

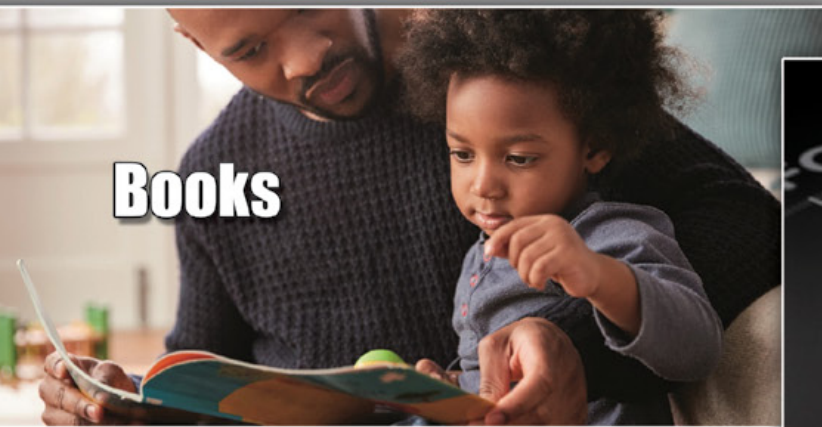
Vol. 5 No. 7 July 2019



Magazine EDUCATION

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Editor's column

Should girls and boys be in separate schools – yes or no?

We had a look at this age-old question based on information from various debate platforms, academic studies and expert opinions.

Yes...

Boys and girls learn differently. Researchers agree that learners achieve better results in single-gender classes than in coed classes. Girls are more passive learners; they are usually good visual and auditory learners and do well with lots of class discussions and diagrams. Boys are more kinetic learners and they need to learn by doing. Single sex classes would mean we could cater for different learning styles.

Girls and boys are also engaged by different stimuli.

Boys are often intimidated by girls' superior verbal abilities in classes like English. They score far better without girls around. The same goes for girls in classes like woodwork, PE and science.

The opposite sex can also be a major distraction for learners, keeping them from getting work done. Also, relationship drama stays outside of the school and so everyone is more focused.

Girls and boys gain confidence if they are apart because there is no judgement and everyone is equal. Boys do not have an advantage because they are only with boys, and girls are the same. This counts for sports, and also in school projects.

No...

It is about enhancing one's personality by co-education as this benefits learners way more than keeping them in separate classes. It is true that students would probably get better results in single-gender classes with people having similar learning styles. But the focus must be on the overall development of a student. In the real world one does not compete only with candidates of their own sex but with everyone. Hence, they must be kept in the same class so that they are able to work on their gender-relation skills. In this way, they would simultaneously excel in all fields.

Children and young adults get better at socialising with and understanding all people, irrespective of their gender.

Sexism should not be taught to students. Also, separating by gender is not a good way to prepare children for when they're older. Learners should be taught to ignore any distractions.

It can prepare them for future life because in the work environment there is no gender separation so why should there be in a classroom? It's important to learn how to socialise with co-workers. In fact this would apply to society and people in general.

It is interesting to me that this debate still rages when the current trend (often legislated) in western countries is to be all-inclusive of the *gender spectrum*. It's now acceptable to choose and identify with many (and any) genders and the traditional (and biological) male/female binaries are no longer valid.

Good luck separating that.

Yours in education

Janos Bozsik
Editor

How online learning is changing the face of education and training

Technology disrupts by its very nature. This is evident in many sectors where UBER – the biggest competitor to metered taxis – does not own any vehicles. The hospitality industry has seen a shake-up with Airbnb becoming a massive competitor without owning any real estate in the hotel industry.

We are seeing the same trend in education. Start-up EdTech (Education Technology) companies are getting higher valuations than traditional classroom-based colleges and schools. For example:

1. In 2017 we saw the acquisition of a South Africa-based online education provider by a US-based education technology company for US\$103 million (R1.466 billion). If you consider that the education provider doesn't own a single classroom it becomes a staggering paradigm.
2. In February 2018, it was announced that an online education start-up in the US, specialising in offering hi-tech subjects to students online, received a US\$1 billion valuation (R14 billion).

So why is online learning growing so fast?

The answer lies in the ability for education companies to scale using technology-based platforms called learner management systems (LMS). "Classroom-based learning presents logistical challenges and a higher cost per unit for delivery," says Lisa Schneider: managing director of the Digital School of Marketing. "Typically, we refer to this as the 'bums in seats' model. Online learning simply requires a device (smart phone, tablet or laptop) and Internet connectivity."

Can you study as effectively online as in a classroom?

The answer to that question changes as technology evolves. A lecture delivered in a classroom has a see-and-touch aspect to it that is missed with online lecture videos. However, the benefits of online lectures

videos are misunderstood, as every Individual has a unique way of absorbing information. Many studies have proven this, as learning paths and the absorption of information are specific to each person.

Undoubtedly one of the biggest benefits of an online lecture, as opposed to a contact learning lecture, is the ability to do four things that can't be done in person: pause, rewind, fast forward and replay. This allows a student to be in control in terms of how they absorb content. For this reason, we can understand why online learning is disrupting the traditions of classroom-based learning.

Online learning is growing exponentially. More people are understanding the benefits and buying into the proposition of studying online. This disruption brings exciting new opportunities.

The pros and cons of online learning

Pros

Flexibility: If you work, have a family life or just a busy life, it can be difficult to fit traditional classroom time in. Online courses are convenient and flexible.

Fast: Because there is so much independent work in an online programme, you set the pace. You can work as quickly as you want.

Options: Online offerings are more diverse and complete than ever, and growing every year. More than 5 million people take online courses today.

Cons

Limits: Some content isn't offered in an online format. For example, you can watch a hundred videos on welding, but until you have that welder in your hand, you're never going to master your technique. The same goes for training for some medical programmes.

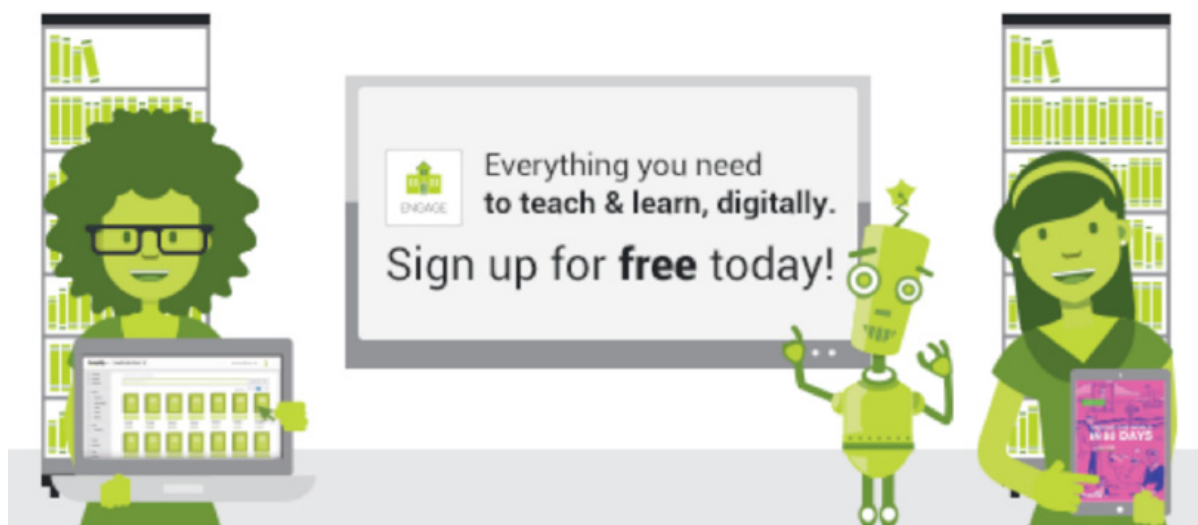
Learning styles: Today's online instruction is often geared toward a variety of learners. Whether you like to listen to lectures or watch videos, you can find an online resource. On the other hand, if you're a hands-on learner who benefits most from face-to-face contact with instructors and classmates, you may want to limit the amount of online courses you include in your programme.

Independent: Online programmes require you to take charge of your education. No one will make you sign into the online portal, complete assignments and upload them on time. If you have difficulty working independently, staying organised and meeting deadlines, you might struggle in an online programme. ▲

Launch | Basic Engage

Snapplify launches free version of e-learning platform, Engage
South African edtech company makes digital tools even more attainable

Limited access to digital tools due to cost restrictions, a lack of technical know-how, and device integration restrictions have been consistent problems for educational institutions in emerging markets. To tackle this problem head on and to give schools the opportunity to explore digital learning at no cost, **Snapplify has released a free version of their Engage e-learning platform – known as Basic Engage.**



Schools can register online and investigate the applications of the platform for themselves, inviting staff, educators and students to have a look around, too. The platform is fully customisable to suit individual institutions' needs. Administrators are able to manage user access, and educators can share teacher-created, multimedia resources with their students using the Resources and Groups functions. Librarians can curate a robust, 24-hour access digital library that promotes reading and learning with thousands of free ebooks and study resources to choose from, such as past exam papers, children's books, sheet music, plays, biographies and more. All ebooks and resources are accessed through the Snapplify Reader app that has broad device integration, and allows for offline use.

To date, Snapplify has worked with over 1 000 schools across Africa who now have access to world-class tools they need to collaborate, innovate and thrive. Snapplify has been recognised internationally for their innovations, winning two prestigious awards at the 2019 Reimagine Education Conference in San Francisco and receiving recognition in the London Stock Exchange Group's 'Companies to Inspire Africa' report twice in a row.

Register for Basic Engage today at engage.snapplify.com/get-started, or email hello@snapplify.com to chat about your specific needs and how we can work together.

About Snapplify

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



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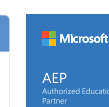
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Is technology destroying our humanness?

The world is spinning with new technologies and we, the human inhabitants, are the willing prey. Cindy Glass, Director and Co-founder of Step Up Education Centres says “With ever-increasing time spent on Smartphone’s, iPads and in front of live-streamed TV, we are in danger of losing our humanness. Teeny toddlers, vulnerable teens, exhausted parents and even bored grandparents can be seen, heads-down, shoulders bent and disengaged from the real world as they spend endless hours scrolling through their devices. Losing a Smartphone is a big deal and people often feel a loss which is akin to losing a much-prized body part.”

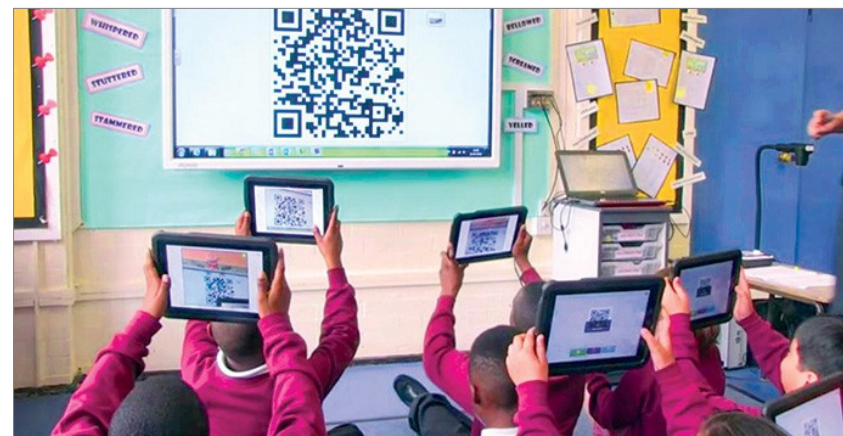
Cindy highlights the following negative effects of too much screen time and says that they are serious enough for us, as parents, to STOP and take note:

- It affects cognitive development in young children as it literally affects the way in which our children’s brains develop.
- Too much screen time stifles creativity, imagination and playfulness which are essential to the wholesome development of children.
- Concentration, critical thinking, memory and other learning skills are effected as children focus mindlessly on information (whether real or not) as it just pours effortlessly into their subconscious.
- It affects mental and physical health as people become increasingly inactive and detached from the real world.
- It will harm your relationship with your children. With parents and children spending too much time on their devices, they run the risk of losing the positive human connections that are key to happy relationships! Children feel unacknowledged, unheard and unnoticed and this leads to negative behaviours, anxiety, stress and depression.

Cindy goes on to explain “We cannot ignore the dangers of too much exposure to the non-real world that the internet offers. We cannot afford to lose the beauty of life because we did not take a stand against the media (in all its forms).”

Consider the following tips in reducing the amount of screen time that you allow for yourself and your children

1. You have to set the example. Your children are more likely to do what you do, rather than what you say. You cannot expect your children to reduce their screen time if you do not do the same.



Cindy Glass



2. Have dedicated no-go-zones for devices. Family activities, mealtimes and even when driving in a car can be cell phone free zones.
3. Get outside. Plan activities that involve getting into nature – it is great for the soul and it will increase all the happy-hormones in your bodies.
4. Encourage your children to get involved in activities beyond the school environment. Sport, drama, music and art are great examples.
5. Very young children need to play with their hands and bodies, not on a device.

Cindy closes by reiterating “Remember, as parents, we must set the example. REAL people, real love, real joy, real honesty and integrity cannot be experienced through the internet.”

EduTECH Africa 2019 Exhibition and Conference

EduTECH Africa is a massive conference and exhibition covering the whole education lifecycle.

Technology is the driving force behind a change in the fundamental purpose and delivery of education. Today’s students need to be equipped with a set of 21st century skills that prepare them for tomorrow’s workplace.

We understand that it’s hard to keep up with the continual development of new technologies, innovative learning experiences and ways of measuring student mastery. This is where EduTECH Africa steps in.

Over the last few years EduTECH Africa has grown to become the largest and most influential EdTech conference and exhibition in Africa.

With over **300 sessions across 9 tracks, 3 500 attendees, 150 speakers and 120 exhibitors**, the entire education ecosystem will be at EduTECH Africa looking for the latest tech and innovations to boost education quality in schools and universities across the continent.

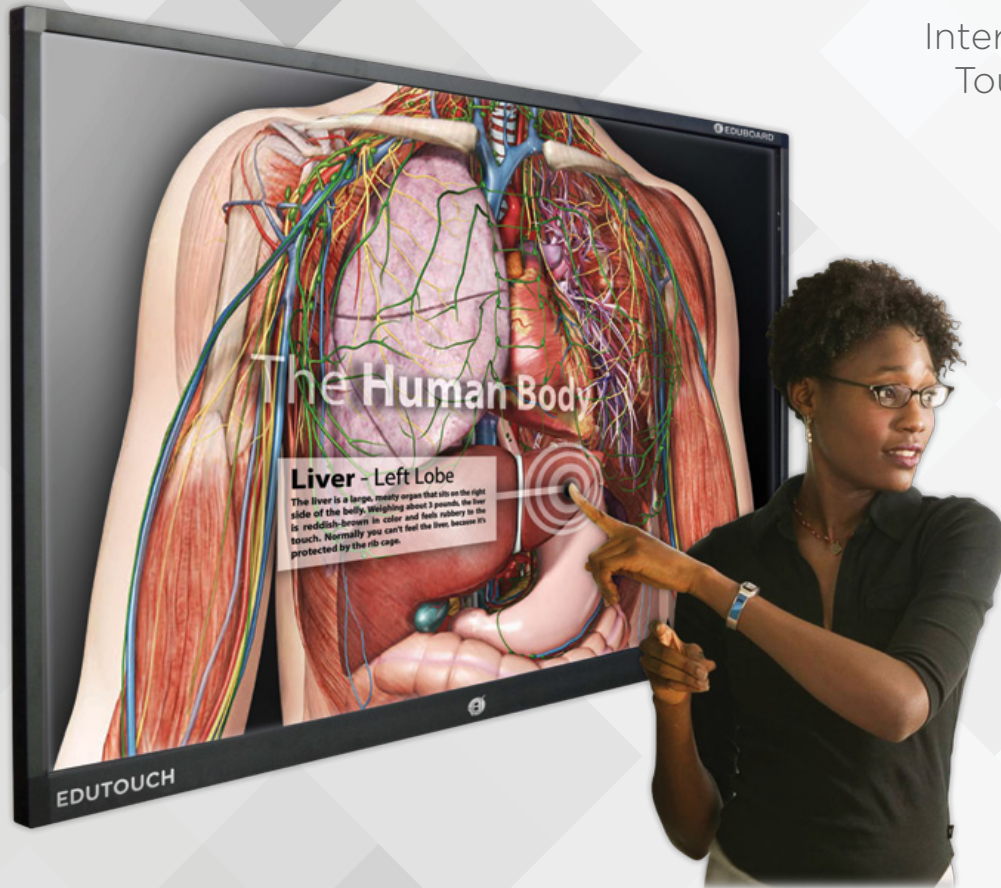
On the **9th - 10th of October 2019**, EduTECH Africa will gather the region’s leading minds in education to harness the power of technology and drive 21st century learning.

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EduMax Pro

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into IWB

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



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Sowing leadership seeds from a young age

By Andries Greyling, CEO of Curro Holdings

Any discussion about solving South Africa's challenges (or any country's or organisation's, for that matter) eventually comes back to the idea of leadership. Without leadership, there is no action, and without action, there is no change. To change for the better requires people to make tough choices and follow through on them. What our world in flux needs is people with the courage of their convictions, integrity and a strong work ethic. I believe that cultivating these traits – and thus future leaders – must begin as young as possible. As John F Kennedy said, "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." As our children learn, so they become better equipped to lead. Successful leadership in today's world is agile, which means that leaders should never stop learning.

South Africa is grappling with pressing issues that range from stubbornly high levels of unemployment, particularly in our youth – at 54.7% – to poverty, inequality and a shaky economic climate, exacerbated by recent issues like electricity supply uncertainty. To overcome these problems and build a successful future, we need a strong leadership element. I believe that teaching leadership *must* begin at as young an age as possible.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, in a speech at the Discovery Leadership Summit in late 2018, noted that "leadership should not be contained to one single person, but should be adopted on a multilateral level, across all sectors and industries". Every person – including every child – can lead where they are at. Leadership is not necessarily about taking charge; it's about stepping out of one's comfort zone to do what is right, and for the greater good.

What good is an education that provides excellent academic results, but does not empower children to fulfil their potential and make a positive difference to the world in which they live? In today's age, we need to focus on educating the "whole child", considering every aspect – physical, social, emotional and cognitive.

Having been in the education industry for a number of years, I've seen that there's a real hunger in our youth – a hunger for leadership and positive change. We want leadership to be a value that permeates our corridors, classrooms and halls.



But what does it mean to lead? We need to explain to our children that leadership can look different for each person. It might mean leading by tutoring a fellow learner who is struggling with a subject that you're good at, or it could mean befriending the new child in the class, or helping to pick up litter in the street. *Leading* is stepping up to make a positive change.

My dream is that South Africa's youth will be taught that they *do* matter, and that what they do matters.

As Magic Johnson, renowned basketball player said, "All *kids* need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them." And so, in the spirit of *dare to lead*, we're daring South Africa to step up to the task too, to set the right example. ▲



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STEP 2

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Username

Password

Re-type Password

Create User Cancel

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Must be 8 or more characters
Must include upper and lower case
Must include a number
Click on the **Create User** button.

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Recent Timetable Successes

	Parallel Medium	Primary	High	Combined	Academic	Technical	Special	Government	Independent
Carel de Wet High School, Vanderbylpark	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hoërskool Jan van Riebeeck, Cape Town	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kingsway High School, Amangimtoti	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lady Gray Arts Academy, Eastern Cape	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Florida Vaardigheidskool (ELSEN), Cape Town	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Orban School, Melville, Johannesburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meredale Primary School, Johannesburg	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

LEARNERS WHO BENEFITED FROM THE ALATEEN PROGRAMME

Below are some comments from South African school children in the Alateen programme

(Names are changed to protect members' anonymity)

Feedback

Teacher

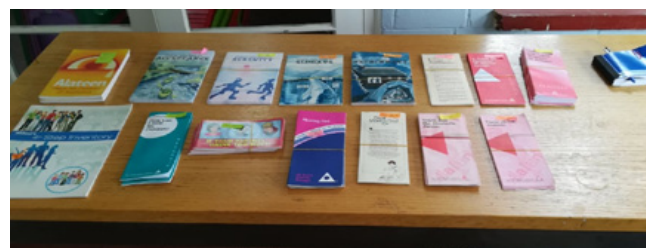
In February this year Alateen visited Sunward Park High School in Boksburg and spoke with 1 800 learners. The coordinating teacher, Ms Juanita Engelbrecht, said that for days after the talk by Alateen learners were going on the website and asking questions. "This service is a blessing and affects many of our children," said Ms Engelbrecht. "We should have this in every school."



Patience

Ally

I was constantly angry with my mother. We always fought and never talked. Two years after my mother joined Al-Anon, I finally decided to come to Alateen. I didn't realize what I was doing. After eight meetings I realized how easily I could talk to my mother. Although it is hard to admit, I also see how much we are alike. I have learned about patience in Alateen and how important it is in communication, because I must wait and think about what I want to say. Now I can let my anger simmer down. My sister, who is the alcoholic at home, told me the importance of asking questions. Whenever I need an answer, I ask. Communication has definitely made an impact on my life. I couldn't have done it without Alateen.



Communication

Kirsten

My communication skills have improved since Alateen. I used to play the role of the shy girl who waited for people to talk to her. If there was something I wanted to say, I held it in. Now I have the courage to introduce myself to others. Because I am working the program and going to meetings, I know how to establish limits. I can confront someone if I need to without getting uncomfortable feelings. Thanks to Alateen and the tools I have gained, my relationships with my family and friends are strong, healthy, and happy. I am so grateful to Alateen for all the positive things I have received in my short life. Without this program, I wouldn't be the person I am.

Forgiveness

Anonymous

I've learned to communicate much better with my parents. Before I joined Alateen, my mom and I fought a lot because I felt we didn't understand each other. Alateen showed me we are similar in more ways than I could have ever realized. Alateen also gave me the tools I needed to forgive my dad and remake my relationship with him.



FOR EDUCATORS & PRINCIPALS

What is Alateen?

Alateen is:

...a fellowship of young Al-Anon members, usually teenagers, whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

Purposes of Alateen

Young People Come Together to:

- share experience, strength, and hope with each other
- discuss their difficulties
- learn effective ways to cope with their problems
- encourage one another
- help each other understand the principles of the Al-Anon program

Alateen Members Learn

- compulsive drinking is a disease
- they can detach themselves emotionally from the drinker's problems while continuing to love the person
- they are not the cause of anyone else's drinking or behaviour
- they cannot change or control anyone but themselves
- they have spiritual and intellectual resources with which to develop their own potentials, no matter what happens at home
- they can build satisfying and rewarding life experiences for themselves

Sponsorship & Supervision

In order to be registered as an Alateen group, there must be TWO Alateen Group Sponsors at each meeting. These sponsors – Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service (AMIAS) – are experienced Al-Anon members, certified through the Alateen Service certification process, prior to serving, and are in possession of a SAPS Police Clearance Certificate, renewed annually.

2019 UPDATE

During 2018 we operated 2 Alateen Groups in Gauteng & 2 in KZN. Supported by our friends in AA, they brought their children to us and have reported amazing results both at home and in school through regular attendance at Alateen meetings.

For 2019 we are focusing on bringing our message to schools – to both learners & educators. We KNOW there's a need. We know families are in pain. If you'd like an information session at your school, call our helpline 0861 252 666

We believe alcoholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control our parents, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.



We do not discuss religion or become involved with any outside organisations. Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics.



UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECT OF ALCOHOLISM ON CHILDREN

For nearly 70 years, Al-Anon Family Groups, globally, has helped the families who live with the disease of alcoholism.

The disease of alcoholism in a family member or friend affects children and teenagers in many ways that impact on their behaviour and ultimately, their school work.

Frequently, students and educators do not realise that a relationship with an alcoholic could be a factor in poor performance, disruptive behaviour and other problems.

Alateen helps young people understand how alcoholism affects the lives of all who are associated with a problem drinker.

Alateen in South Africa

We have learned that learners are very cautious about attending Alateen meetings at their schools.

In some areas Alateen meetings are held in the evenings in a nearby church hall, community centre or somewhere secure.

Parents/guardians must give written permission for Alateen attendance.

Alateen South Africa has groups across the country.

A list of Alateen meetings may be found on our websites:

<http://www.alanon.org.za/meetings/>
<http://www.alanongauteng.co.za/>
<https://al-anon.org/newcomers/teen-corner-alateen/>

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Literature & more information is available. Just call us.


Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

Teachers can advise parents on how to build a relationship of trust with their children

Trust is at the core of all positive human relationships. This is according to Cindy Glass, Owner and Co-Founder of Step Up Education Centres. She says, “Trust, when nurtured and honoured within a family system can lead to happier, more fulfilling experiences, greatly reducing stress and anxiety, Mistrust, on the other hand, inevitably leads to hurt, tension and misery. Many believe that trust can be something one demands of another: ‘You must trust me!’ Research, however, has shown that trust is earned, in small gestures and in moments in time.”

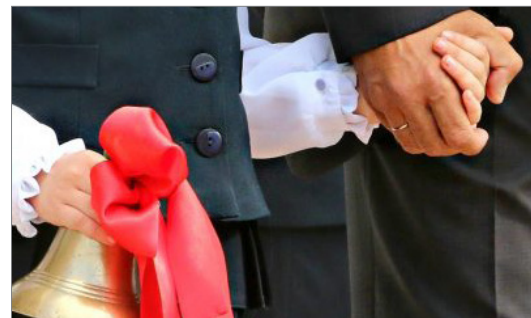
International speaker, Brene’ Brown says that actions demonstrating trustworthiness are likened to marbles. Every time one demonstrates or actions a trust behaviour, you can put a marble in a jar. However, when a behaviour demonstrating mistrust occurs, you can remove a whole handful of those marbles and it will take a lot of hard work to replace the marbles of trust again. Trust is earned. It cannot be demanded of anyone.

Parents want their children to trust them and children want the same of their parents. Cindy explains that it is up to parents to make the first move in modelling the behaviours that create relationships of trust within the family. Nurturing trust requires action.

Five actionable behaviours that you can implement to help create and nurture trust

1. Learn to listen to understand: There is a difference between hearing and listening. Listening entails eye contact and a genuine, sincere interest in what the other person is saying.
2. Strive for non-judgemental parenting: Children who hide their challenges and negative behavioural choices (creating a sense of mistrust) most often do this because they are fearful of their parent’s reactions. Keep the lines of communication open by assuring your children that you do, indeed, have their back. Seek positive solutions to challenges together. This does not mean that you must overlook or justify behaviours. It simply means that your children will fall from time to time and they need a safe, trustworthy place to seek solutions.
3. Be your word: Do what you say and say what you do, consistently and sincerely.
4. Be the person your children can rely on: Keep your promises. Consistently tell the truth.
5. Establish boundaries and accountability: Just as you are accountable for your own behaviours, teach your children to own theirs.

“Your children will most likely model what you do rather than what you say. With patience and love, you can learn to trust each other, despite the difficulties and challenges that you will face as a family. Remember that each action that creates trust is like a marble being put into the ‘trust jar’. Breaking that trust is like taking a handful of marbles out of the jar. It is way better to consistently build trust than to have to try and regain trust that has been broken,” Cindy concludes.



Here’s how to build trust with learners and create a healthy classroom environment for learning

- Talk about trust. Establishing trust should start the moment your learners enter the classroom.
- Give learners responsibilities.
- Develop a classroom atmosphere of trust.
- Be tolerant.
- Be consistent. ▲

How to instil a love of books in children

The building blocks that children need for language and literacy form in their first three years, and developing early literacy skills makes it easier for children to learn to read in school. Given that reading is a vital life skill, author and senior lecturer at Embury Institute for Higher Education, Nicole Rimensberger, shares her tips on how to instil a love of reading in young children.

Rimensberger recently self-published her first children’s book, *Witchfield*, an adventure story with a magical twist. She believes that books should be everywhere in the home (not just neatly stacked on bookshelves) – on coffee tables, on beds, on the couch, on the kitchen counter, even on the floor. “It may seem obvious, but when children see books everywhere, they become part of their daily lives, which is more likely to foster a love of books later on,” she explains. “They will learn that when they are bored, in need of distraction or just curious – all they need to do is to grab their nearest book.”

Rimensberger cites Emilie Buchwald, who said, “Children are made readers in the laps of their parents.” She says that this sums up the powerful role parents play in establishing a love of reading in young children. “Books represent quality time with mom or dad, be it with cuddles before bed or to calm down and bond after a tantrum, or to giggle and laugh about together during the day. It’s about so much more than just a book or a story at this stage, it’s about fostering the relationship as well as a love of books,” she says.

“Young children, in particular, relate to books as objects first before they fully understand how they work or what they do. They are attracted to the bright, cheerful covers, they want to explore them in a tactile way – what do they feel like? Are they heavy or light? Perhaps even, what do they taste like? There is nothing wrong when toddlers treat books like objects to play with. Learning how to treat a book gently comes later, so for now, books are about fun, exploration and learning. This is where tactile books, books with holes, pop-up books or books with flaps become very popular and can provide endless entertainment for curious fingers and curious minds.”

Rimensberger advises that reading to toddlers and young children should be about the interaction, and suggests parents and teachers get creative for story time. “There’s no need to stick to the script – much amusement can be had when a familiar story is told with a new twist. The ensuing argument is a great

opportunity for language development,” she says, “Repetition, rhyme, word play and prediction are all part of the parental tool box when it comes to story-telling and language. The child can complete sentences, guess what will happen next, think up reasons why something happened, repeat words or phrases and, in a general sense, let story-time become more of a conversation than about making it from beginning to end.”

She adds that probably the most important, yet often forgotten, element of fostering a love of reading in children is for parents to show an interest in books themselves. “Little eyes are always watching and they notice the objects that occupy the hands and minds of the adults around them – is it a cell phone or is it a book? What fascinates mom or dad is more likely to draw the attention of children too. Parents should remember, however, that buying lots of books doesn’t automatically encourage reading; becoming a reading role model does.” ▲



Endorsing executive education – why lifelong study enhances your career

The scale and breadth of technological innovations is dramatically reshaping the way in which business is done. Advances in technology trends including artificial intelligence and machine learning helps make operations within businesses more efficient, while digital fabrication technologies like 3D printing enable companies to bring manufacturing closer to customers.

In order to create strategies that allow their companies to keep abreast of this change, operate efficiently, and implement management systems that result in sustainable growth, managers, management graduates and mid-career professionals embrace continuous learning.

The perfect avenue for delivering this is through postgraduate or executive education programmes, which enable mid-career graduates, managers and leaders to become empowered with the latest thought leadership and case studies on innovation, design thinking, strategy, decision-making, and leadership methodology.

These programmes enable you to set yourself up for a brighter future, while also empowering your company to achieve greater success, by way of your expanded set of skillsets. Executive education programmes range from short learning programmes that equip employees with sought after skillsets that are required for employees to thrive in the fourth industrial era such as mobile app development and change management programmes, through to more expansive and all-encompassing management courses.

These are particularly important for future proofing one's skillsets, with organisations such as the World Economic Forum forecasting that millions of jobs will be phased out due to automation while millions more will be created that require these new skills to drive new economies

Jonathan Foster-Pedley, dean and director of the Henley Business School, in a Mail & Guardian article said, "When choosing a school to enrol for an executive education programme, you want to make sure that the school is cutting edge in terms of the research it produces around business strategies and methods of innovation. You need a school that will equip you with the necessary managerial skills to respond to change. It should ultimately be leading (or align with your interests) with the latest thinking in business excellence, design thinking, big data, strategic management, methods for innovation, and is ultimately multi-layered in its focus on the various aspects of the business, including management, clients and the socioeconomic conditions in which the business is operating."

As part of your research for finding a school, look up frameworks for business, strategy, leadership, and innovation that the school uses and find testimonies from alumni on their thoughts about implementing the tools they have learned within their organisations. Executive education is different from a "university education" or the theoretical education we get from universities, which is often aimed at preparing us for the workspace and giving us critical tools to navigate through society. Executive education, on the other hand, is aimed at preparing you to be a leader in the workplace. Because a lot of the programmes



are targeted at individuals who are far ahead in their careers, the programmes tend to be more practical in what and how they teach.

Longer courses such as a Postgraduate Diploma in Corporate Governance, enable graduates to fulfil any role in organisational leadership, particularly at senior management and board director level. Whereas globally-focused degrees such as a Master of International Business degree provide the skills graduates and employees need to operate from a global perspective.

"Ultimately, executive education programmes are a great investment for graduates because it empowers them to handle operations, along with strategic business facets like higher-level vision and strategy for the business," says Prof Alwyn Louw, President and Academic President of IIE MSA.

"It is also very worthwhile for companies, because their employees and managers obtain future-proof skills and the ability required to identify factors that drive the growth of the business and can then use their newly obtained leadership and managerial skills to maximise that growth and help ensure that the business operates more efficiently," concludes Professor Louw. ▲

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Mind the gap – why you should think twice before taking a year off after school

Matrics who are tempted to take a year off after their school careers – whether it is because they feel they just need a break, or because they don't yet know if or what they want to study – should think twice about their decision, an education expert says.

“There are significant implications to taking a so-called gap year instead of directly entering studies,” says Peter Kriel, General Manager at The IIE.

Chief among these is the fact that graduates who went to study straight after school, and who completed their qualification within the required timeframe, are significantly better off than matriculants who elected to enter the workplace right away or who opted for a gap year, particularly if that gap year is unproductive.

“A gap year doesn't necessarily mean that you take off a year to travel the world and pretty much do nothing as the term was understood in the past. The concept has evolved to include other activities, such as getting a job after Matric to earn some money or gain work experience, or volunteering or even undergoing a structured programme,” says Kriel.

However, while these options are still better than just relaxing for a year before entering studies, they may still put you behind your peers in terms of studying and earning potential, he says.

Another risk with taking a gap year, is that one loses one's “study muscles”, says Kriel.

“It is completely understandable that the idea of getting away from the books after the demands of one's final year at school is a very attractive idea for many. However after that year, getting back into the habit of studying and focusing on academics are major challenges which are best avoided,” he adds.

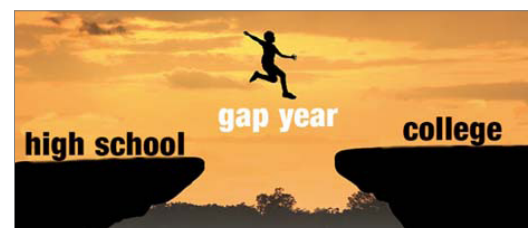
If you do decide to take a gap year, it is crucial that you at least do something to improve your skills and competencies during that time. A great option in this instance is to do some distance or part-time courses.

“Doing some short or distance courses allows you to investigate your options and interests without the financial and time commitments required of full-time degree study,” notes Kriel.

“This means that you can get a better idea of where your passion and talents lie, while at the same time earning some certification that will make your gap year less of a ‘hole’ in your CV.

“And finally, staying with the books, even without the commitment of having to study full-time and the ability to study at your own pace, means that you keep your brain working and geared for when you do sign up for full qualification study later.”

But for those who have legitimate reasons for not going straight into further studies, the advice is definitely to ensure that you don't lose sight of the long



game, and that you keep learning even if you are already earning.

Kriel says the time should also be used to actively investigate future study options to limit time-wasting later.

Look at all the higher education institutions, whether it be a public university or private, and their offerings. Find a qualification that will make you employable – one that is recognised by employers and has a curriculum that is relevant in the workplace of today.

You must also choose an institution whose curricula and learning processes enable you to master work-ready skills so that you have a competitive ‘hit the ground running’ advantage. Having a portfolio of work at graduation, for example, allows you to instantly showcase what you have learnt and what makes you an attractive prospect to potential employers.

“Finally, you must choose an institution that will give you the best possible chance of succeeding and completing your qualification in the minimum time. Every additional year of study leaves a long-term financial impact, so consider things such as student support, class sizes, and the quality of lecturing and facilities,” concludes Kriel. ▲



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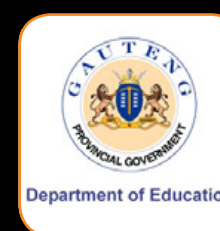
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