Written correspondence between the kids and their parents is facilitated once a week, there is one phone call home during the period, and the students may take a book with them.)

Trek also includes a 34-hour solo, where each teen constructs their own shelter and spends time alone. It might surprise parents to learn that this time of contemplation is the highlight for many of the kids. Brink acknowledges that it might sound daunting but says that having run Trek for so long, they have the experience to ensure that it is difficult enough just to stretch the kids. "It is a true rite of passage, but it is carefully planned with incredible attention to safety issues. It's actually more difficult for the parents," he notes.

The Grade 9s wear their Trek boots for the month before Trek and are taught how to ride bicycles, fix punctures, waterproof their belongings and operate a storm cooker, as well as basic first aid and map reading.

Then they are divided into eight groups of 14 to 16 teens and head off over the Helderberg. Each group is assigned two adults and there is further support available, including a doctor on call for the duration. But the learners have to find the way themselves by reading a map for directions.

Each group carries their clothes, tents, cooking equipment and wash basins. They have a box of dry goods daily and fresh food is delivered to drop-off points. Accommodation is in tents they erect themselves on farms and in reserves. Ablution facilities are provided at campsites and on private land, but invariably they return happy, exhausted and filthy.

"When the tales of their exciting adventures have been told, what remains is the incredible range of emotions they go through, the mental, spiritual and physical growth, and the deep knowledge they have received about themselves, working with others and their place in the world. You can't really say a school has a 'unique selling point', but if I had to choose one, it would be this. Trek is a very powerful programme. These lessons and life skills could never be taught in a classroom," says Brink. ▲

Laying the foundations for academic success from Grade 1

Building the foundations for future academic success must start from when a child enters Grade 1, and the focus must be on cultivating a love of learning, an education expert says.

“Parents have an important role to play in the early years, in terms of developing the framework for a child’s educational journey. One of the most important ways in which this can be done, is to help the child navigate the early years with humour and enthusiasm, to ensure the process of learning and discovery creates positive associations in the brain, rather than feelings of anxiety and despondency,” says Desiree Hugo, Academic Head: Schools Division at ADvTECH, Africa’s leading private education provider.

Hugo says that by providing playful after-school home routines right from the start, children are able to grow and thrive throughout their school career.

“While there is little to no homework in the early years, putting aside some time every day to focus on the day’s activities, by talking over what was done in school during the day and reading together, for instance, young children will start getting into a natural routine of building upon what they’ve learned. By making this a fun and enjoyable experience, and a positive family interaction, they will start to associate learning with empowerment, which will pay dividends down the line when the workload does start to grow,” she says.

In addition to setting up a daily ‘connection’ routine with positive associations right from the start, parents should also help their children build the skills which will be required from them later in their school careers, says Hugo. These include:

Healthy routines

Children need a healthy diet, plenty of sleep and exercise. Unhealthy habits and routines can manifest in a child’s general disposition and academic engagement, so establishing good habits – including limiting screentime – is key.

Resilience

Help your child keep a balance and put things into context. Sometimes small things going wrong can have a big impact, especially on sensitive children, so young children need to understand that just because they haven’t yet mastered something, this doesn’t mean they can’t. Help them by emphasising the word ‘yet’ – ‘I haven’t mastered this YET, but I will keep trying and then I will’.

Staying positive

While it is normal for parents to feel a little competitive and compare their child’s progress to others, this instinct should be kept in check. Children can very quickly sense if parents feel they are not measuring up to their peers, and this can kickstart a downward spiral in terms of motivation and belief in self. The early years is a developmental stage, and a time for students to explore, discover and hone their skills. Mastering a skill may take many attempts and parents should afford their children the time and space to do so. Therefore, don’t let the child feel their school performance is the be all and end all. It’s okay to not get a perfect score on every spelling quiz, and to focus on mastery rather than performance.



**Desiree Hugo – Academic Head:
Schools Division at ADvTECH**



Learning styles

If you see your child struggling, it is worth speaking to their teacher or a counsellor to determine whether they perhaps have a unique learning style or special needs which require additional support. There are many different approaches to learning and finding those that work for your child will work wonders on their learning journey. Additionally, it might be that the environment is not right for your child, which is why it is important to find a school that is a right fit. It is therefore vital for parents to do thorough research when choosing a school, by talking to other parents, visiting the school, finding out what their approach entails, and how they will enable your child’s success. And if your child experiences anxiety, it is essential to engage directly with the teachers and school leadership teams to consider supportive interventions – prior to moving environments. ▲

LEARNERS WHO BENEFITED FROM THE ALATEEN PROGRAMME

Below are some comments from school children in the Alateen programme

(Names are changed to protect members’ anonymity)

My daughter has changed so much in the past year since attending Alateen. There’s a new confidence, a renewed happiness, and more openness. She has the courage to share in AA meetings, and to engage with people outside of them. She’s growing into an amazing person, and I couldn’t be prouder of her.
“Proud Mother”.

It’s amazing how much honesty there can be in Alateen when alcohol is full of lies. **“Maria” age 11.**



Alateen has relieved me of the stress in my life. I have more focus on my schoolwork and I have stopped overthinking everything. I have serenity in my life for the first time as I have stopped worrying about my Dad’s drinking and am more confident.
“Jabulani”, age 11.

I have been told by my friends & family I am much more relaxed, calmer and more mature. I have been going to Alateen for nearly three years and I don’t worry so much about my Mom and am not so negative. **“Lucy” now age 13.**



Alateen has helped me stop worrying about what might happen at home if my parents are drinking and fighting. **“Ray” age 12.**

Alateen has helped me deal with the stress at home and my school marks have improved. I didn’t want to go to meetings at first, but now I look forward to the weekend meeting and seeing my friends there.
“Rebecca”, age 15.

Before Alateen I found it very difficult to talk to other people at school. Now I feel freer, am much more confident, and understand it’s not only my family that has this problem. **“Mark” age 14.**

I used to bottle up my feelings about everything, until my anger would explode. At Alateen I learned a better, calmer way to share discuss any problems with my group. **“Jay” age 16.**



How to fund your education in a tough economy

By Eloise Nolte, MD of Optimi College

With this year's National Budget Speech, education, once again, received the majority share of our government's annual spending.

During this year's budget, National Treasury allocated R433bn of its R2trn budget towards education. More than half of this funding (R282bn) went towards basic education. Of this, R46bn was allocated towards the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

Programmes such as NSFAS are crucial in helping to provide financial support to disadvantaged students who wish to further their studies at public universities or TVET colleges.

However, in a country where the official unemployment rate is hovering around 35%, this programme is continuously under pressure amid huge demand. In recent years, NSFAS has experienced funding constraints.

Also, NSFAS only caters for students in public education institutions, and it doesn't assist the growing number of private colleges and universities in our country.

Therefore, for many young South Africans who are looking to fund their studies, it's clear that they may need to look to alternative sources of funding.

Below are just a few of the possible funding options to consider before embarking on this journey.

Corporate bursaries

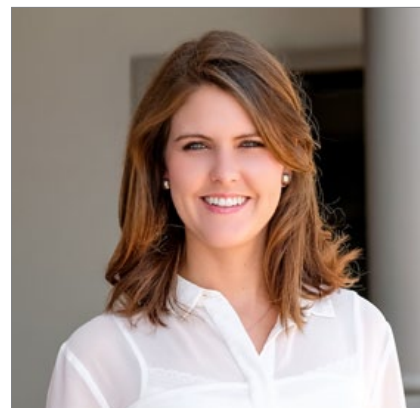
Many companies in South Africa, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes and other initiatives, provide bursaries to students in need of funding. Often, this requires going through an application process and it could entail other terms and conditions, such as ensuring that you pass all modules and even working for the company for a stipulated period after completing your studies.

Support from family & friends

Another way to fund your education may be to borrow from family members or friends. This has several advantages, if it is handled responsibly. The first is that there is the possibility that family members or friends could provide you with a lower 'interest rate' or even no interest. Secondly, many educational institutions offer discounts if learners pay in full and upfront. If, for example, you're able to receive a 10% discount for paying upfront, this means that you would need to raise 90% of the required funding. Raising this 90% of funding from several family members or friends could result in much lower long-term costs.

Payment terms from education institutions

If getting hold of the "90% of your fees" is not possible, then another option is to secure a payment agreement with the educational institution that you're studying with. Typically, this could require that you pay a small upfront deposit, and then



Eloise Nolte

pay the rest of your fees in monthly installments over a certain amount of time. These monthly fees might include extra costs compared to paying upfront for your studies, but these monthly amounts could be manageable.

Student financing options

A fourth route to consider is going with a reputable student finance provider, of which there are a growing number of options in South Africa. A student finance provider can offer both a service as an intermediary between financing partners, or offer financing itself. It's important to only work with providers that are reputable, who have a good track record and who are registered with the National Credit Regulator (NCR). What differentiates a student financing provider from a bank is that they typically give the student the option of paying a stipulated amount over a period of, for example, three months, and thereafter paying lower monthly installments for 12 months or 15 months. This spreads the cost and can make funding your education more affordable on a monthly basis. However, it could incur extra fees over the long term from the student financing provider itself, and it's important to be fully aware of these. Also, each provider differs, with some, for instance, allowing you to pay the interest after you've finished studying. It's best to read the terms and conditions carefully before proceeding.

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An E-learning ecosystem – the holistic solution

The gamification of learning & App development

Providing E-learning tools through supplier partnerships

Created 5 000+ E-lessons for the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership

Sharing the vision of MEC Panyaza Lesufi: 1 learner – 1 tablet; 1 teacher – 1 laptop

Learn to earn & earn to learn – creating an internal economy through virtual banking

Redressing the inequalities in the education system by empowering over 120 000 learners



1st public school to go 100% digital
Blueprint E-learning school



Finalist in the 2015 United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA) for Improving the Delivery of Public Services



WINNER of the 2015 Centre for Public Service Innovation Awards (CPSI) for Innovative Use of ICT for Effective Service Delivery



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

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Banks

Finally, banks are an option for funding your studies. Some banks offer student financing at more affordable, prime interest rates with set monthly payment periods. It is important to approach this with care and pay back the amounts diligently. Failing to do so could impact one's credit score negatively.

In summary, there are many options available to fund your education, apart from government subsidy programmes such as NSFAS.

All these options require a lot of research, and if you need any further advice, you should speak to a certified advisor or professional to help you.

Where can I get a bursary/funds to further my studies?

The following organisations may help you fund your studies once you have finished school:

Department of Higher Education and Training

The Department maintains a [list of government bursaries\(link is external\)](#) available to deserving students. It also has a website with [international scholarship opportunities](#) available to South Africans.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

NSFAS provides funding for deserving students who cannot afford further education. From 2018 this will be in the form of a bursary rather than a loan as was the case previously. Courses at public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges are also funded by NSFAS.

E-mail: info@nsfas.org.za([link sends e-mail](#))

Tel: 0860 067 327

08:30 – 17:00 (Monday – Friday)

08:30 – 16:30 (Saturdays)

Website: <https://www.nsfas.org.za/>([link is external](#))

Bursaries South Africa

- [All Bursaries South Africa\(link is external\)](#) has a list of the bursaries in South Africa.
- [Bursaries South Africa\(link is external\)](#) has a list of the bursaries in South Africa.

Universities and universities of technology

Contact the [university](#) of your choice for information on bursaries and other forms of funding.

Banks

You could also approach your bank for a loan. Some also give bursaries to students of merit.

Government to boost funding for education

Over the medium term, the learning and culture function accounts for R1.23 trillion (23.5%) of the consolidated expenditure.

“The function will continue to receive the largest share of government spending over the period, rising from R387.2 billion in 2020/21 to R416 billion in 2023/24,” said the National Treasury in its Budget Review report.

Expenditure in this function is driven by the basic education sector.

In the basic education sector, compensation of employees in provincial education departments remains the largest spending category, representing 51.2% of total functional expenditure.

Low compensation growth of 0.8% over the MTEF [Medium Term Expenditure Framework] period, combined with early retirements, will reduce the number of available teachers.

This, coupled with a rising number of learners, implies larger class sizes, especially in no-fee schools, which is expected to negatively affect learning outcomes.

Over the medium term, R36.7 billion will be allocated to the Education Infrastructure Grant, which will be used to roll out new school infrastructure and maintain existing infrastructure.

Regardless of which funding option you choose, it's important to also give yourself enough time and apply as early as you can, as some application processes do that a while. Funding your education can be a long-term investment too, especially if you are able to increase your earning power in years to come.

Experts at Optimi College – a leading provider of distance learning in South Africa – can assist you with any advice on this matter as well. To find out more, visit www.collegesa.edu.za. ▲

Projects funded by the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant will end in 2022/23 and funds will become part of the Education Infrastructure Grant from 2023/24.

This will consolidate school infrastructure spending within provincial education departments. To maintain meals for about 9 million learners at 19 950 schools each year, the national school nutrition programme grant will cost R25.5 billion over the medium term.

In the post-school education and training sector, slower growth in subsidies and grants for universities, technical and vocational education and training colleges, and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme will require a review of student enrolment growth and bursary allowances.

The Budget Review says institutions will need to contain costs such as staff numbers and salaries, and develop ways of using information and communication technology more effectively to enhance blended learning.

During this period, spending from the skills development levy is projected to increase by 10.2% annually.

Sector education and training authorities will fund skills programmes, learnerships, internships and apprenticeships, and workplace experience, the report indicates.

Over the period, R65.5 billion will help an estimated 89 000 new artisans to register for training, develop 71 500 qualified artisans and provide more than 320 000 work-based learning opportunities.

The sports, arts and culture sector will continue to focus on social cohesion.

An allocation of R33.7 billion over the medium term will support community library services, heritage legacy and job creation projects, school sport and indigenous games, and help drive transformation in sport.

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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

CHOICE SUBJECTS (20 CREDITS EACH)

6. <u>ACCOUNTING</u>	6. <u>LIFE SCIENCES</u>
7. <u>Business Economics</u>	7. <u>Geography</u>
<u>OR</u>	<u>OR</u>
<u>Economics</u>	EGD (Minimum 20 Learners)
	<u>OR</u>
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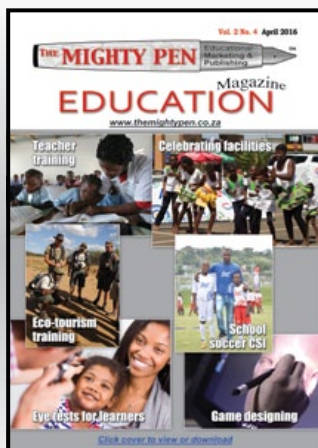
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