



# Magazine EDUCATION

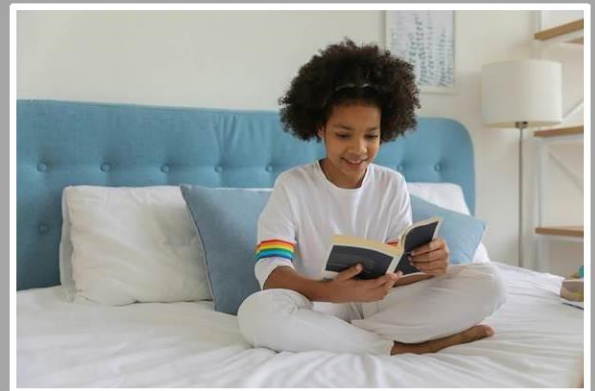
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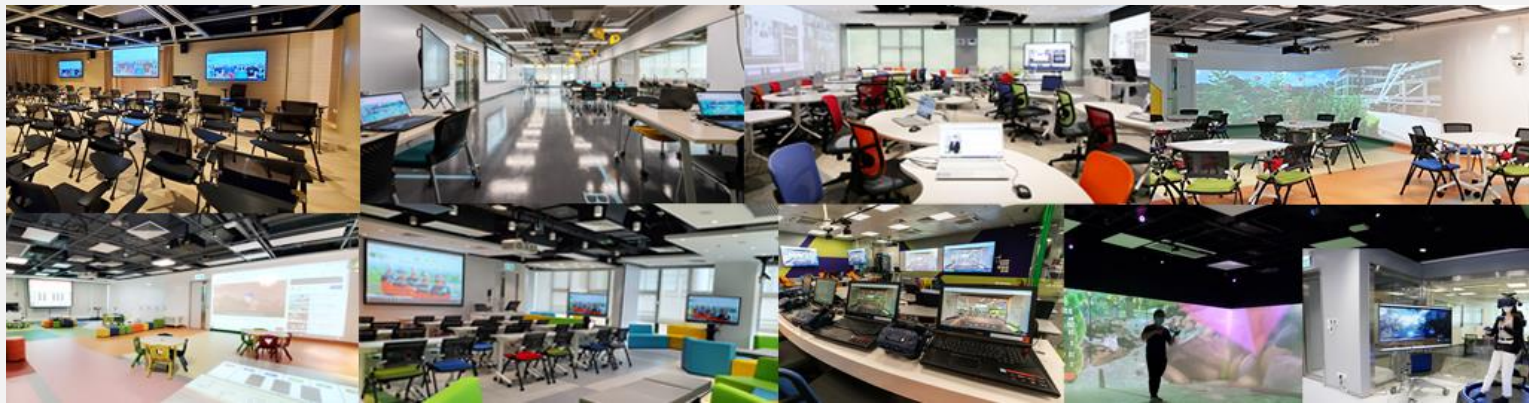
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**Editor's Column**

**Cell phones in schools – a call for responsible usage**

The South African Basic Education Department and provincial departments are increasingly pushing for strict cell phone restrictions in schools. The department said policies should aim to balance reduced distractions with meaningful access to technology.

While not a mandatory national ban, schools are adopting "bell-to-bell" bans and, in some cases, restricting devices to "dumb" phones – only able to receive urgent phone calls from family. The National Department emphasises that decisions on cell phone use are made by individual school management teams and governing bodies (SGBs).

See our bumper Technology Feature article which ironically highlights the groundbreaking use of a cell phone in digital education by Christian Brothers' College, Boksburg. The school's cell phone policy allows for its use for the Knowledge Network Technology integration using ILAMM.

Banning cell phones in schools is a rapidly growing global trend driven by concerns over distraction, mental health, and academic performance, with 40% of education systems worldwide having implemented restrictions by the end of 2024. According to UNESCO, nations like France, China, and New Zealand have enacted nationwide bans, while many schools in the U.S. and Europe are adopting a classroom ban.

The movement is strongly supported by parent bodies (like *Smartphone Free Childhood SA*) who are lobbying for bans to combat addiction and improve social skills.

Education authorities say the shift is about managing technology responsibly — not removing it from classrooms altogether. This must be managed in an educationally sound manner and every school should have in place a policy on the use of cellular phones and mobile devices, with the input from all stakeholders

Education experts have pointed to alternatives such as computer laboratories, school-owned tablets used under supervision, and interactive smartboards.

Educational psychologists agree that restrictions result in better interaction between pupils, improved focus and engagement in the classroom, and less anxiety.

So, the responsibility is on schools to adopt a wise and balanced policy.

**Blessings in education**

**Janos Bozsik - editor**

# A South African first – Students succeed on the device they choose

**A mentoring-led formula that equips school students with the foundational digital skills needed for school, work, university, and the future.**

South Africa is celebrating a new milestone in digital education — one shaped by visionary leadership, pioneering methodology, and students who proved what's possible when learning adapts to life.

## The formula that makes mixed-device learning work

Under the guidance of Christian Brothers' College Boksburg (CBC) Headmaster, Mr Toby Craig — a strategic thinker and catalyst for digital transformation — the school adopted a forward-thinking formula: ILAMM - Integrated Learning and Mentoring Methodology; Knowledge Network's non-overlapping digital-skills programme that enhances rather than duplicates government subjects; Google's platform; web-based apps; and a *Choose to Bring Your Own Device* model grounded in a simple principle: bring what you have; we will teach you to succeed.

This formula works because ILAMM is a relationship-based methodology that depends on teachers and students being active participants in learning. Teachers are mentored to guide mixed-device learning with confidence, and students are mentored to learn on whichever device they choose — ensuring every choice becomes a pathway to success.

In the classroom, Ms Vanessa Campbell — a distinguished ILAMM practitioner whose presence, commitment, and mastery help every student achieve on the device they choose — brought this vision to life. In real life, students switch naturally between devices depending on their day, activities, and what's practical in the moment. ILAMM supports this reality.

Before exploring how this innovation unfolded in practice, we begin with the voice of a student who lived it. **Nkateko Baloyi**, Grade 10, who received the *Excellence in Technology Integration Award*. He shares his honest account of the course, the assessment, and how learning across devices shaped his confidence and skills.

After Nkateko's story and award photo, **Jil Hrdliczka**, Knowledge Network's Founder and architect of ILAMM, explains what the award recognises. There is also a sample of the actual exam paper the students worked from - the same standard applied to every student, no matter which device they use.

We then hear from **Uriel Moonsammy**, also a Grade 10 student

who completed the entire assessment on his phone, Demonstrating *learn-with-any-device learning*.

## Nkateko shares his journey:

"If I'm being honest, this isn't a very difficult course. I'd show up, do the work, and next thing I knew I was being handed a fancy trophy.



**Nkateko Baloyi receives the Excellence in Technology Integration Award on 27 January 2026 in the CBC hall.**

*Photo taken by his proud mother, Wendy Baloyi.*

*Floating Trophy & Replica sponsored by Lynda Meikle of Tao Designer Glass.*

"The work was straightforward. I would sit in class with Mrs Campbell and copy the slides and docs she made. While it's not a lot of effort to copy, the real art of the subject was learning how to adapt to new scenarios and criteria.

"We were shown different scenarios, and we had to use skills we learned through copying to make Slides and Docs appropriate for each scenario. This is exactly what we would find in the exams, so I applied myself, and have to thank Mrs Campbell for showing the way.

"I learned about the Google platforms. (Docs, Slides, Sheets, etc.) through the course which helped tons at the time because Microsoft had become truly awful to use. I was exposed to these new platforms I was never privy to, and I learned how to use them in an effective manner.

"For example, in group public speaking,

*Cont. p. 3 ...*

... from p. 2

where we would normally work separately on speeches, using the share features I learned in this course, I got my team on one doc working simultaneously and this synergy helped us perform better than our competitors.

“Firstly, how to look for new options when other things fall through. For example, I had to write this on my phone and restart from zero because my laptop stopped working.

“Secondly, it gave me the ability to learn new lessons that changed how I work in my everyday life and provided me with the tools to utilize those lessons.

“Thirdly it showed me that there are teachers who go beyond the measurable limits to help students succeed. That is to say, Mrs Campbell is truly the only reason I have the honour of writing this. She pushed me at every step and for that I am eternally grateful.

“So yeah, this course is easy, but that might just be because I had a teacher willing to do the most to make me successful.”

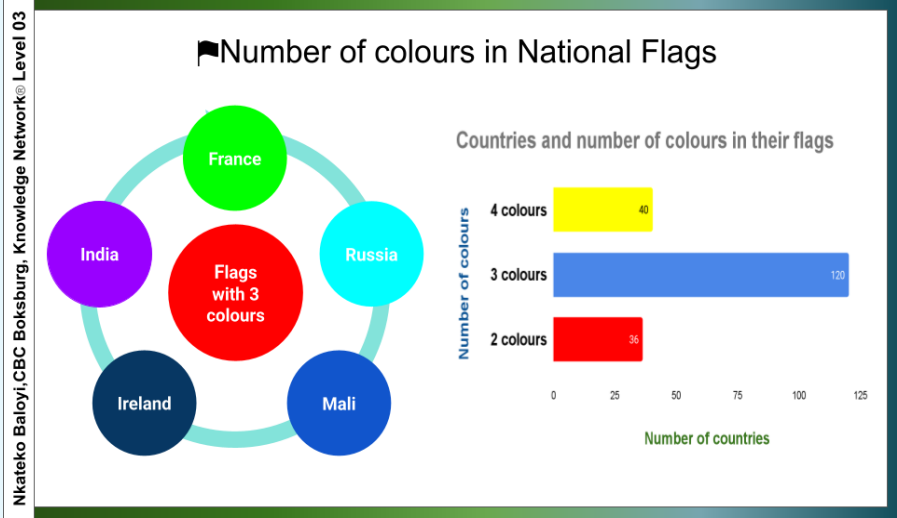
**What this award really recognises**

The course assessment — the same exam Nkateko and Uriel describe — mirrors real-world digital learning, where students work with the devices they already own. In a Bring Your Own Device model, the aim is not to standardise hardware but to standardise learning.

Allowing students to complete the exam on any device makes technology accessible, flexible, and choice-driven. Completing it on a phone is particularly significant. Phones are not traditionally viewed as classroom tools, yet they are often the most available.

When a student interprets data, creates bitmaps and vector graphics, designs icons, builds diagrams and graphs, writes and formats content, uploads and downloads work, and completes the full assessment on a small screen, they show genuine digital competence — not reliance on specialised equipment or AI shortcuts.

Cont. p. 4 ...



***Nkateko Baloyi - Grade 09 2025 - Exam - KN Level 03 - Page 02***

“I only learned how to share, print the docs and slides because I had to show Mrs Campbell my work from time to time, and learning these skills saved me during my exam when my school account failed me and when performing for public speaking.

“Weirdly, this course is done on your own device, which was different from the years prior, and I feel this has the power to help a lot of students and schools. Schools that don't have the option to install a computer lab or grades like mine who didn't have access to the lab, still have the option of developing the skills the course offers.

**“And students who can't afford or can't get access to laptops can still do the course. This worked out in favour of my classmates, who mostly worked on their phones.**

“It's an amazing thing to have adaptable education. As you can guess a phone doesn't have as many options for working as a laptop, so Mrs Campbell and the Knowledge Network team made sure that my class could pass by adapting the exam to their device's capabilities.

“The lessons I learned really saved my butt when it came to passing my other classes as well. In Technology I used slides to compose my projects and docs to write my plans. In History and Geography, I used the lessons on AI we had earlier in the year to assist in research.

“This is a course built on the idea of adaptation and preparation for the future, and I learned a ton from it.

... from p. 3

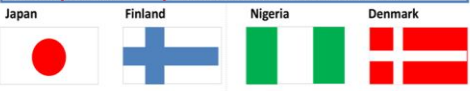
**Knowledge Network** © Knowledge Network 2025 This project can be created on a slide e.g. Google Slides, Keynote, PowerPoint – MS 365 on Android devices

KN Level 03 1 of 2

### Interesting facts about flags around the world

Most flags use colour to convey values like freedom, peace, religion or natural beauty

Flag colour symbolism guide		
JAPAN	Red and white	White for honesty, red for sun and energy
NIGERIA	Green and white	Green for natural resources, white for peace and unity
FINLAND	Blue and white	Blue for lakes and sky, white for snow and purity
DENMARK	Red and white	Red for strength, white for Christianity (cross)




Instructions for the flags: do not type this text. All flags must be the same size. Align and distribute the flags evenly. The colours and design of the flag must be accurate – note the position of the shapes on the flag. Use WordArt for the names of the countries. Align the names (if the paper is in grayscale use the colours given to you in the table).

- Open a slide app
- Design a border on the slide master
- Include your name surname, name of school, Knowledge Network® Level 03 on the slide master
- Insert a symbol of the World in the slide title
- Add text to a shape
- Fill the shape with a gradient fill – text must be easy to read
- Insert an icon of a flag inside the shape
- Merge cells in a table
- Fill heading with colour
- Apply a bold / thick outside border
- Apply a thick red border to vertical borders inside the table
- Apply a customised bullet – you can use the flag icon or other
- Adjust column widths

**Knowledge Network** © Knowledge Network 2025 This project can be created on a slide e.g. Google Slides, Keynote, PowerPoint – MS 365 on Android devices

KN Level 03 2 of 2

### Number of colours in National Flags



Instructions for the bar chart - do not type this text

Insert a bar chart

- Chart title is – Countries and number of colours in their flags
- Compare the following data:
 

No of colours	Number of Countries
4 colours -	40
3 colours -	120
2 colours -	36
- Fill each bar with a gradient fill that includes the number of colours in the flag e.g. 4 colours bar will have 4 colours in the gradient fill
- Add axis titles – change the font colour of the axis titles using theme colours
- Add data labels
- Delete the gridlines
- Increase the font size of all text and apply bold format

Insert a second slide to create a two-slide presentation – delete additional slides

- Slide titles must have the same format, size and position on both slides
- Insert the flag icon
- Use SmartArt to display the flags with 3 colours
- Add an extra shape if required
- Change the colours
- Change the SmartArt Style
- Resize and reposition on the slide
- Check the spelling
- Pay attention to the layout and alignment of objects on the slide
- Save / download each slide as a PNG file type
- Save as a presentation
- Save / download each slide as a PNG file type
- Save as: name, surname and class code

**The Knowledge Network 2025 Assessment - KN Level 03 Exam Paper which the students worked from.**

AI still plays a role, but in the right way. Students are mentored to use AI tools for research support — gathering and verifying background information — but the creation of assessment artefacts must be their own work. This ensures they develop essential skills in planning, designing, problem-solving, and representing information visually — skills AI cannot replace.

**These skills directly support learning across other subjects:**

- **Mathematics:** representing data accurately through graphs and diagrams.
- **Geography:** working with maps, symbols, and visual information.
- **Languages:** preparing visual presentations, digital submissions, and verbal projects.
- **Life Orientation and Social Sciences:** gathering information, evaluating sources, and communicating findings.
- **Creative subjects:** applying principles of layout, colour, and visual hierarchy.

In Nkateko’s article, he demonstrates these skills across Public Speaking, History, Geography, and Technology. The course does not compete with subjects such as CAT, IT, Coding and Robotics, Technology, or Creative Arts — most of which the school already offers. Instead, it acts as the glue: the enabling “know-how” that empowers students to use whatever technology they have in everything they do for school, work, life, and university.

We need our students to have the skills to compete for opportunities across the world. This course is the starting point. Students gain the skills, use them, and apply them across life. They don’t have to wait for the next computer lab visit — they gain experience every time they access their own or any device. Their progress accelerates because they drive it themselves.

It all happens online, mirroring the way modern learning and workplaces function. Working online teaches students how to collaborate, share files, submit work digitally, and manage

cloud-based tools — essential in real life.

Whether uploading a diagram for the teacher, sharing a link with a peer, or downloading a resource to complete a task, students practise the same digital behaviours used in universities, workplaces, and global communication. Online work also encourages collaboration: students learn to exchange ideas, give feedback, and co-create resources across different devices and platforms.

Course assessments are uploaded, marked, and moderated. A score of 70% earns students a Knowledge Network Certificate of Successful Completion, issued and distributed digitally by the teacher.

Behind the scenes are ILAMM, the teacher, and the school. Together, they make this programme — with its different levels — work because they honour the whole student: their device, context, strengths, talents, and growing digital identity.

It creates a learning environment where adaptability, collaboration, creativity, confidence, the teacher’s gentle push to achieve, and technical understanding come together naturally. It prepares students not just to pass an exam, but to thrive in a world where digital fluency and flexible problem-solving are essential.


Cont. p. 5 ...

... from p. 4

### Uriel explains his experience:

“For this exam, I created the layout by using shapes, charts and text boxes. I started by adding a title and my name at the top. Then I inserted a bar graph to show the number of colours in national flags, and I edited the data to match the information. After that, I added a table to explain what different flag colours mean for countries like Japan, Finland, Nigeria and Denmark. I also added small circles to create a visual diagram that shows the different colours. Finally, I arranged everything neatly, so the project looks clear and easy to read.

## Interesting facts about flags around the

 Most flags use colour to convey values like freedom, peace, religion or natural beauty

### Flag colour symbolism guide

JAPAN	Red and white	• White for honesty, red for sun and energy
NIGERIA	Green and white	•Green for natural resources, white for peace and unity
FINLAND	Blue and white	•Blue for lakes and sky, white for snow and purity
DENMARK	Red and white	•Red for strength, white for Christianity(cross)



Uriel, Moonsammy, CBC Boksburg, Knowledge Network Level 03

**Uriel Moonsammy – Grade 9 2025 – Exam – KN Level 03 – Page 01**

“It was difficult to do this project on my phone because the screen is small, and it was hard to move and resize the charts and text boxes accurately. It also took longer to type and switch between tools compared to using a laptop.

I overcame the challenges by working slowly and carefully, zooming in when needed, and double-checking my layout. I also broke the work into smaller steps, so it was easier to manage on a small screen.”

### Why phone-based assessment adds value

Students completing assessments on a phone gain an additional layer of digital fluency. Working on a small screen requires them to understand their device’s capabilities and limitations, adapt their workflow, and make deliberate choices about tools and file handling. They learn to judge what their phone can and cannot do and adjust their approach to meet the criteria.

This becomes a powerful skill: evaluating a device, working within its constraints, and still producing high-quality digital artefacts. Uriel’s experience shows this adaptability in action.

### A formula for real-world learning

Nkateko completed his assessment on a laptop while classmates succeeded on their devices, and Uriel completed his on a phone.

Their experiences — alongside the pioneering work of Jil Hrdliczka, marking another South African first — show how a choice-driven model reshapes digital fluency.

### Key takeaway

This teacher - and ILAMM-led, choice-driven digital learning formula — combining a non-overlapping digital skills programme, Google’s platform, web-based apps, and *Choose to Bring Your Own Device* — is replicable anywhere, works with any device, requires only Wi-Fi, data projection, and storage. It reflects real-world learning: students switch naturally between phones, tablets, Chromebooks, and laptops depending on their day and activities. This flexibility strengthens digital fluency and ensures the formula can benefit millions of students and teachers worldwide.

### ILAMM in one breath

ILAMM - Integrated Learning and Mentoring Methodology® — is a relationship-based mentoring methodology that makes learning easier and more meaningful. It integrates teaching and mentoring, promotes iterative growth, builds student agency and ownership, works with any device on any platform, and strengthens purposeful language use — because language is how students think, express, and connect. ILAMM develops communication, creative, critical, logical, lateral thinking and problem-solving skills; builds confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth; and honours the whole student and the whole teacher.

# 5 Pieces of Advice for Teachers, Tech Coaches, and Principals to Increase Student Engagement

## Honor student and teacher voices

allow students and teachers to share what's working and what's not working

## Bring hope into your school and classroom

emphasize importance of empathy, the importance of optimism as a leader

## Remain positive

the motto during this time is "this too shall pass."

## Reestablish norms

educational instruction will move back to the classroom and students will have to readjust to the new environment.

## Self-care

teachers are unable to fully educate students without taking care of themselves first

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Empower learners.



# Let's make learning easier and fun!

Partner with Knowledge Network® to give your students the best chance to successfully master technology.



This is Marty. Marty can talk, walk, dance, translate, sense and learn.

We use Marty to test code already learned through Knowledge Network for unplugged, ScratchJr, Scratch and Python, and we progress from there. We do machine learning, add microcontrollers and use AI like text-to-speech. Progression per grade is built in.



This is a microcontroller. A micro:bit – a great starter tool to teach how circuits work, how to connect different robotic elements, how electricity flows through materials, coding and robotics for indoor and outdoor use. We use it for AI, machine learning, to use with robots like Marty, and for creating DIY robotics like windmills, fans, turtles and other. Extensions like sound, recording, servos and microturtle grids are excellent teaching tools for little learners too.



**Coding.** We integrate all the different learning areas into coding. Students code stories, games, shape drawing, animation, calculations and data storage like game scores. They **design** characters for animation, use art and graphics to **create** backgrounds, game interfaces and develop websites.

They do research for photos and images, make music for stories and games, edit sound and record voice. They make videos, **invent** new games and code apps. They learn how to manage their files. Little learners improve their vocab, communication and thinking skills through storytelling **coding**.



This looks like AI. A companion for students and teachers learning **Skills for Schoolwork**. AI is a valuable study companion and **research** assistant. AI can help with full APA-style **referencing** and proper citing.

AI can support writing, provide math help and study guides, and assist students with revision by helping with translations, grammar checks and language conversational practice.

Let's teach students how to use it correctly and safely. Teachers also use it during class to make learning easier.



**Skills for schoolwork:** we all need excellent skills in all areas of computer use, from writing, drawing, layout, research and referencing to charting, number crunching, animation, sound, video, presenting data for projects using business-standard and newly released tools.

**Integrating technology** in teaching and learning is the key to mastering all these new skills for schoolwork, coding and robotics. It also develops **computational** thinking, **creativity**, **problem-solving**, **teamwork** and collaboration - key abilities students also need to prosper in the digital age.

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# Adaptive learning – breaking barriers in schools

As technological development transforms global education, the education sector in South Africa faces a critical challenge: how to deliver personalised, inclusive, and differentiated learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of every student.

“As classrooms grow more diverse, both in learning styles and abilities, schools must adopt innovative approaches to ensure no student is left behind. Adaptive learning technologies offer a powerful solution, enabling educators to tailor instruction while fostering an inclusive environment,” says Andrea Kruger, EdTech specialist at ADvTECH Schools.

Adaptive learning technologies use data-driven insights to customise educational content, pacing, and assessments to suit individual student needs. These tools, ranging from intelligent tutoring systems to learning management platforms, allow educators to differentiate instruction without overwhelming their workloads.

For students, this means a learning experience that feels tailored, engaging, and supportive, whether they’re mastering foundational skills or tackling advanced concepts. For teachers, it provides real-time feedback to adjust strategies, ensuring every student progresses.

## Accessibility of adaptive learning technologies

Resource-restricted schools can absolutely integrate adaptive learning technologies by starting small, leveraging free or low-cost tools, and prioritising teacher training and inclusivity.

While they may not match the scale of a global best practice ecosystem, the core principles - pedagogy-driven tech, inclusivity, and adaptability - apply universally.

Additionally, by tapping into partnerships, open resources, and community support, these schools can deliver personalised learning that transforms student outcomes, proving that innovation is possible even with limited means.

## Curriculum integration

Technology must not dictate educational strategy but rather enhance it. Schools should prioritise tools that align with their pedagogical goals, fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Moreover, inclusivity must remain at the heart of these efforts, ensuring that technology bridges gaps for students with diverse needs, including those with learning difficulties or language barriers.



## Put pedagogy first

Choose technologies that support your teaching goals, fostering skills like critical thinking and creativity. Avoid tools that prioritise rote learning or dictate classroom strategies.

## Champion inclusivity

Select adaptive tools that cater to diverse learners, including students with disabilities, language barriers, or varying academic needs.

## Empower educators

Invest in teacher training to build confidence in using adaptive technologies. Tools like data dashboards can streamline administrative tasks, freeing teachers to focus on instruction.

## Adopt cost-effective solutions

Resource-restricted schools can leverage free or low-cost platforms like Khan Academy, Moodle, or Kolibri, which offer personalised learning and offline capabilities. Mobile-first apps, such as Quizlet, can also deliver adaptive content using widely available smartphones, maximising access in underserved areas.

## Engage communities

Involve parents, students, and local stakeholders to build trust in adaptive learning. Transparent communication about its benefits - such as improved engagement and equity - can foster buy-in.

## The right age – to cultivate a love of reading

Children between ages 10 and 12 are at a fascinating stage of life. They're no longer little kids, but they're not yet teenagers. They're starting to ask bigger questions, push boundaries, and search for who they are becoming. Amid all these changes, reading plays a powerful role, and schools and parents should strongly encourage students to build their reading muscle during this time.

In contrast to content on devices, books give children a safe space to explore new ideas, test out possibilities, and imagine life through someone else's eyes. They also strengthen critical thinking, boost vocabulary, and build empathy - all skills that help pre-teens navigate school and friendships with more confidence.

Most importantly, reading at this age lays the foundation for a lifelong habit. A child who enjoys books at ages 10 to 12 is far more likely to carry that love into their teenage years, when the pull of social media and other distractions becomes stronger.

A 2024 study of children aged 10 to 12, by neuroscientists at *Columbia University's Teachers College*, found that reading on paper promoted "deeper reading" with better comprehension and processing of complex texts. It was noted that this age group is pivotal for transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn", making physical books ideal for exploring ideas and imagining others' perspectives without digital distractions.

Regular reading during this key developmental period will support stronger understanding across subjects, better information absorption, and clearer expression of ideas throughout the child's life.

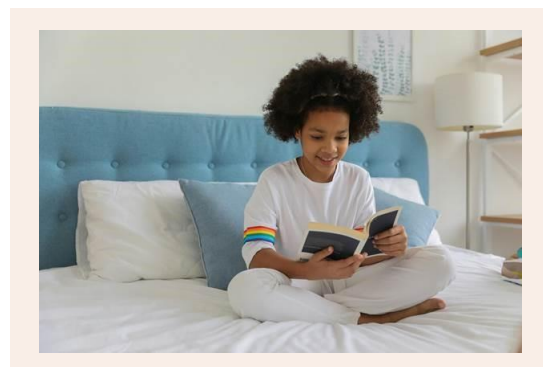
### Creating a reading-rich home

Pre-teens crave independence, yet they still look to their parents for cues. The best way to nurture reading at this age is to show that it's valued at home - not as a school task, but as part of family life.

Before bedtime, spend some time reading side by side. You each choose your own book, then share a favourite line or moment. It shows that reading is for everyone, not just a chore for children. (And no, reading on devices do not count).

Invite your child to read maps while travelling, menus at restaurants, or DIY instructions at home. These moments prove that reading has value beyond the classroom.

Encourage your child to swap books with a friend or start a mini



book club, to make reading become a social, not a solitary activity.

### The role of schools

Schools offer social and collaborative opportunities that enhance reading motivation and enjoyment.

By fostering a love of reading within a communal and supportive learning environment, schools complement and extend the encouragement children receive at home, making the development of reading habits more comprehensive and durable.

Rather have structured programmes than just ad hoc reading opportunities.

### Play with a purpose

When reading feels playful and purposeful, children are far more likely to carry that joy into their teenage years and beyond.

Between ages 10 and 12, children are shaping their identities. They're learning who they are, who they want to be, and how they see the world.

Books offer them mirrors to see themselves and windows to step into lives very different from their own.

As parents and teachers, when we nurture a love of stories, we're not only supporting school success, but we are also giving our young people tools for life.

# 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 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.**

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.**



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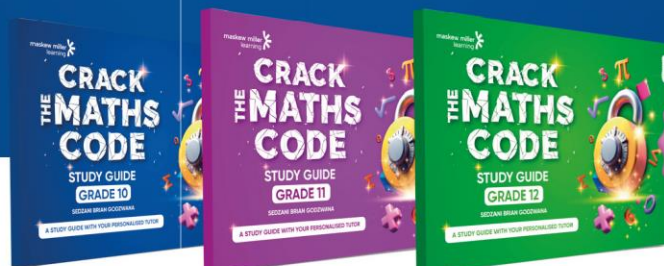
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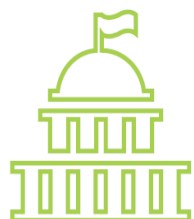
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# From preschool to primary – Grade 1 transition

Transitioning from preschool to the more formal primary school setting is a significant milestone for both children and their parents. This change can bring about feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, but with intentional preparation, parents can help their children embark on this new educational journey with confidence.

There will be lots of excitement around the practical preparations such as selecting school uniforms, gathering supplies, and getting to grips with new routines.

## Manage expectations

As parents, it is important to manage your expectations. Allow your child to make mistakes and learn from them, rather than pushing for achievement and perfect outcomes at all costs. In the next few weeks, help your child develop independence and confidence by taking small steps towards self-care, such as dressing themselves and organising their belongings.

## Foster perseverance

Young children may feel frustrated when they struggle with tasks. It's essential to teach them the value of persistence and the importance of continuing to try despite difficulties.

“Instead of immediately stepping in to resolve issues, parents should offer guidance and encouragement, to help their child build confidence in their own abilities,” an education expert says.

## Promote positive play

Starting Junior school is a crucial social development phase where children learn to engage meaningfully with peers. Parents should encourage kindness and inclusivity among their children, which are vital for emotional growth and confidence.

These early years start marking the time where parents can't just always step in and remedy the situation, and where students need to start understanding how to navigate challenges themselves.

## Encourage curiosity

A natural curiosity about the world is fundamental for learning. Parents should nurture this by engaging in conversations about their surroundings during outings, ask questions of your child, do not just supply answers. Research indicates that children benefit significantly from interactive discussions where both parties question, listen and respond thoughtfully.

Exploring topics together can further enhance this curiosity.



## Develop healthy routines to build resilience

While there is little to no homework in the early years, parents should put 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.

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.

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

By fostering connection time, parents will build trusting relationships with their children, so that when something may be troubling them, they reach out to their parents as their first line of support and care.

## Reviewing your plans – after Matric

Following the release of the Matric results in January this year, countless students are in a position where they can – or are forced to – reconsider their plans.

For those who did better than expected, new doors will have opened. For others, their initial study plans may need to be reviewed due to their marks not fulfilling the requirements of their chosen qualification. Regardless of an individual's position, it's important to know how to move forward, an education expert says.

“In the wake of receiving their results, it is important for all Matrics from the Class of 2025 to pause and consider the way forward. Even if your results don't impact your initial plans, it is still advisable to make sure you know you are on the right path,” says Peter Kriel, General Manager at The Independent Institute of Education.

### You did better than expected

Kriel says the first thing to do if you did better than expected is to enjoy the moment and celebrate your success. Think about what strategies worked for you. Did you follow a study schedule? Did you use specific study techniques? Understanding what contributed to your success can help you in future endeavours.

If you applied to a higher education institution to study, contact them immediately and find out if there is space available in a programme that you would rather follow but did not previously qualify for.

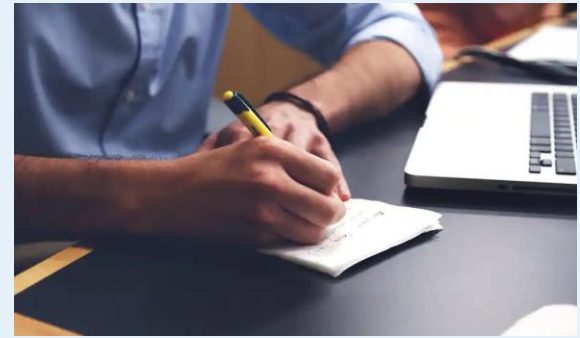
### You didn't do as well as expected

Kriel says it is very important to stay positive and not panic. Performing below par is a temporary hurdle, not the end of the road.

If your poorer performance didn't impact your National Senior Certificate endorsement you are probably also set to go.

“It's natural to feel disappointed but remember that one set of results does not define your future. Reflect on what happened and understand where things went wrong. Was it a lack of preparation, anxiety, or difficulty with certain topics? Identifying the problem is the first step to improvement going forward,” he says.

If you applied to study and you now no longer qualify to follow this route, you must act quickly to plan how you will get to where you planned to be in the first place.



“Remember, all doors are not closed – you may just need to follow a different route. One really good option is to enrol for a Higher Certificate at a reputable registered and accredited higher education institution. The advantage of doing this is that once you have successfully completed the Higher Certificate, you will be able to continue with degree studies in your chosen discipline,” Kriel says.

Use them as opportunities to build resilient adaptability and develop a growth mindset by believing in your ability to grow and improve.

A growth mindset can turn challenges into opportunities for learning and development.

“Your final school exam results are an important milestone, but they are just one part of your academic journey.

Whether you did better or worse than expected, there are always steps you can take to continue growing and improving. Celebrate your achievements, learn from your experiences, and stay focused on your future goals.

Remember, with determination and the right mindset, you can overcome any challenge and achieve your dreams



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## Bridging certificates – a lifeline to further study



**For students whose study plans have been disrupted due to not meeting minimum course requirements, Bridging Certificates offer a second chance to achieve their educational goals.**

“Bridging Certificates empower students by providing them with the foundational knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to succeed in occupational qualifications at NQF Level 3, 4, or 5,” says Siyavuya Makubalo, Marketing Manager at Oxbridge Academy.

These courses bridge the gap for those who may not meet entry requirements for their desired programme, ensuring access to further education and career opportunities.

While failing to qualify for previously planned studies can be discouraging, Bridging Certificates help students get back on track. They address knowledge gaps and enhance understanding of subject matter. These courses also focus on essential skills development in areas such as numeracy, literacy, and communication to prepare students for success in further studies.

### **Bridging Certificates cater to a diverse group of learners:**

- Students who missed minimum requirements for their chosen courses.
- Individuals with Grade 9 or 10 qualifications who have years of work experience and now seek formal education to validate their skills and pursue career growth.
- Workers looking to transition into fields where formal qualifications are essential.

“For someone who has been working in a shop or similar roles but now wants to gain a formal qualification, a Bridging Certificate provides the perfect stepping stone,” says Makubalo.

It not only validates their competency, but also opens doors to higher NQF qualifications.

### **Affordable and flexible learning**

Bridging Certificates are designed to be accessible and flexible. Offered via distance learning, they allow students to balance their studies with personal and professional commitments.

### **Expanding opportunities in a crowded education landscape**

Each year, thousands of students qualify for higher education, but many face challenges due to limited university spaces.

This reality underscores the importance of alternative pathways like Bridging Certificates, which ensure students can continue their education without being limited by traditional constraints.

“For students determined to move forward, Bridging Certificates are an efficient and credible solution,” says Makubalo.

They prepare learners for further studies and equip them with the broad foundational knowledge required for a successful academic journey and future career.



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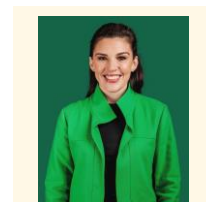
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## Funding for – your child's studies



**By Wendy Beaumont, Executive: Unsecured Lending at Nedbank**

Decisions must be made about how to finance your children's tertiary education. Ideally, an education savings plan should now be kicking in, but for parents without such a plan, or without the prospect of sponsorship from corporates or that rich uncle or aunt, the decision often comes down to two options: funding through a personal loan or applying for a student loan.

### Understanding the differences

A personal loan is a general-purpose credit option. It gives you a lump sum upfront that you can use for various purposes, including tuition, laptops, accommodation or even unrelated expenses. It's unsecured, which means it doesn't require putting up your car, home or other assets, but your approval and interest rate depend on your income, credit record, and ability to repay.

On the other hand, a student loan is purpose-built to cover education costs only such as tuition, textbooks, accommodation, and study equipment without the flexibility of covering unrelated expenses. It usually offers lower interest rates, longer repayment terms and repayment flexibility, often allowing you to pay only the interest while studying, with full capital repayments starting after graduation. For minors or full-time students, a parent or guardian co-signs the loan.

### Choosing the most suitable option

Typically, a personal loan is most suited for parents or working individuals who have a steady income and a healthy credit profile, don't need restrictions on how the funds will be used, and can start repayments immediately. It's mostly ideal for short-term studies.

However, if parents are looking for a solution to funding full-time studies at an accredited institution with lower repayments throughout the duration of the programme and can co-sign an agreement for their children to access financial support that they will repay once they have graduated, then a student loan is best placed to assist.

### Be fully aware of the risks

Life doesn't always follow the script. Students may drop out, courses can be abandoned, or financial hardships may hit unexpectedly. Should your child not complete their qualification, you, the parent or guardian who is the co-signer, become liable and missed instalments will damage both your and your child's credit records. When it comes to a personal loan, the bank isn't

concerned with whether the study was completed, but only that monthly repayments continue uninterrupted.

Personal loans often move to legal action faster than student loans due to the lack of grace periods.

### Be responsible and trustworthy

For parent and guardians who co-sign a student loan agreement, it is prudent that they counsel their children to treat studies like a full-time job as attendance, effort, and completion are non-negotiable.

For working individuals advancing their academic prospects using a personal loan, it is important to borrow wisely. Ensure the course is worth the investment and aligns with your career goals.

### Make the choice with your head, not just your heart

Whether for your child or your own professional growth, education is one of the most valuable investments you can make. But it's also a financial commitment that requires discipline, foresight, and follow-through.

The right loan depends on your study type, repayment capacity, and long-term financial goals. If in doubt, speak to a trusted financial adviser. The bottom line is that borrowing for education is about more than securing funds.

It's about committing to the journey, completing it with diligence, and honouring the agreement that made it possible.



# Magazine EDUCATION

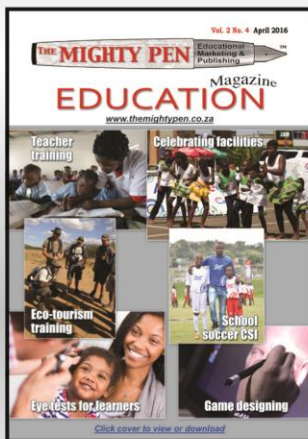
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