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Contents

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THE MIGHTY PEN Educational Marketing & Publishing Magazine EDUCATION

>> Technology feature

A Digital Talent Exchange is born 3

Cisco launches free, self-enrol online courses to build digital skills in South Africa 4

Tshimologong and ACSA partner for security design challenge 6

Young South African engineers crack award in land rover competition in Abu Dhabi 8

>> Education matters

The power of philanthropy to build a resilient society for sustainable education 10

New school, new hope for bright stars with special challenges .. 12

The silver bullet to improving the matric pass rate 14

>> Learners, teachers and parents

How to create the ideal parent-teacher relationship 16

Free knowledge hub launched to boost school leadership and management. 18

>> Careers and tertiary training

Now is the time to confirm you are making the right study choices 19

Advertisers

Pearson Education
Front Cover Strip

Magazine profile & rates
IBC

The Mighty Pen EDUCATION magazine
OBC

Sunward Park High School
IFC

Pearson Classroom Solutions
Page 5

Via Afrika
Page 7

Stipendium Hungaricum Hungarian Government Full Scholarship Programme
Page 11

CeeBee Debt Management Services
Page 15

Cignal Secure Technologies
Page 17

Our front cover

Snippets of our January issue stories. Pearson Classroom Solutions – see page 5.

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Editor's column

Back to basics – a quick orientation of the magazine

The Mighty Pen EDUCATION magazine is in its fourth volume of publication, March this year will be our 4th anniversary of monthly issues distributed at the end of each month from January to November.

Our digital circulation of the fully interactive pdf to the schools and principals has received nothing but praise. Our glossy printed copies of the magazine; which is given to the education officials, MEC's office and e-learning directors through our district networks; has also been commended.

Yes it is a fully interactive (video clips, hyperlinks & social media) spread pdf with a mainly digital distribution but we are special because we did not go from print to digital – we actually print quality glossy magazines *from* the digital version. Hence our slogan: *The traditional magazine experience – on any digital platform.*

Distribution & statistics

1. The magazine is sent to 5 000 principal's email addresses. 70% secondary schools. 1 500 Gauteng and balance in all provinces.
2. Within that group we also send via our districts in the province to just over 1 000 principals. These are from the district emails used by the officials.
3. I also have just over 1 000 physical subscriptions from education events over the past three years. These are mainly teachers, lecturers, HOD's and a few deputy principals and some corporate heads. These are recent physical subscriptions by the actual people attending the events and subscribing at my exhibition stand.
4. We also send to 40 PR agencies and 50 educational companies/ supplier executives.

Due to the legal obligations pertaining to school image, principals are not very active on social media as many schools have their own closed WhatsApp groups for staff and management. However, we do have an agreement with School Advisor to post the magazine every month on their platforms.

They have 1 300 subscribers, almost 1 000 Facebook likes and around 500 blog reads.

- Statistically, we have a 92% to 95% delivery rate. The balance is soft bounces – full server etc. This high rate is because we are constantly updating our emails from districts.
- We have a click-to-open ratio of 35% to 55% – depends on certain months. These would be the actual recipients/readers clicking on the magazine cover in the email and viewing or downloading.

All our regular advertisers are displayed on our big screen at major education events that we are media partners with and the thousands of attending delegates (principals, education officials & suppliers) receive the digital magazine as a free subscription.

We also have a strategic alliance partnership with ADESSA, the Associated Distributors of Educational Supplies in Southern Africa.

I'm looking forward to an interesting 2018 in education and school management.

Yours in education

Janos Bozsik
Editor

Gig Economy disrupts status quo, presenting an opportunity for Africa

A Digital Talent Exchange is born

Freelancing has found a new name in the digital era. A 'Gig' is simply a task performed as a once-off freelancing job, but because the trend towards freelancing has grown so significantly, a new economy has been born: the 'Gig Economy'.

Internationally, it has grown at a rapid pace with independent workers within Europe regarded as the fastest growing group in the EU labour market. Analysts also predict that half of the United Kingdom's working population will be self-employed in the next five years. According to Pierre Aurel, Strategic Project Manager at e4, Africa could also benefit from this trend.

He says that there are no short-term wins on the cards for the South African economy but participating in the Gig Economy could create much needed opportunities, both for those seeking work or entrepreneurs needing specific skills to achieve a goal. By utilising technology, accessing work (gigs) and generating income, is as simple as using Uber or AirBnB.

"The Gig Economy offers new revenue streams for a struggling economy, one that's challenged by an ever-increasing unemployment rate. It could also boost businesses that require scarce technology skills. While still a relatively new concept locally, I believe that the Gig Economy will gain momentum and offer a respite for those seeking additional income or wanting to launch or grow existing businesses," says Aurel.

He says that technology has removed barriers to global freelancing, promoting the growth of the Gig Economy: "Thanks to technology trends such as high-speed Internet access, collaboration tools, video conferencing and virtual offices, employees no longer need to be in the same physical location. Artificial Intelligence will enhance the trend towards the Gig Economy by intelligently matching the right skills to the right work opportunities, creating efficiencies and enticing more people to participate and collaborate."

While Africa's digital maturity is not on par globally, there are numerous examples of where digitalisation has started to change the fundamentals of the business landscape. Currently there is enough of a critical mass to attract people to the Gig Economy and get them to adopt a new way of working. "The benefits are two-fold as it opens a business to the world, allowing them to source talent instantly from anywhere in the world at competitive rates, additionally, it gives tech-gurus an opportunity to seek and secure work to generate new income," says Aurel.

This is yet another tacit example of the far-reaching effect of digitalisation and how it is changing the business landscape, creating an exchange centred on talent. Aurel says the Gig Economy is an exciting opportunity for those who have

Pierre Aurel, Strategic Project Manager at e4

the right skills but could previously not find the right opportunities: "You only need to look at platforms such as upwork.com and fiverr.com to get a feel for this exciting digital world. Entrepreneurs who have a great idea and want to build an "App" can simply post their requirements on the platform and allow skilled software engineers to pitch for the gig. This enables the entrepreneur to complete their idea and take it to market."

These digitally-born businesses rely on the technology platforms to support business clients and freelancers, unlocking the business model that underpins this new digital economy.

Cisco launches free, self-enrol online courses to build digital skills in South Africa

Cisco Networking Academy (NetAcad) pledges commitment to train 100 000 graduates by 2020 for the workforce of the future

As part of its commitment to support the workforce of the future and the NDP2030 Youth Ambassador programme, Cisco announced the release of seven free, self-enrol online courses to help South Africans to develop their digital skills. In doing so, the company is pledging to train an additional 100 000 students by 2020.

Underpinned by the Cisco Networking Academy, Cisco announced that it will work with education, industry and local communities to skill or retrain individuals to develop the next generation of talent to thrive in the digital economy.

"The future global competitiveness of South Africa will be determined by our commitment as a nation, and as employers to ensure that we have the skills required for a thriving digital economy. The education system alone cannot be expected to keep up with the increasing skills gap. As technology leaders and future employers, we are partnering with Government and the education ecosystem to ensure that South Africans are given more opportunities to be part of the workforce of the future," said Cathy Smith, Managing Director for Cisco Sub-Saharan Africa.

"Not so long ago, I identified ICT as a way to lay a solid foundation for rapid and inclusive economic growth in our country. Together with Cisco, we are going to provide skills development opportunities through training, internships and mentorship for young graduates and budding entrepreneurs," said Minister in the Presidency Jeff Radebe.

To deliver on its pledge, Cisco has launched free online training courses (available in English) and accessible to anyone, anywhere on the following topics:

- Get Connected (Digital Literacy)
- Entrepreneurship
- Cybersecurity
- Cybersecurity Essentials
- Introduction to IoT
- NDG Linux Unhatched
- NDG Linux Essentials

Cisco's skills programmes are built around three principles

1. **Providing access to the right skills, when they are needed**
   Teaching computer literacy at an early age is vital to preparing young people for future employment, but it doesn't end there. Cisco believes in providing access to digital skills training when it is needed, from working with education departments to help teach the basics of cybersecurity at school to providing platforms for professionals to develop their coding capabilities.
2. **Providing an opportunity for everyone**
   With 90 percent of jobs anticipated to be digital by 2020[1], it is not enough to only train for the technology industry. With over 72 Networking Academies in South Africa, Cisco works with partner organisations to create digital opportunities in the formal education sector through schools, colleges, TVETs, and universities, but also in non-traditional environments like prisons, homeless shelters, schools for the blind, and through training partnerships with innovation hubs.
3. **Using our networks to help as many people as we can**
   No one organisation can do it alone. Cisco has a channel-based business model and believes in the power of partnerships. The task at hand requires industry and academia to work together. It also requires a different approach to reaching the widest range of people, with the biggest impact.

This initiative is the latest example of Cisco's commitment to support South Africa in the growing digital economy. Cisco's partnership with government, industry and academia to deliver real outcomes faster and more effectively is part of the company's global commitment to accelerating digitalisation of countries around the world.

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Tshimologong and ACSA partner for security design challenge

Are you a maths genius, mad scientist, engineering wizard, IT wonderchild or tech boffin? ACSA needs your skills!

The Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) and Wits University's Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct, have partnered to launch a security access management hackathon. Aimed at streamlining the company's security access, The ACSA Access Management Challenge, hopes to find a unique and impactful security solution utilising a Single Sign On (SSO) approach.

Itumeleng Dhlamini, community manager, Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct, says that the hub welcomes the collaborative project with ACSA and is excited to work with a host of budding IT gurus to find an appropriate access management solution: "ACSA is a world-class airports management organisation running a wide range of systems within each of its operations. The issue of managing access to these systems is a major challenge and resulted in ACSA approaching Tshimologong to not only find a solution, but to use the challenge as a means to identify and build new generation IT skills."

Kutlwano Mtyeku, ACSA Group manager: brand marketing and communications, says that the issue of user identification is critical within ACSA: "We are no different to any other large organisation that uses a multitude of systems and has hundreds of users. It is imperative to link user identity, either to meet security protocols or to match the system to the user profile. It would prove challenging to utilise a system that requires a user ID and password, which is why ACSA wants to consider various SSO options."

The initial hackathon briefing session took place on 23 January 2018 at Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct in Braamfontein. The process will run through the month of February and works as follows:

- ***Briefing session:*** Interested participants are invited to attend the briefing session at Wits University's Tshimologong Digital Innovation Precinct in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. Each person will be given additional information by the ACSA and Tshimologong teams.
- ***Submit an entry:*** Once participants have attended the briefing session and are clear about the challenge and the expectations, they will be required to complete an entry form and upload a 2-minute video clip describing their idea.

- ***Boot Camp and Hackathon session:*** The top 50 entrants will be invited to participate in a three-day boot camp and hackathon. They will be guided through the process of developing a conceptual prototype and a business model canvas. At the end of the hackathon each entrant will present a 10-minute pitch to a panel of expert judges. The 10 top ideas will be selected.
- ***Pre-incubation:*** The Top 10 entrants will be given a 6-week membership to the Tshimologong Precinct pre-incubation programme. They will each be assigned a mentor and given access to a range of facilities, expert advisors and resources. They will use this time to develop a working prototype and will refine their business model canvas.
- ***Demo Day:*** Each of the Top-10 entrants will demonstrate their prototype and pitch their idea to a panel of judges. Three winners will be selected.
- ***Incubation:*** All three winners will receive an additional 7-month membership to the Tshimologong Precinct incubation programme.

Mtyeku, says that while the first priority in the ACSA Challenge is to focus on developing access to IT systems, the winning solution may be expanded to include controlling access to physical spaces via systems fitted to secure doors: "We are very excited to work with tomorrow's IT innovators to develop exciting and disruptive security access solutions."

To enter or find out more about the ACSA Challenge visit http://www.tshimologong.joburg/acsa/

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KNOW AND USE YOUR ANDROID TABLET DEVICE

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: ALL ABOUT ANDROID TABLET DEVICES
- SESSION 2: MAKING CONTACT WITH THE WORLD
- SESSION 3: MY ANDROID TABLET DEVICE IS MINE!

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: THERE'S AN ANDROID APP FOR THAT
- SESSION 2: FINDING IT ON THE INTERNET
- SESSION 3: MAKING THE ANDROID TABLET DEVICE WORK FOR YOU – FILES

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: MAKING THE ANDROID TABLET DEVICE WORK FOR YOU – CALENDARS AND DATA MANAGEMENT
- SESSION 2: MAKING THE ANDROID TABLET DEVICE WORK YOU – eBOOKS AND eREADERS
- SESSION 3: TAKING THE ANDROID TABLET TO SCHOOL

COURSE 2
SOCIAL MEDIA ON ANDROID TABLET DEVICES

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: INTRODUCING SOCIAL MEDIA
- SESSION 2: CREATING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS
- SESSION 3: SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM: USEFUL OR JUST FUN?

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: DON'T FORGET THE OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA
- SESSION 2: FACEBOOK IN THE CLASSROOM
- SESSION 3: TWITTER IN THE CLASSROOM

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: A LOOK AT YOUTUBE
- SESSION 2: YOUTUBE IN THE CLASSROOM
- SESSION 3: BLOGGING IN THE CLASSROOM

COURSE 3
GOOGLE AND GOOGLE APPS ON ANDROID TABLET DEVICES

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: THE GOOGLE APPS PACKAGE AND GOOGLE DRIVE
- SESSION 2: GOOGLE DOCS
- SESSION 3: GOOGLE CALENDAR AND GOOGLE SLIDES

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: GOOGLE+
- SESSION 2: GOOGLE HANGOUTS
- SESSION 3: CREATING MY OWN TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTENT

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: GOOGLE APPS THAT WILL OPEN A NEW WORLD TO YOUR LEARNERS
- SESSION 2: STREAMLINE YOUR CLASS WITH GOOGLE FORMS
- SESSION 3: GOOGLE SHEETS

COURSE 4
DIGITAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS FOR ANDROID USERS

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: WHY ELEARNING?
- SESSION 2: GETTING TECHNICAL
- SESSION 3: MANAGEMENT AND USAGE OF ICTS IN SCHOOLS

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: CONTENT FOR TABLET DEVICES
- SESSION 2: APPS FOR TEACHERS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS AND CONTENT CREATION
- SESSION 3: ONLINE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
- SESSION 2: GAMES TEACH TOO
- SESSION 3: THE GAMIFICATION OF EDUCATION

COURSE 5
KNOW AND USE YOUR WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: ALL ABOUT MY WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE
- SESSION 2: MAKING CONTACT WITH THE WORLD WITH MY WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE
- SESSION 3: MY WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE IS MINE!

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: THERE'S A WINDOWS APP FOR THAT
- SESSION 2: FINDING IT ON THE INTERNET
- SESSION 3: MAKING THE WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE WORK FOR YOU – FILES

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: MAKING THE WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE WORK FOR YOU – CALENDARS AND DATA MANAGEMENT
- SESSION 2: MAKING THE WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE WORK FOR YOU – EBOOKS AND EREADERS
- SESSION 3: TAKING THE WINDOWS TABLET DEVICE TO SCHOOL

COURSE 6
SOCIAL MEDIA ON WINDOWS TABLET DEVICES

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: INTRODUCING SOCIAL MEDIA
- SESSION 2: CREATING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS
- SESSION 3: SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM: USEFUL OR JUST FUN?

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: DON'T FORGET THE OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA
- SESSION 2: FACEBOOK IN THE CLASSROOM
- SESSION 3: TWITTER IN THE CLASSROOM

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: A LOOK AT YOUTUBE
- SESSION 2: YOUTUBE IN THE CLASSROOM
- SESSION 3: BLOGGING IN THE CLASSROOM

COURSE 7
MICROSOFT FOR WINDOWS TABLET DEVICES

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: INTRODUCING MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 EDUCATION AND ONEDRIVE
- SESSION 2 MICROSOFT WORD AND MICROSOFT OUTLOOK
- SESSION 3: MICROSOFT POWERPOINT

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: MICROSOFT ONENOTE
- SESSION 2: SKYPE AND YAMMER
- SESSION 3: MICROSOFT FORMS AND ONLINE ASSESSMENT APPS

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: OFFICE MIX AND BLENDED LEARNING
- SESSION 2: MICROSOFT EXCEL
- SESSION 3: OFFICE SWAY AND THE MICROSOFT EDUCATOR COMMUNITY

COURSE 8
DIGITAL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS FOR WINDOWS USERS

BEGINNER LEVEL
- SESSION 1: WHY ELEARNING?
- SESSION 2: GETTING TECHNICAL
- SESSION 3: MANAGEMENT AND USAGE OF ICTS IN SCHOOLS

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
- SESSION 1: CONTENT FOR WINDOWS TABLET DEVICES
- SESSION 2: APPS FOR TEACHERS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS AND CONTENT CREATION
- SESSION 3: ONLINE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

ADVANCED LEVEL
- SESSION 1: LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
- SESSION 2: GAMES TEACH TOO
- SESSION 3: THE GAMIFICATION OF EDUCATION

COURSE 9
IMPLEMENTING DIGITAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS FROM A CHANGE MANAGEMENT MINDSET

LEVEL 1 – FACING CHANGE
- SESSION 1: EDUCATION IS CHANGING – SO WHAT?
- SESSION 2: THE VIA AFRIKA CHANGE MANAGEMENT MINDSET MODEL FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION
- SESSION 3: MAKING MYSELF ADAPT-ABLE TO CHANE

LEVEL 2 – DEVELOPING CHANGE FACILITATORS
- SESSION 1: THE ROLE OF THE CHANGE FACILITATOR IN THE VIA AFRIKA CHANGE MANAGEMENT MINDSET MODEL FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION
- SESSION 2: WORKING WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS – DEALING WITH CHANGE
- SESSION 3: WORKING WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS – SKILLS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

LEVEL 3 – MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN
- SESSION 1: DEVELOPING THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
- SESSION 2: IMPLEMENTING THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
- SESSION 3: MAKING CHANGE STICK

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Young South African engineers crack award in land rover competition in Abu Dhabi

More than 150 future software engineers from schools in 16 countries gathered in December in Abu Dhabi for the world finals of the Land Rover 4x4 in Schools Technology Challenge.

The young engineers, aged 11 to 19, used computer coding to programme miniature remote-controlled four-wheel-drive vehicles, designed and built for the two-day competition at the Yas Marina Circuit.

The contest, which supports curriculum learning, reflects Jaguar Land Rover's commitment to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and a desire to recruit the next generation of engineers to design and develop future electric, connected and autonomous vehicles. The contest is managed and run in South Africa by Sangari Education.

Bez Sangari, CEO of Sangari Education, explained: "Jaguar Land Rover has launched a global initiative which aims to recruit more than 1 000 electronic and software engineers to its expanding business. In June 2016, the company launched an innovative, mixed-reality recruitment app in collaboration with virtual band Gorillaz to find global future engineering talent. In South Africa the competition is running well and schools are deriving similar benefits to Team Rhino in terms of STEM education."

Alex Heslop, director of Electrical Engineering, Jaguar Land Rover, said: "I am passionate about engineering and inspiring more young people to consider STEM careers. The Land Rover 4x4 in Schools competition will help us fill exciting future roles in software systems, cyber systems, app development and graphics performance. The new coding challenge is a great way to introduce young people to the importance of software innovation in our business."

Team Rhino put their vehicle through its paces on the Land Rover Discovery off-road track with team manager Bevan Roets (centre)

Team Rhino – South Africa – best track performance

Team Rhino from South Africa won the award for the Best Track Performance. Bevan Roets, team manager, 18, explained: "This award is possibly the toughest in the competition, especially with this year's four-track judging sessions. Our 4x4 performed well mainly due to the design of the wheels. They were really grippy which helped us on the slippery surfaces. We've had an amazing experience in Abu Dhabi and are so proud to take home this award."

Three students from Maritzburg College in Pietermaritzburg formed Team Rhino in October 2016. The team enjoyed the project style of learning, practical experience and opportunity to pitch to businesses.

Roets added: "Two of us competed in the Land Rover 4x4 in Schools Technology Challenge 2016 and headed to the final full of nerves and excitement. We've had lots of support along the way and want to encourage more young people to get involved. We all study design, engineering, graphics and other STEM subjects and all want to become engineers in the future."

The top three teams

The team spent ten months working on the project and team-work played a vital part in their success. Roets continued, "We've spent around 750 hours working on the project as well as juggling revision and exams. Sometimes we disagreed on decisions but negotiated to find the best solution. We used biomimetics to design our car which imitates elements of nature for the purpose of solving complex human problems. It looks like a rhino and we've also designed the tyres with separated spokes which have a special rubber compound for extra grip."

"We've all enjoyed meeting new people from different continents and cultures and have been able to develop our solid works design skills, communication skills and also working under pressure. We've also improved our coding skills and have written over 100 lines which control our indicators, headlights and a wireless tow bar and have also strengthened our graphic design skills."

"We were already interested in STEM careers but are now going to work even harder towards our career ambitions. We have been inspired to pursue careers in mechatronics, robotics and engineering."

Global team players

"Our advice to other students considering the competition is go for it. The Land Rover 4x4 in Schools competition has broadened our minds and opened our eyes to many new job opportunities and we're now all passionate about engineering. We've had an amazing experience," said Roets.

The global competition has reached more than three million young people since 2 000. Teams qualify for the world finals through a series of regional and national events.

Results for the world finals of the Land Rover 4x4 in Schools Technology Challenge

Award	Winner
World Champions	K – EVO – Portugal
2nd Place	Panthera – Malaysia
3rd Place	Fair Dinkum 4x4 – Australia
Best Track Performance	Team Rhino – South Africa
Innovative Thinking Award	Tessera Extreme Racing – Greece
Coding Challenge Award	The Doc's – Scotland
Best Newcomer Award	Project Ram – United Arab Emirates
Best Engineered Vehicle	K – EVO – Portugal
Sustainability Award	Project Ram – United Arab Emirates
Research & Development Award	All4One – Germany
Best Trailer Performance	Epsilon Engineers – England
Pull Challenge Award	TECH BRAIN – Brazil
Judges Special Award	Rogue 6 – Cyprus
Sponsorship and Marketing Award	TEAM HURRICANE – Malaysia
Team Identity Award	K – EVO – Portugal
Verbal Presentation Award	Panthera – Malaysia
Portfolio and Pit Display Award	Fair Dinkum 4x4 – Australia
Best Use of Social Media	AUTO291 – Brazil

The power of philanthropy to build a resilient society for sustainable education

What can civil society, business and ordinary citizens do to not only survive but prosper in a context of state and governing party failure, and a lack of trust in democratic institutions, that has long-term repercussions for the economy?

We need to focus on resilience, says Professor William Gumede, Associate Professor: School of Government, University of the Witwatersrand and Executive Chairperson of the Democracy Works Foundation. He was speaking in Cape Town at a recent philanthropy forum organised by non-profit trust Inyathelo, the South African Institute for Advancement.

(Left to right) Professor William Gumede of the Democracy Works Foundation, Inyathelo Programme Director Nazli Abrahams and Noel Daniels, CEO Cornerstone Institute and Inyathelo board member

Practically, resilience means making do with the resources that people have, to the maximum, with imagination. Even in an under-resourced community, people could be good mediators in addressing gang warfare, or they may have valuable skills from previous employment.

“The real challenge is to get someone who grows up vulnerable, is rightfully angry and feels like giving up the agency to persevere.”

Professor Gumede divided philanthropy into two types: Traditional ‘big’ philanthropy, mostly implemented locally or globally through major corporations or foundations. The second pillar is citizen philanthropy – ordinary individuals giving money or volunteering their time and skills.

A challenge is for ‘big’ philanthropists to support what the community identifies and prioritises – there has to be a mind-set change in how philanthropists look at giving.

He urged greater corporate engagement in social justice issues. People struggle to see the importance of social justice – it can’t easily be marketed like other projects – but it is at the heart of society. They should also not shy away from the kind of issues that would strengthen democracy, such as access to information.

“Getting involved in undoing inequality often seems to be where people step aside and don’t want to engage.”

He said that citizen philanthropy is an exciting opportunity that we often miss – “when ordinary individuals give their money, time or services to civil society organisations and engage publicly with issues.”

“The problem is that people feel that, as individuals, they can’t make an impact and withdraw from public engagement. The problems seem so big and they feel there is little that they can do.”

While the black middle class has more income and time, people are vulnerable – change only started after 1994. Due to poor public education and health services, such costs take up a large proportion of middle class income. People are also supporting extended families and do not think they can get involved in philanthropy.

Members of the white middle class are also concerned they could be seen as patronising black people if they become involved, or fear there is no longer space for them.

It is however important to boost citizen philanthropy, said Professor Gumede. This can be done by encouraging people to get involved in civic engagement, for example fighting for consumer rights, teaching sport or getting involved on a school board.

He said that government could possibly improve the tax environment for giving – through a dedicated philanthropy tax for example, or tax payers could sign off a percentage of their annual income for giving. A proportion of municipal rates could also go to civil society or charity.

“In an emerging democracy, philanthropy’s role is to reduce inequality; boost social solidarity so that those who are wealthy want to help those with limited means; to promote social justice as many of our current problems have to do with issues of the past; and promote active citizenship.”

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New school, new hope for bright stars

with special challenges

A new Gauteng school, opened in January 2018, will provide unprecedented hope for desperate parents and learners facing challenges that are not necessarily catered for in either mainstream or special needs schools.

As an Assisted Learning School, The Bridge represents a much-needed opportunity for children with average to above average ability, whose learning is impacted by challenges such as ADHD, ADD and mild autism or anxiety, or who have been through illness or trauma which has affected their progress until now.

"There is a tremendous need for a school focused on assisting learners to bridge the gap between where they currently find themselves, and mainstream schools. Ultimately, the goal is to help each learner reach their full potential and develop strategies that will enable them to return to a mainstream classroom confidently and empowered," says Retha van Niekerk, Principal at The Bridge.

Van Niekerk notes that a distinction should be made between remedial schools, of which there are a number of providers in the country, and Assisted Learning Schools, which are in extremely short supply despite the tremendous need.

"Because of our small classes which are capped at twelve pupils, an individualised learning approach, and therapeutic programmes, we are able to assist learners who are cognitively on par or ahead of their peers, to address whatever the challenge is that has kept them from succeeding in mainstream schools.

"For some, it is gaps between verbal and non-verbal communication skills or where slow processing and auditory discrimination gaps have left them unable to keep up in mainstream environments. For others, it is the impact of serious illness that has disrupted learning or the emotional impacts of trauma. For many, it is a combination of these and the impact on their self-esteem of not having been able to keep up with peers.

School to bridge special needs gap

"Assisted Learning Schools that tackle these challenges holistically have significant impact," Van Niekerk says.

She says The Bridge Assisted Learning School will provide specialised education for Grade 0 to Grade 7 children, and that its approach to learning and therapeutic and support interventions will develop skills and self-esteem which are both needed to be able to take on their future learning journey with confidence. The school is situated in a safe and tranquil environment in Beverley, Lonehill, where the needs of pupils have been taken into account from the design of the building, to materials chosen.

In addition to highly qualified and experienced teachers, the school will also employ a team of expert occupational therapists (S.I. trained), speech therapists, and an NDT (neuro-developmental) physiotherapist.

Yanelo Mdlopane, Tyler Ludick, Sihle Radebe, Leanne Hitge and Tate Hodnett have started Grade 2 at the Bridge Assisted Learning School Photo: Robyn Kirk

Architect's rendition of The Bridge School in Gauteng

There is also a strong focus on cultural programmes and extra-murals, Van Niekerk says.

"As our aim is for most of our children to return to mainstream schools, and because holistic development supports scholastic progress, we want to ensure that the extramural activities that they would have participated in at a mainstream school are provided. We have thus invested in a mini-Astroturf field where hockey and soccer will be played, as well as netball and tennis courts, and a swimming pool. On the cultural front, we offer public speaking, chess and arts and craft classes, to name a few. There will also be gymnastics, karate and drama classes."

Van Niekerk says that when parents recognise that the offerings of The Bridge may well match the needs of their child, they can approach the school to initiate a full assessment. Not only does this ensure that the interventions will be targeted, but also that the right decision is being made for the child.

"In our experience, it is often at the end of the first or second term in a new grade that teachers and parents conclude that a mainstream school may not currently be meeting the needs of the child. We will enroll children when the need arises as further delays could damage the confidence of the child and cause further challenges.

"Our aim is to offer a solution to parents who know that a change is needed, but have not known where and how to get the help and support needed – with a solution-oriented, focused programme for their child we intend to address much of the anxiety experienced by both child and parent."

Questions from parents

How will I know my child will benefit from an education at The Bridge?

"We cater for pupils of average or above average cognitive ability who may have barriers to learning. We are also ideal for the pupil who may require a smaller, more individualised environment. Contact us and we will be able to assess your child's needs and make a recommendation accordingly."

Which schools can my child attend once it has been recommended that he/she integrates into mainstream schooling again?

"The Bridge is a member of the ADvTECH Group of Schools that own brands such as Trinityhouse, CrawfordSchools™ and many others. Application can be made to any ADvTECH school or any other school of your choice. We will ensure that the process of transition is as smooth as possible by building relationships with schools that our pupils will attend."

Principal of the Bridge Assisted Learning School, Retha van Niekerk, with Neo Mphosi and Lwandile Mpangase who are both in Grade 3

The school offers the following services on-site

- Educational Psychologist
- Remedial Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Speech and Language Therapist

Two therapy sessions per week are included in the fees. These therapy sessions can be chosen from the following list

- Occupational Therapist
- Physiotherapist
- Speech and Language Therapist

Additional therapy sessions can be booked with the on-site therapists directly and can be claimed back from medical aid.

Josué Tshiany was dropped off by his parents for his first day at the Bridge Assisted Learning School Photo: The Bridge Assisted Learning School

The silver bullet to improving the matric pass rate

By Cindy Glass, ex-teacher & co-founder and director of step up education centres

Every year, teachers, principals, learners and parents focus on the preparation and writing of the final matric examinations and every year we are left feeling battered and disappointed at the less-than-desirable results.

With a 75.1% national pass rate, this year was not much different to years past. Only three quarters of matriculants achieved success and this despite increased attempts to improve the outcome of the matric exams. Why is this? What sustainable solutions are there and how do we implement them? What are we missing in our efforts to fix this worrying trend?

It is time to stop what we have been doing and look deeper. Einstein said that the definition of insanity is doing something over and over again and expecting a different result. It is time to look at making significant changes to the way we approach the matric exams, and indeed, education as a whole. Whilst there are many changes needed in our education system, there are four key factors that will go a long way in improving how our matriculants fair in years to come. They are:

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence skills are key to changing the way teachers and learners approach education. Studies have shown that prioritising the teaching of emotional intelligence skills improves our ability to take in and retain new information, study smarter, concentrate better and it improves relationships in the school environment. These skills include self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. How can effective learning take place when a learner or teacher does not see the value of who they are and, worse, lacks the motivation that is needed to engage in learning? Emotional Intelligence skills improve self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Learners and teachers work with greater courage and determination and they get to feel more fulfilled and happier in the process. It is a win-win for all.

Training

Attention needs to be given to changing the way teachers are being trained. Focus needs to be less on the theoretical aspects of education and more on practical ways in which to connect and engage effectively with learners. Teachers are inherently creative beings and training should be focused on uplifting our teachers and encouraging them to love their work. Training needs to be motivating and practical with easy-to-achieve methods of teaching new skills and concepts.

Reduce admin

It is time to significantly reduce the amount of admin work that teachers are forced to do and give our teachers space to teach in creative ways. Piling more and more admin on to our teachers is counter-productive. Exhausted teachers cannot teach effectively – they end up teaching to fulfil the requirements of the paperwork given to them. Learners need creative, motivated teachers who are excited about their work.

Get the basics right

We cannot ignore the significance of using prior knowledge as the basis of teaching each lesson. Many learners fail because of a lack of understanding of new knowledge that is taught independently of prior or root knowledge.

The challenges being experienced in our attempts to improve the matric results are seemingly overwhelming, but they are not impossible. The only thing stopping South Africa from setting sustainable trends in education is our fear of change. Let's stop what we are doing and find solutions which will result in a better South Africa for all.

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How to create the ideal parent-teacher relationship

"It takes a village to raise a child" is a proverb which essentially means that it takes an entire community of different people interacting with children in order for them to grow and develop successfully. Each year, parents entrust their children into the hands of their teachers for the greater part of each school day. Children will begin to develop relationships with their teachers from the first day and these relationships will grow as the year progresses.

"As parents, it is essential that we, too, begin developing a healthy relationship with our children's teachers. Studies have shown that children whose teachers and parents enjoyed solid, trusting, synergetic relationships were significantly more likely to make positive progress throughout the year," says Cindy Glass, Director and Co-founder of Step Up Education Centres.

Cindy gives the following tips to consider on how to create and sustain a healthy relationship with your child's teacher:

1. Communication is key

Take a moment to meet your child's teacher. This is, of course, easier done in the younger grades as most often a younger child will have one 'main' teacher. It will be a lot easier to meet and connect with your older child's teachers if you make the effort to attend the teacher-parent information evenings that are offered at their school in the beginning of the academic year. Teachers will use these meetings to explain their expectations of learners and their parents. Remember, teachers will not know what *your* expectations are unless you communicate these. Information that will affect the learning of your child needs to be communicated as soon as these arise.

2. See yourself in partnership with the teacher in your child's learning

You and your child's teacher have a common goal; the personal and academic development of your child. Keep an open mind and always remember that the best interests of your child need to be the core focus of any conversation.

3. Remember that your child's teacher is as human as you are

This means that mistakes are possible and that things may go wrong from time-to-time. Misunderstandings and challenges can severely damage a teacher-parent relationship if not handled swiftly and correctly. Negative teacher-bashing-comments are a sure-way to build walls instead of keeping the lines of communication open. Focus instead on finding positive, amicable solutions as a partnership-with-a-common-goal.

4. Try and get involved in assisting with school activities

This is not always possible for many working parents, but, there may be the rare occasion that an opportunity presents itself to be actively present in supporting the teacher and school. This is a wonderful way to get to know each other better.

"Creating strong inter-personal relationships can take time," Cindy explains. "How we choose to react to challenges and negative situations in a school setting will influence the outcomes of these essential relationships. Never forget that it takes a village to raise a child. Teachers play a very big role in the lives of all children. Choose to enjoy a positive working relationship with your child's teacher this year and you will be creating a happier learning experience for all," Cindy concludes.

The MIGHTY PEN EDUCATION

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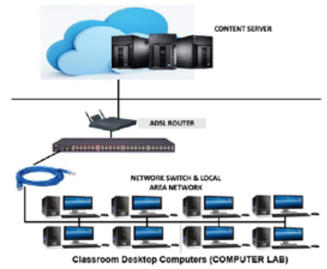

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IT DOESN'T MATTER YOUR SCHOOL LOCATION WILL GET YOU CONNECTED

Free knowledge hub launched

to boost school leadership and management

A free, comprehensive online resource has been launched to help improve school leadership and management – a critical factor in boosting learner performance.

Known as the Trialogue Knowledge Hub, the resource offers examples of best practice projects, case studies, local and international research findings, and many more tools. These can assist schools, educators, philanthropists and companies that want to start up their own projects, as well as researchers and media needing up-to-date information.

This best practice resource has been created by CSI consultancy Trialogue and Old Mutual, a long-term supporter of better-functioning schools.

Kanyisa Diamond, Senior Project Manager of the Old Mutual Foundation, says the Old Mutual Education Flagship Project was set up in 2013. Its holistic approach combines mentoring, coaching and leadership training with experience across the board to build strong school leadership and management capability of principals and senior management teams, enhancing classroom teaching skills for Maths and Science educators.

"We want to share our learnings of many years and, through the Knowledge Hub, provide schools with an opportunity to access high quality information. We have also partnered with a service provider to set up vegetable gardens at selected schools, to contribute towards better nutrition for learners".

We hope that other companies that are considering getting involved in the social investment sector will build on our experiences so that the cumulative effect is enhanced."

Trialogue MD Nick Rockey says: "It's generally accepted that education needs competent, inspiring leaders. But unlike the business sector, which has long traditions of assessment and instruction to build up its leadership ranks, there's not the same level of continuous training in education. We hope that our resource will form part of the solution."

Rockey says that Trialogue's goal is to have corporates funding topics across 12 development sectors on the Knowledge Hub. To date it has six supporters:

- Old Mutual, with information on school leadership and management;
- Investec on maths and science education;
- Nedbank Private Wealth is sharing its expertise on philanthropy;
- the MMI Foundation is promoting financial literacy;
- Vodacom is supporting Information Communications Technology in Education; and
- Absa on the topic of shared value.

According to the Trialogue Knowledge Hub, South African government school spend has increased about sevenfold, from R40 billion in 1997 to R320 billion in 2017. However, historical inequality and socio-economic challenges continue to plague the South African public school system.

- 37% of children starting school go on to pass matric; 4% earn a degree.
- 27% of SA learners who have attended school for six years cannot read, compared with 4% in Tanzania and 19% in Zimbabwe. After five years of school about half cannot work out that 24 divided by three equals eight.
- In 2013, SA had the highest rate of teacher absenteeism in SADC.
- Out of 138 countries included in The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2016 & 2017, SA was ranked 111th for internet access in schools, 134th for overall quality of education, and last for quality of maths and science education.
- The latest Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), a quadrennial test sat by 580 000 pupils in 57 countries, had South Africa at or near the bottom of its various rankings, though its scores had improved since 2011.

To access the Trialogue Knowledge Hub, click on www.trialogueknowledgehub.co.za/index.php/topics/school-leadership-and-management

Matric class of 2017

great results mean greater options

Now is the time to confirm you are making the right study choices

As First Years prepare to head off to higher education for the first time, many are having second thoughts about their chosen course or institution. While feelings of uncertainty are healthy and normal, an education expert also warns parents and prospective students to rather look at all their options now and change course right away if necessary, instead of taking a wait-and-see approach.

"SA's first year dropout rate is significant, but at an individual level, this costly outcome could in many instances have been avoided if prospective students took more time to ensure they investigated all offerings in terms of institutions and qualifications," says Dr Felicity Coughlan, Director of The Independent Institute of Education.

She says that it is often the case that learners applied for the same qualifications or at the same institutions as their friends, opted for a standard 3-year degree without knowing much about what it entails, or decided on their course because of pressure and expectations from others.

"There is so much research evidence that success in first year requires that students are doing something that has meaning to them and not just what they have always been expected to do. So if there is any chance that there is a better fit available, even at this late stage, we encourage students and their families to make the move now. This applies equally to high performing students who are often the ones who have the most choices and yet still find themselves doing something they do not actually want to do or being somewhere that does not match their personal needs."

The pressure – particularly for strong students – to pursue a traditional degree at a traditional institution is very strong. Now that they have their excellent results in their hands, those with an interest in a career focused professional qualification such as accounting, law or teaching, or whose interests lie in a new and exciting career path such as brand management, digital marketing, network engineering, game design and development, and application and cloud development, should take this last opportunity to confirm that they are making the right choices for themselves. This means looking beyond the public system too.

"Private higher education is increasingly becoming the study route of choice, in line with international trends, for students who want quality workplace-oriented and recognised qualifications, niche degrees, smaller class sizes and modern campuses."

Coughlan points out that because South Africa has a single quality assurance system and one National Qualifications Framework, any institution offering a registered and accredited qualification – whether public or private – is offering a qualification of equal standing, which means that prospective students may have many more, and more exciting, options than they may have realised.

And while there is no state subsidy for private institutions, which means that the cost of private higher education is still sometimes higher than at public universities, this cost is often offset in the long run because of improved results.

"Private institutions are often far more affordable from a broader perspective than members of the public seem to realise. And because these campuses are mostly relatively small with class sizes rarely exceeding 100 students, individual focus and therefore higher success rates are the norm.

"As a result, proportionally more students graduate, making the overall educational experience a real value for money opportunity."

Coughlan says choices about tertiary education must be based on a thorough assessment of the fit between personal aspiration, circumstances and the institutional choices available. And if a prospective student is already having second thoughts, the time re-assess is now, while there is still time.

>> to page 20

>> from page 19

This advice also holds true for those Matrics who may have been pleasantly surprised with their results, achieving a Bachelor's pass when they didn't expect it, or achieving top scores when they expected more modest ones.

The options open to learners who failed, but who are determined to still earn their National Senior Certificate, include:

- Sitting for the supplementary examinations.
- Sending papers for either a re-mark or re-check.
- Returning to school and re-registering for matric.
- Registering at another school to complete matric.
- Completing matric via distance learning.

Those learners who passed, but didn't achieve the marks required for entrance into degree study, have the following options:

- Sending papers for either a re-mark or re-check.
- Enrolling for a Higher Certificate at a higher education institution, which can give access to degree study.
- Enrolling for a Diploma which can give access to degree study.

"The most important thing for both parents and learners having sleepless nights over their future prospects, is to not panic," says Fathima Razack, Head of Programme: Faculty of Commerce at The IIE.

"While it might feel like the end of the world at the moment, clear heads and a pragmatic approach are required to make the right decisions for the future," she says.

"It is also important to remember that while your marks may not have been good enough to get access to your first choice of course or institution, that doesn't mean you have no other study options left. Quite the opposite in fact, so parents and prospective students should ensure that they have really investigated the offerings at both public universities and private higher education institutions.

"Each university and private higher education provider set their own minimum criteria, and these requirements vary between institutions. An institution where the demand outweighs the availability of space may set this bar quite high, which means they are likely to accept only students who are very strong academically. Other institutions may have made provision for students who require more support, and will therefore have more accommodating admission requirements.

"That means it may not be necessary to repeat Grade 12 or rewrite a subject, as there could be alternatives available in your chosen field of study," says Razack.

The most important thing to remember is that below par matric results don't have to mean giving up on one's dreams and aspirations, she says.

"If parents and learners can handle this situation maturely, and strategise their next steps instead of getting stuck in a catastrophising mindset, disappointing performance could be just the catalyst needed to propel a learner in a new and better direction, with more determination and resolve than before."

"If you haven't yet made study plans, and now you did better than you thought you would, or you were too late and now do not have a place, it makes sense to use the month that you have now to be sure about what you are doing.

"Ultimately, Matrics should honestly determine whether they are excited about the degree they are soon to embark on, and that they are signed up with a higher education institution that will give them what they need. If the answers are not resoundingly yes and yes, the following weeks are the opportune time to investigate all options and change direction before it is too late."

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Since its launch in March 2015, *The Mighty Pen EDUCATION magazine* was set up as a distinctive media offering within the educational community network. Through our work with SPHS (the Gauteng Education MEC's Blueprint e-learning school) - and partnerships with local and international providers of e-learning resources and platforms - this print and digital magazine has a crossover readership of principals, teachers, SGB members, learners, parents, education company executives and PR agencies.

The content caters for a diverse interest including technology & e-learning, careers & training, learners & youth, educators & best practice, as well as a generic section called *Education Matters* – which contains a range of relevant topics.

With the focus on building an education community that brings together all the stakeholders (reflected in our readership), *The Mighty Pen EDUCATION Magazine has a unique* digital distribution model. These include direct emails to Principals, a VPN resource cloud, a school LMS, e-learning portals for learners and school SMS communicators to parents.

In this way the magazine can reach its diverse readership through varied but appropriate platforms in a direct yet non-intrusive manner.

The Mighty Pen EDUCATION magazine aims to provide a focal point for writing-based activities within the education community, including the creation of a national schools writer's club.

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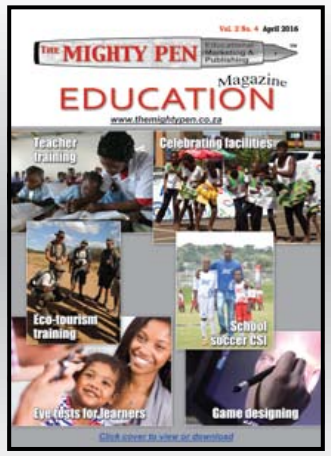

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