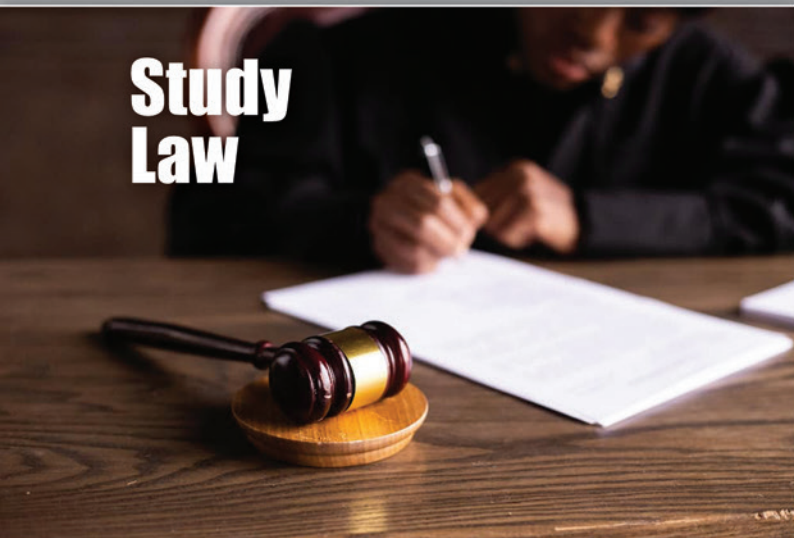




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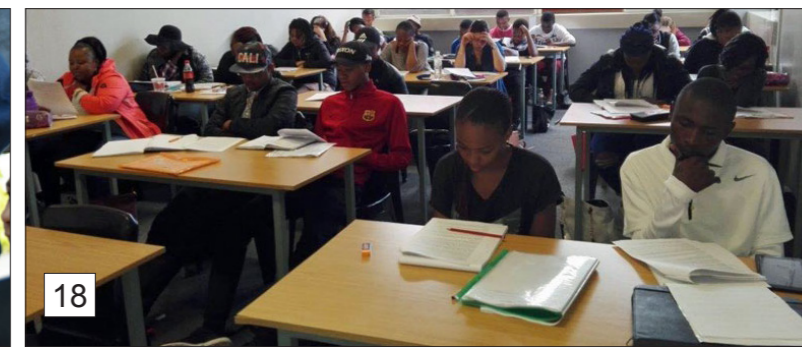
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Editor's column

Majority of SA schools are dysfunctional

Research conducted by the Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) into underperforming schools in the country came out with a clear and dismal verdict. The report stated at least “80% of schools are dysfunctional, and most of these schools serve black and coloured learners”.

The researchers said despite improvements, deep inequalities continue in the education system. They cited data from the General Household Survey that indicated the percentage of youths who completed Grade 12 was approximately 44.9% in 2009 and 53.8% in 2018. Although this shows an increase in pass rates, we need to consider the lowering of the pass marks and assessment criteria for most subjects.

As with most issues in South Africa, there is a clear racial divide. According to the report, “The completion rates of African and coloured youth were at 51.6% and 52.5%, respectively, whereas for Indian and white youth, the rates were 81.9% and 81.1%, respectively.

“It is hard to applaud a general increase in stats when on a deeper level, the exclusionary effects of apartheid still exist on a bigger scale than one would expect in a post-apartheid South Africa.”

The EELC argued that when dealing with underperforming schools, the department concentrated on academic performance, neglecting other socioeconomic factors.

Schools are classified as underperforming if their matric exam pass rate is below 65% and produce less than 30% of bachelor and diploma passes.

The criteria do not mention other issues like violence and bad school management.

Failure to meet the standards prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement is one of the three criteria for underperformance, the other two being breakdown in school management and threats to safety.

The report said the focus on academic performance also extended to the annual reports principals must prepare. These reports only focus on academic performance and use of school resources, ignoring external factors.

The EELC said the heads of department (HOD) should be more involved in developing a School Improvement Plan. Currently, their role is only to review the plan and make recommendations.

“The provincial education departments have noted that, in practice, support from the HOD in developing the School Improvement Plan is very limited. Further, it is for the principal to implement the plan, albeit with the support of the HOD, and report back at the end of the year.

“While there is value in the school being able to develop and own the School Improvement Plan, the existing regulatory framework fails to recognise that the school principal and leadership team are often part of the problem and may lack the will or capacity to turn the situation around. The HOD should be more closely involved from the outset to guarantee meaningful change.”

The EELC recommended parents and school governing bodies be given powers to hold underperforming schools accountable; and the department needed to have a clear-sighted, reflective, tailored and holistic approach to improving school functionality.

Yours in functional education

Janos Bozsik
Editor



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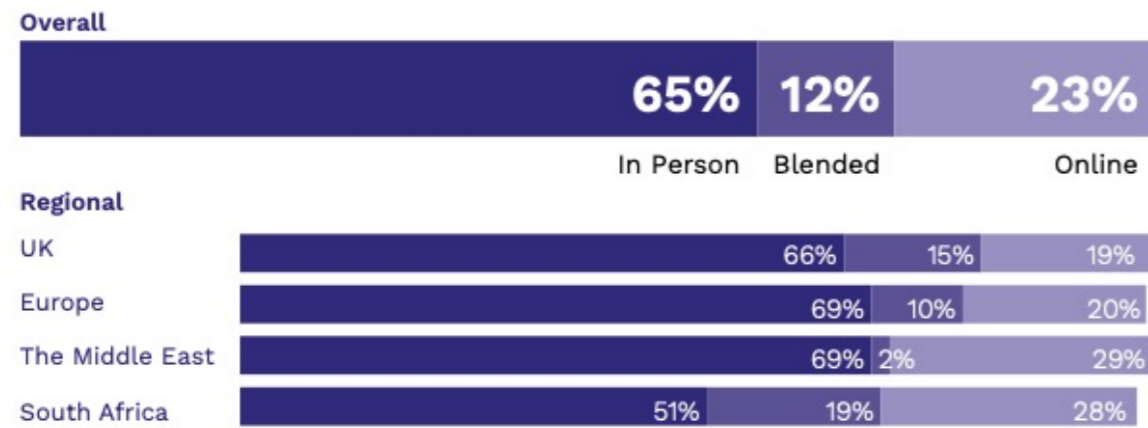
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SA is a Leading Region in Pre-COVID Online Learning



Research covering higher education (HE) instructors' priorities and challenges in course delivery conducted by education technology company Cengage EMEA indicates that prior to COVID, South Africa had the highest percentage of learners receiving online or blended learning as their main mode of course delivery compared with the UK, Middle East and Europe.

South Africa had a pre-COVID online and blended learning course delivery of 47% compared with the UK at 34%, Middle East 31% and Europe 30%.

The survey covering 402 HE instructors indicated South Africa having the lowest percentage of In-Person learning at 51% followed by the UK (66%), Europe (69%) and Middle East (69%) prior to COVID.

Overall, two thirds of the higher education instructors were delivering their course content in person pre-COVID, with just a quarter predominantly delivering their course content online.

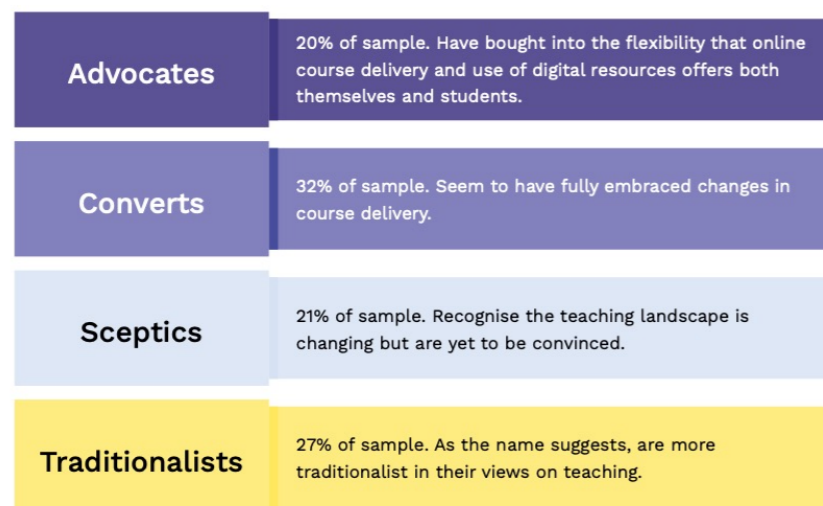
The results may indicate that SA was moving at a faster pace towards online learning prior to COVID. Another factor could be that in SA, courses are generally

much larger, some with thousands taking a course, and therefore online would be better suited for managing very large cohorts.

Segment membership

In the research, Cengage EMEA identified four core instructor segments that the company says go some way to distinguishing attitudes to the use and future use of digital content and delivery in higher education settings. Cengage has called these segments: **Advocates**, **Converts**, **Sceptics** and **Traditionalists**.

The largest group of instructors were designated as 'converts' and the second largest group 'traditionalists'. Each segment shared particular characteristics, as seen below:



Resources used

Also prior to COVID, it was found that a combination of resources to deliver courses was used, with basic digital resources such as eTextbooks, instructor PowerPoints, and instructor notes, being part of this and used by 77% of the overall sample.

In combination with these basic digital resources, instructors representing half the sample were typically using 'reading from print textbooks', 'lecture notes', 'practice questions' and 'practical sessions', alongside journal articles. Journal articles were significantly more likely to be used in the UK (62%) comparative to other regions, whilst the UK was also significantly more likely to use published materials (63%) and recorded lectures (38%).

Teaching preferences

By the time the study was carried out, COVID-19 had disrupted teaching in most higher education institutions (HEIs) for over a year, forcing many to move their teaching online. The sample were asked: Thinking about your own teaching preferences, how would you prefer to teach your course?

Overall, HE instructors showed a preference for either in-person or a blended mix of online and face-to-face teaching. However, preference differences were noted across the segments, with 'advocates' showing a significant greater preference for in-person teaching and lower for blended.

'Converts' showed a significantly higher preference for a blended or online approach to course delivery, whilst 'traditionalists' evidenced significantly higher preferences for in-person teaching and much lower preferences for blended or online teaching, suggesting that they are more rigid in their in-person preferences. 'Sceptics' showed a lower preference for online only.

Thinking about your own teaching preferences, how would you prefer to teach a course?

	In-person	Blended (a mix of in-person and online)	Online
Overall	50%	32%	18%
Advocates	73% ▲	3% ▼	24%
Converts	4% ▼	63% ▲	33% ▲
Sceptics	62%	32%	6% ▼
Traditionalists	80% ▲	15% ▼	6% ▼

Regionally, European instructors showed significantly greater preference for in-person teaching (62%), whereas those in South Africa show significantly lower preference for in-person teaching (31%).

Core reasons for preferences:

In-person



- preferred interaction and contact
- can see if students understand the course I'm teaching
- it's easier to demonstrate something

Blended



- provides flexibility for students
- some aspects need in person interaction

Online



- provides flexibility for students
- flexibility for me to teach around family and personal commitments

The reality of delivering courses using digital content

Understandably, the enforced move for HE institutions to deliver teaching online to their students over the course of the pandemic met with a range of responses. Through the study Cengage EMEA says it wanted to gauge the perceived benefits and challenges of using digital content to deliver teaching, so that as education providers and content providers, it can work together to further improve any future experience of this for educators and students alike.

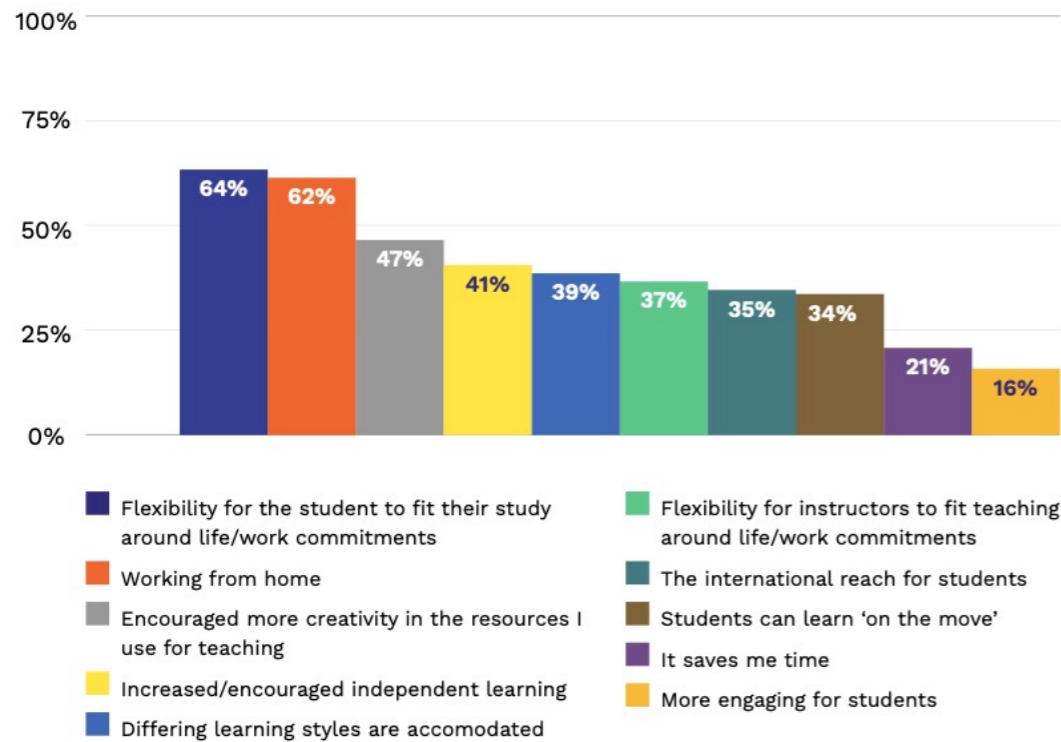
Perceived benefits

The sample highlighted many perceived benefits in making the transition to online course delivery. The main benefits of online course delivery highlighted by instructors included:

- flexibility for students (64%)
- instructors being able to work from home (62%)
- encouraging more creativity in resources used by instructors (47%)
- increasing independent learning (41%).

>> from page 5

Following COVID and the move to online course delivery, what do you perceive to have been the benefits of such a move?



Unsurprisingly, the 'converts' segment were most likely to perceive a fuller range of benefits than other segments, whilst also noting additional benefits of embracing online course delivery such as accommodating different learning styles, the flexibility for instructors to fit teaching around life-and-work commitments and allowing students to 'learn on the move'. 'Traditionalists' were more likely to perceive fewer benefits of an online mode of teaching.

Perceived drawbacks

When asked about the perceived drawbacks of online course delivery, the most commonly cited drawback will be recognisable to anyone that endured lockdown in some form. Just over a fifth (21%) claimed that the core drawback was the students missing social interaction.

However, they also cited the difficulty in assessing student understanding, which is something that some digital solutions can aid educators with. It is notable that 'sceptics' tend to express more drawbacks with online course delivery than the other segments and were more concerned about assessing student understanding and engagement, which, again, digital solutions can offer assistance with.

Across the regions there was little discrepancy, with the exception of Africa where 'broadband issues' was the key concern for a third of instructors, as well

as the perception that students find the use of technology stressful. It is likely that these two issues are related.

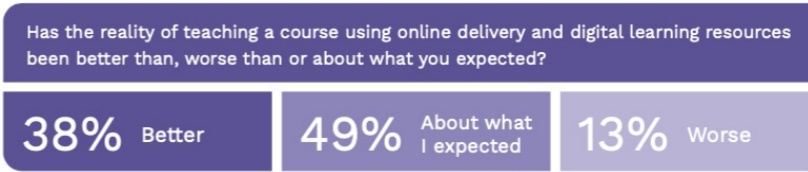
Potential concerns

Some wariness to moving courses online, particularly at short notice, is understandable. To gauge this the sample were asked: During COVID, which of the following potential concerns, if any, have you had about delivering online courses?

The main concerns expressed were around students' motivation and engagement, but also instructors had concerns around their own ability to deliver certain aspects and having to potentially rewrite course content, which is presumably a time issue.

Meeting expectations

That said, when asked about the reality of teaching a course using online delivery and resources the experience for just under half of instructors predominantly met expectations. Whilst almost 4 in 10 agreed that teaching a course using online delivery and digital learning resources was a better experience than they had anticipated.



For those that stated that the experience of teaching a course using online delivery and digital learning resources was better than expected, the reasons given included:

- Students actively engage online / better student engagement (15%)
- Flexibility for students / teachers (9%)
- Students / teachers adapted well (7%)
- Technology worked well (7%)

Although no differences were observed by region, there were differences noted by segment.

	Advocates	Converts	Sceptics	Traditionalists
Better	61% ▲	52% ▲	12% ▼	27% ▼
About as expected	39%	48%	45%	60% ▲
Worse	0% ▼	0% ▼	43% ▲	14%

'Sceptics' significantly more strongly felt that the experience had been worse than they expected (43%), whereas 'advocates' and 'converts' believed it to be a better experience.

Those who had expressed greater confidence in delivering digital content had a more positive experience (43%), which suggests that familiarity with digital content is beneficial. Where expectations were not exceeded, this is mainly due to initial concerns being realised, lower student engagement; time consuming etc.

This seems to reinforce the view that the more practiced and confident educators are with using digital learning resources, the better their experience and the more likely they are to notice the benefits of using such resources.

So, where does this leave instructors? Online learning is now an increasingly important and impactful to the improvement of the teaching and learning experience. To realise the full potential of technology enhanced learning, help and support for instructors to develop digital and pedagogical tools to teach effectively both in remote and in-person settings is an imperative factor in course delivery in higher education.

About Cengage

Cengage EMEA is part of Cengage Group, a global education technology company dedicated to removing the barriers to higher education and providing every student with access to quality teaching and learning and a brighter future. Focussed on making education more accessible, sustainable and affordable, its product portfolio includes online learning platforms that offers students everything they need in one place – textbooks, eTextbooks, homework, study and assessment tools, and resources to develop employability skills to help them transition successfully into the hugely competitive global workplace.

Cengage EMEA sells its products and services to over 52 countries throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa, covering a diverse cultural range, each with its own particular and varied curriculum needs for educational solutions ▲

It's time to change the way we see education

By **Stefan Botha** – CEO of **Optimi Group**

Youth Month is a time in South Africa when we typically commemorate how far we have come in terms of education in our country.

There's no doubt that there have been big advances in South Africa. At the dawn of democracy in 1994, 58% of public-school learners in Grade 12 passed matric, while in 2021 that figure was 76.4%.

However, our youth also face serious challenges, as outlined by two recent reports.

The first is underscored by a comment from Higher Education, Science And Innovation Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, who recently said that only 4% of learners on average who start Grade 1 in South Africa go on to attain a university degree.

Compounding this problem further is the fact that the pandemic has severely impacted learning. A recent study by Stellenbosch University – which compared test results from the years 2019 and 2021 on a range of mathematical and reading and writing competencies – found that learners had fallen 40% to 70% of a school year behind earlier cohorts in language learning and up to 95% to 106% of a school year in Mathematics.

– Education has a direct impact on employment –

All of these challenges with education ultimately have a direct impact on employment prospects in South Africa. Already, 64% of youth aged 15 to 24 are officially unemployed in South Africa.

But these statistics also include a very important, but often overlooked fact: the unemployment rate is significantly lower for people with better levels of education. As an example, the most recent unemployment rate for people without matric in South Africa is above 40%, while the graduate unemployment rate is below 10%.

Therefore, we need to do more as a country to ensure that we help our learners get to the next steps in their educational journeys.

In the 21st century, it's fair to say that technology and connectivity should be at the forefront of our education system and any efforts to catch up on lost learning.

While this has been a trend in education over the past few decades, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in the education space.

University is not the only option

After prioritising catch up efforts in our schooling system, we further need to pay more attention to the post-matric learning options for our learners.



Stefan Botha – CEO of **Optimi Group**

While having a degree certainly is proven to boost one's job prospects, the fact is that the world has also changed dramatically when it comes to tertiary education.

For example, there has been a severe shortage of artisans in SA for many years now, and therefore many job opportunities in this space. To study towards becoming an artisan, one wouldn't typically follow the university route but rather opt for national trade courses.

These qualifications are known as N1, N2 and N3 qualifications, and enable learners to ultimately follow career paths such as boilermaking, welding, fitting and turning, electrical and motor trade and more.

When it comes to technology, there are, for example, certified Software Development courses that cover fundamentals such as HTML5, C#, Microsoft Azure, and much more. In addition to these, there are many viable alternatives to university courses in the fields of accounting and finance, HR management and more.

– Technology in education is the key –

What's clear is that as a country we need to collectively start thinking outside the box when it comes to how we educate our youth and the options they have once they move through the education system. There are many more options on the table today with advances in technology.

In this way, we can then start to tackle the big challenges we have as a country. ▲

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Libraries maintain their glow

One Soweto High School principal is convinced that the good old-fashioned library remains an important part of the educational mix.

Many people conclude that the ongoing digitalisation of the world signals the end for libraries – especially in schools, given the fact they are the stomping ground of today’s digital natives. But experience shows that, in fact, the respected school library continues to play a significant role in modern education.

One consistent benefit of a well-equipped school library is that it provides a comfortable, quiet, and safe space where pupils can explore beyond the bounds of the strict curriculum. This is particularly true when it comes to under-resourced township and rural schools – for them, the library can be an oasis where pupils can expand their horizons.

It’s also true that physical books retain a certain dignity and heft, and the act of flipping through a book is often experienced as more intimate than scanning a screen.

– Physical books have a unique dignity of their own –

Andrew Setshedi, Principal of Moletsane Secondary School in Soweto, is in no doubt about the value of books and the role they play in enhancing the learning experience: “After MiWay refurbished the library at our school, we noted a dramatic increase in our school’s pass rate, which now sits at an impressive 92%. I’m also very proud to say that the library is one of the best I’ve has seen in the area and it is often visited by other schools.”

According to Mr. Setshedi, the library is well used by the school’s learners, and “thanks to the both the donation of books and interior design investment, it’s become a popular space where it’s comfortable to sit and read or work”.

Sizwe Shiba, a Mathematics teacher at Moletsane and one of the two teachers who runs the library, agrees that the school’s library plays a big part in enabling stellar academic results. “Part of our contribution as teachers is taking care of the language side of things, guiding learners to writings that will boost subject

performance. We play our part by ensuring that the library has extended opening hours to allow pupils more time to study, browse for book and access the WiFi that it offers”.

Shiba agrees that the library’s comfort and aesthetic appeal makes the Moletsane library a pleasant place to study and read in. “It’s always full,” Mr. Shiba says.

Maria Sebati, one of the librarians at Maphutha Secondary School in Tembisa, says that the school has developed a good reading culture, with pupils mostly using the library to check out novels – fewer use the library as a source of schoolwork-related information. The school has several book clubs which the pupils run themselves, with assistant teachers available to help if any is needed.

Another interesting fact is that while library users have in the past tended to be female, Ms Sebati says that this year there has been an influx of male book borrowers. She hopes to build on this great reading culture by integrating the library more closely into the teaching activities. But, achieving this will be dependent on accessing more books related to the curriculum.

“We have made a good start but there’s a lot more we can do,” she says. “We are so grateful to MiWay for the help they give us each year, it makes a big difference.”

– What every school needs –

One of the key ingredients in continuing the role of libraries is the way in which enlightened principals and librarians are prepared to allow the library’s role to evolve. For example, many libraries offer

computing facilities, which can be used to help prepare pupils for the digital world. In fact, some libraries actively provide pupils with information on how to stay safe online, and how to develop research skills.

Librarians and libraries have a vast amount of institutional wisdom related to research and, particularly, verifying sources – old-time skills that are more necessary today than ever.

Modern-day librarians are also increasingly partnering with class teachers to provide information and skills that complement the syllabus.

If one takes a step back, it’s clear that the interventions by corporates such as MiWay work together to provide not only an area dedicated to learning and personal development – the library – but also a set of pathways through which motivated individuals can channel their energies to achieve personal and career goals via mentorship, internships, and further study.

Who said the library was dead? ▲



Finding a library in Gauteng (click on the blue hyperlinked words)

Joburg has a network of public libraries that residents, including schoolchildren, may use to access books or just a quiet place to read and study. At the centre of the network is the Johannesburg Public Library on Market Street in the centre of the Joburg CBD. Alongside the lending library, it contains a reference library, children’s library and newspaper reading room. Other specialist libraries in this complex include the Michaelis Art Library, a multimedia library and the Harold Strange Library of African Studies.

Any Joburg resident can join these libraries, or one of the many satellite libraries spread across the Greater Johannesburg area. [Find your nearest library.](#)

The [National Library of South Africa](#) is located in the Pretoria CBD at 75 Thabo Sehume Street. It seats 1 800 users and has more than 500 computers. Similarly, the Greater Tshwane area has its own [network of community libraries.](#)

Mogale City has a network of libraries on Gauteng’s West Rand, with another network available on the East Rand in the region of Benoni.

[Find West Rand libraries.](#)

[Find East Rand libraries.](#)



Three tips to conquer exam stress

It may be all too easy to pass off our children's high school exam worries, but their stress is real, and it is imperative that parents help guide their children to cope with these stresses to excel in school and in life.

When it comes to high school, nothing is more stressful than exam preparation. Sonica Koopman, Product Manager at learning company, Pearson South Africa says it is important to tap into all the coping mechanisms to help our children excel at school. "Parents or guardians need to deeply understand their child's strengths and weaknesses in order to help bridge the gaps where necessary."

When it comes to overcoming weaknesses, Koopman says this comes in the form of mental and physical techniques that can help our children ease the pressure and calm the mind.

Time is the most crucial resource

Koopman believes time to be the most precious resource when it comes to exam preparation. "If you manage your time correctly, you will have ample time to absorb what you need to learn. The problem is that teenagers are not the best at self-management so they may need their parents to help manage their schedules to ensure the right amount of studying is done."

Research has shown that effective time management helps reduce stress. Koopman says there are plenty of time management apps that can be downloaded onto the learner's phone to help them manage their study time and practice exams for each subject.

Get the right study materials

As one of the leading study material publishers in the country, Pearson South Africa knows the importance of preparation. "Study guides are essential as they are directly linked to the current curriculum and provide learners with an opportunity to engage with the subject matter in their own time and in a language they can understand."

All the books published by Pearson are in accordance with the school curriculum in order to be tied to learning progressions expected from the institution. For instance, all X-kit Achieve books are written by expert teachers to ensure that the



materials contained within are exactly what student's need according to the current curriculum.

Pearson South Africa have even converted all their hard-copy educational content into eBooks, which are available on the [Pearson eStore](#).

Healthy body, healthy mind

Stress can tear the body and mind apart, so Koopman advises that all learners understand that balance is the key to exam success, which begins with a healthy mindset and a healthy body.

"Schedule time to go outside and be active. This is not only to stay fit and increase energy levels but does wonders for mental health as you increase blood flow to your brain and your body. Exercise releases vital endorphins that help your mind cope with the stress," says Koopman.

Above all things, Koopman says that parents and learners need to realise that there are an endless number of resources that can be found online. "Find the advice that works for you, but keep in mind that not all of it will work so it is important to discuss these steps with a learning professional to ensure you are doing it right." ▲



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Expanded options for high school success – find the right fit for your child

A mere cursory glance at social media and parent groups shows the anxieties and frustrations of parents with school going children today regarding access to an excellent education. Lack of access at public schools is a major challenge, with parents whose children qualify on all counts not gaining admission – through no fault on their part, but because of capacity constraints. Another observed challenge is that of children already at school, but where the environment is simply not preparing them for the modern world because of outdated pedagogies and ways of working, non-productive homework requirements, or a system that no longer serves the needs of students.

An education expert says while the above and other issues related to schools may feel like an impossible hill to climb for parents, the reality is that there are many options in the private sector of which parents may not be aware. Additionally, parents sometimes discard the idea of private education out of hand because of the perception that it might not be within their reach financially, when that is not necessarily the case.

“Over the past weeks, many parents have had to tell their children that they were not accepted at any of the schools to which they applied, despite them qualifying for access,” says Kassandra Strydom, Academic Advisor: ADVTECH Schools Division Central Academic Team.

“We’ve also noticed parents highlighting the struggles their children are facing because of personal challenges or circumstances, being just a number at school, being required to take subjects that are of no interest to them and being subjected to teaching methods and approaches that are out of touch regarding what is required in today’s world and what will be required of them in future.

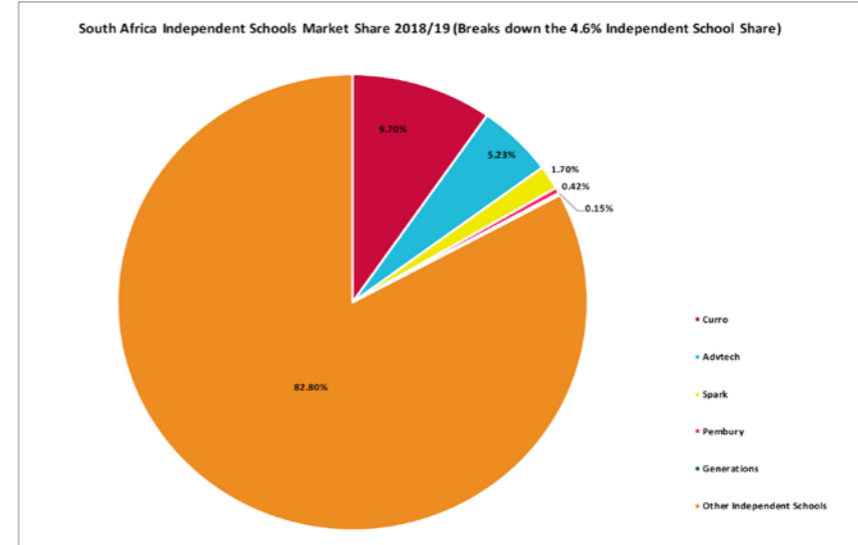
“Parental concerns are becoming evident. We urge these parents to investigate the options open to them in the private sector, because it can make a world of difference in a child’s educational journey, their self-actualisation and future prospects, and their general wellbeing,” says Strydom.



Strydom says a key consideration for parents when investigating options in the private sector, is to consider WHAT KIND of school is right for their child, because unlike in the public sector, different private schools have very different offerings designed to cater to the specific needs of students and their families.

She says top-level considerations when assessing any private school, will include the following:

- Class size
- Teacher qualifications, experience and expertise
- Commitment to continued professional teacher development on the part of the school
- Teaching styles, methodology and environments
- The selection of curriculum and whether qualifications will be internationally recognised
- Fee structures
- Sport and extra-curricular offerings as well as facilities
- Additional academic support as well as programmes such as core skill development and EdTech integration



The kinds of private school offerings include the following

Modern and progressive schools

- Emphasis on learning by doing – hands-on projects, expeditionary learning, experiential learning
- Integrated curriculum focused on thematic units
- Strong emphasis on problem solving and critical thinking
- Group work and development of social skills
- Understanding and action as the goals of learning as opposed to rote knowledge
- Collaborative and cooperative learning projects
- Education for social responsibility and democracy
- Integration of community service and service-learning projects into the daily curriculum
- Selection of subject content by looking forward to ask what skills will be needed in future society
- De-emphasis on textbooks in favour of varied learning resources
- Emphasis on lifelong learning and social skills
- Assessment by evaluation of child’s projects and production
- Ed tech enabled learning opportunities

These schools prepare students for responsible adulthood and potential leadership by laying an excellent academic foundation supported by future-focused skills that will ensure students have lifelong success

Traditional holistic schools/religious traditional schools

In addition to the above elements, traditional schools offer a strong academic focus with excellence in sport and culture opportunities for students. They seek to retain traditional values while preparing students for an ever-changing world. The recipe of following time-honoured traditions has been very successful and recognised for the excellent contributions it makes in every sphere of education and to the social and emotional development of each student.

Specialised academic support and assisted learning

These schools offer a non-traditional approach to education to support neurodiversity. The unique strategy creates opportunities for the academic support and nurturing of all students on their journey to achieving academic success.



All students are included, catered for, and receive the additional support they require. The school believes that when a student joins the school, they are taking the first step toward their best future. creating opportunities for self-fulfilment and self-actualisation for all students, to develop their potential regardless of differences. Each student is taught according to their unique needs and in accordance with an individualised development plan by a multi-dimensional specialist team who follow a neurodiverse approach.

School types as above can be broken down into top tier and mid-tier schools. The variety of school fee options can be aligned to the school’s offering. It is important to highlight that investigation into the academic success of students is important as this is possible at all fee levels, but the offering of additional subjects and activities vary.

Online home schooling

Parents may consider investigating online or home school options, but are urged to ensure that their chosen school focuses on ‘cognitive’ screentime – where students are able to engage during lessons – rather than opt for a ‘paper behind glass’ approach, which may impact successful study.

“Very importantly, parents should feel comfortable that whichever school they choose, it has academic excellence at the core of its offering. Once that has been established, and the basic top-level considerations have been satisfied, parents can settle on the perfect environment for their child which fits with their budget, which will not only impact on the wellbeing and future preparedness of the child, but also on the family’s wellbeing as a whole,” says Strydom. ▲

Addressing industry skills shortages by engaging in the new QCTO framework

By Roland Innes – Group CEO, Dyna Training and Leoni MacKenzie – QCTO Subject Matter Expert in Qualifications Development

In its global risk barometer for 2022, international financial services provider Allianz surveyed 2 650 risk experts in 89 countries on the biggest perils facing industries in the coming year. Notably, skills shortages were identified as the eighth biggest risk in South Africa currently.

Our economic recovery and growth in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic will depend largely on our ability to address skills shortages in the labour market and the workplace. Companies and individuals should make the most of every opportunity to develop skills, and to align these skills with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

Responsible for the oversight of the accreditation, implementation, assessment, and certification of occupational qualifications, part-qualifications, and skills programs, the QCTO has a major role to play in tackling skills shortages, placing vocational certification by means of learnership and apprenticeship programs at the centre of South Africa's skills creation system.

Urgent need for practical skills and artisans

There has been an increased demand worldwide for artisans, engineers and technicians along with individuals skilled in sales and marketing. This highlights the fact that practical skills are urgently needed in the labour market and that there should be an increased focus on training artisans.

South Africa's QCTO was established to manage the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) by setting and developing standards, while assuring the quality of national occupational qualifications. The purpose of the OQSF is to facilitate the development and registration of quality-assured occupational and trade-related qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes from the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 1 to 8.



Roland Innes – Group CEO at Dyna Training

This is intended to meet the needs of existing and emerging sectors by ensuring that all learners, professionals, workers, unemployed and those classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), are equipped with relevant and transferable competencies to enhance lifelong employability.

Win-win for businesses and labour market

Ultimately the QCTO is intended to replace the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), while closing the gap whereby individuals in the labour market have the skills but lack the formal certifications or paperwork necessary to find employment or to maximise earning potential. While higher-level qualifications are essential, it is also necessary to address the immediate gap that stands between an individual coming out of school and becoming eligible to embark on the national qualification process.

To this end the QCTO has implemented skills programmes, effectively a shorter skills syllabus, at the end of which a learner can gain entry into a qualification or a part-time qualification. This also



has the immediate benefit of making the individual more employable. In addition to increasing and keeping their own skills in-house, businesses can contribute to the career development of their people which provides a greater level of motivation and incentive.

Skills development training also assists with reducing absenteeism where workers feel that the training they're getting is valuable to their personal growth, contributing to a more committed workforce. Where companies offer skills development opportunities, it becomes possible to redirect budget spend previously used for recruitment into training, shifting the focus to retention instead of acquisition.

The nitty gritty of the QCTO – how does it work?

As mentioned, the QCTO is responsible for the accreditation of Skills Development Providers (SDPs), authorising them to facilitate programmes and qualifications that fall under the OQSF.

These include: (click on the blue hyperlinked words)

- [occupational qualifications](#) including 'old' trades,
- [N4-N6 Programmes,](#)
- [historically registered qualifications,](#)
- and the shorter, bridging [skills programmes.](#)

Any SDP offering training or intending to offer training in any of these must seek accreditation from the QCTO, and must comply with the entity's minimum criteria.

Out with SETA, in with QCTO

From June 2023, SETA accreditation will be subject to a teach-out period, after which qualifications and skills programmes will need to be aligned with QCTO. This is a valuable opportunity for training providers to align their offerings to the QCTO accreditation standards, as that is the direction in which we are headed.

It will be necessary to work hand-in-hand with industry leaders in developing learning material to ensure that the necessary knowledge is combined with practical experience, hands-on learning opportunities and assessments.

Additionally, a major focus of these skills development and training programmes will be ensuring that learners are placed at companies where they can gain experience and skills in the workplace, and ultimately take up employment after assessment and qualification. The output from SDPs will be assessed by Assessment Quality Partners (AQP's), and it is the responsibility of the Assessment Quality Partner to sign off on the provider issuing a Statement of Result to the learner which gives them entry to the Integrated Summative Assessment for certification.



Smarter approach to skills development

For companies to maximise this opportunity, both from a tax rebate and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) scoring perspective, they will need to ensure that they coordinate training initiatives with SDPs that are accredited by the QCTO.

SDPs will need to modernise their curriculum to be more learner-focused, while forming relationships with Assessment Quality Partners. In order to exit learners smoothly, organisations will need to prepare their workplaces so that they are compliant with QCTO requirements, developing the necessary mentoring infrastructure to enable those placements while giving learners the best possible support.

In shifting the focus from generic skills training to inclusive learner development and facilitation through the QCTO framework, it becomes much easier to address South Africa's skills shortage effectively and sustainably. ▲

Legal degrees 101: what you need to know about studying law in 2023

As Matrics consider their study options for next year, many are drawn to the idea of pursuing a legal career, based on how it's portrayed in popular culture including movies, television and most recently, the Johnny Depp vs Amber Heard trial. Others might be put off by these representations of the legal field, feeling that they don't have the stomach for so much rough and tumble, especially if they are introverts.

But the legal field is extremely varied and have streams that will appeal to many people, regardless of their personality, and with infinitely more career possibilities than just trial law in court, an education expert says.

"Studying law opens many doors across the economy, as there is not one area of our lives that is not regulated by rules such as, for example, road rules, company rules, building laws, and so forth," says Bronwyn Le Ann Batchelor, Head of Faculty: Law at The Independent Institute of Education, SA's largest and most accredited private higher education provider.

"Additionally, there are various options in terms of qualifications in the legal field, which provides entry into various careers," she says.

These include, for example:

- **BCom in Law** – General management, legal advisor, corporate governance.
- **BA in Law** – Legal advising, paralegal, alternate dispute resolution practitioner, mediator, corporate communications practitioner, legal researcher, court reporter, legal writer, online content manager, criminologist.
- **LLB** – Career options in both the public or private sector. You can start your own practice, work for a small organisation (for profit or even an NGO) or even a large company.

"When considering your career vision, it is important to find your passion and link that to the associate career which could be any of the following: an advocate, attorney, prosecutor, legal advisor at one of the Chapter 9 institutions, alternate dispute resolution, community law advising, paralegal office advisor, any form of drafting, family-law practice, general commercial mediation, legal education, legal research, and non-governmental legal advising," Batchelor says.



But she warns prospective students to ensure they properly vet their institution before signing up, as an LLB is a professional qualification which means it is important to study at a credible registered institution that has complied with the legal requirements for accreditation of the qualification. The institution must also be able to demonstrate that they have met the necessary standards in order to produce work ready graduates with the necessary attributes.

"When selecting where to study, it is important to consider the skills needed to become a lawyer or any form of legal professional. The institution where you study should prepare you for the world of work in as many ways as possible, and some universities unfortunately have not kept up adequately with modern workplace demands.



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LEARNERS WHO BENEFITED FROM THE ALATEEN PROGRAMME

Below are some comments from school children in the Alateen programme

(Names are changed to protect members' anonymity)

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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“Law is always evolving so it is important that the higher education institution you select is on the cutting edge of the most recent developments in the content and skills to be taught to their students, which translates into a work ready graduate.”

When considering which qualification to go for, prospective students should be sure to understand the various streams, and what these will qualify them for post-graduation.

“There are a few ways in which an LLB Degree can be obtained, but not all Higher Education providers offer the different stream options so this is also an important consideration,” Batchelor says.

She says options broadly include the following:

- Straight LLB (4 years)
- A selection of one of the streams (a 3-year BA in Law or BCom in Law) followed by an LLB Degree (which can often then be completed in 2 years).

The latter stream results in two qualifications in five years. There are pros and cons to proceeding with either option, Batchelor says, adding that after completion of the BA in Law or BCom in Law students can elect to proceed with a different postgraduate qualification that is not necessarily law related.

“It is important to consider the criteria and requirements of both options as well as your long-term aspirations, for example if owning your own law firm is your goal, it may be beneficial to have some commercial background by doing a BCom in Law first followed by an LLB.

“Making the call on which stream to follow can be challenging, so if you need additional insight and support, speak to student advisors at a reputable higher education provider to help you,” Batchelor advises.

She says prospective students should also look beyond traditional law degrees and see what contemporary degrees might better align with their aspirations. For instance, The IIE LLB degree offered on its IIE Varsity College and IIE MSA campuses has a number of elective modules which are unique and new to the legal profession, such as Integrative Law and Street Law.

And the good news for Matriculants who do not meet the necessary entry requirements, is that it doesn't mean the end of the road for them if law was on their study radar, Batchelor says.

“You can still study law by way of completing a Higher Certificate like a Higher Certificate in Legal Studies and thereafter articulating to a Bachelor's Degree. The Higher Certificate will also empower you to work in a legal office environment after a year of study and upon qualification.”

Batchelor says anyone interested in Law as a career should ensure they do as well as possible in English in high school, as language is of crucial importance in the legal field. Not only to meet admission requirements, but because of their prospects of being successful in study and work. In general, most admission requirements for law degrees entail a Bachelor's pass and a specific marks requirement for English. Some (but not all) also have requirements for Maths, Maths Literacy or Technical Maths marks.

“When evaluating where you want to study law, be sure to find a higher education institution that is responsive to change – change in content as well as format of learning. Enquire about recent additions and change to curricula, and new ways of working. If the registrar's or student support office can't or won't respond to these questions, keep looking. You don't want to qualify with an outdated, purely academic qualification only to find you are not able to function in the real world.

“Also, ensure that the institution focuses strongly on work-integrated learning – the golden thread that must be woven throughout the curriculum to ensure graduates have the necessary skills to enter the industry competently and confidently.”



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Science – Must have 60% or above

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1. English (Home) – 5 Hours per Week
2. Afrikaans (FAL) – 5 Hours per Week
3. Maths – 10 Hours per Week
4. Science – 10 Hours per Week
5. Life Orientation – 2 Hours per Week

CHOICE SUBJECTS (20 CREDITS EACH)

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