

Vol. 4 No. 10 October 2018



# Magazine EDUCATION

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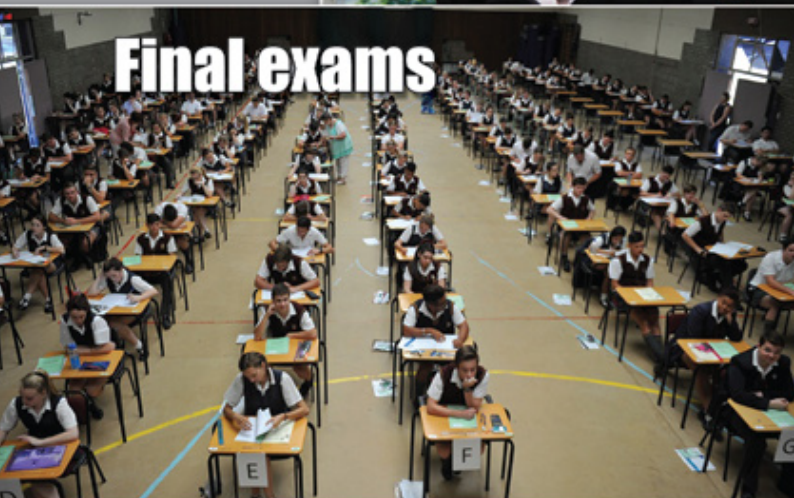


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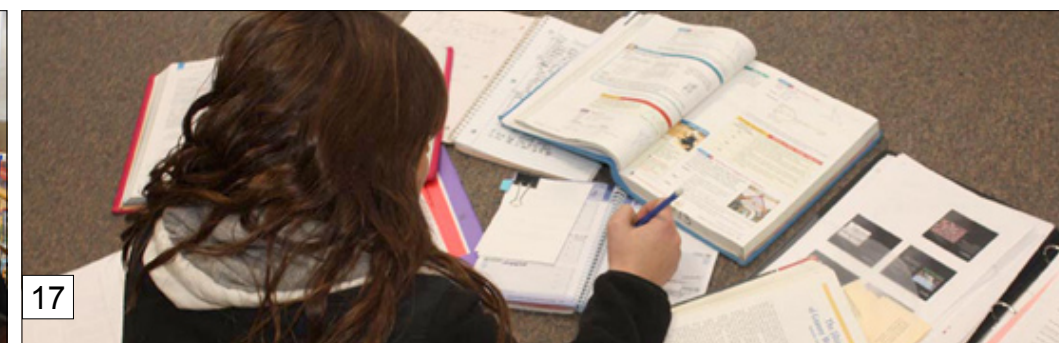
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## Editor's column

### Teachers & technology – the awarding of excellence

Not forgetting our roots, *The Mighty Pen EDUCATION* magazine (TMP) evolved from and through the groundbreaking digital learning initiatives piloted by Sunward Park High School (SPHS) – the Gauteng Education MEC's "blueprint e-learning school".

With this in mind we would like to congratulate Mr Laurence Keulder (38) for being awarded third place at the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the National Teaching Awards (NTA) in the category of *Excellence in Technology – Enhanced, Teaching and Learning*, held in Johannesburg on Friday 2 November 2018.



(From left) SPHS Principal Mrs ASH Peens, Mr L Keulder and Awards Adjudicator Mrs N Duda

The focus of this category is to integrate technology in day to day classroom teaching activities by teachers in public schools, mainstream and full service schools.

The National Teaching Awards scheme was conceptualised and launched in 2000 and is one of the ways in which the Department of Basic Education acknowledges and encourages dedicated and caring teachers in their efforts to develop each learner as a citizen of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. Some of the objectives of the Awards include raising the public image of the teaching profession; honouring dedicated creative and effective teachers and schools; encouraging best practice and to afford South Africans the opportunity to publicly say *thank you* to all outstanding teams or individual teachers in schools.

Mr Keulder was nominated for the Awards by his facilitator, Maxi Mooke, and is a firm believer that ICT in education is "creating new opportunities that were not available before."

He explains that practices such as instant testing and intervention are now possible. Multimedia allows learners not just to learn, but to understand their work in 5 minutes – which previously would take an hour to teach. Printing of 3D models for his subjects of Life Science and Natural Science are also used. "The possibilities are endless".

When asked about his secret to success as an educator, Mr Keulder replied: "Only by the grace of God can we do what we do. We have to depend on Him to be able to guide our learners to a better future."

#### Yours in education

**Janos Bozsik**  
Editor



Some of the Award winners with (centre) Gauteng Education MEC, Mr Panyaza Lesufi



## Literacy is only one side of the development coin

Often referred to as a silent disability, poor-quality and low levels of literacy hinder personal growth and limit opportunities. Collectively, they perpetuate poverty and inequality, and can constrain entire economies. But literacy is only one side of the development coin.

In a world rapidly evolving and advancing technologically, the other half is the nurturing of skills. Investing in both is critical to the advancement of individuals, communities and countries.

As the world marked International Literacy Day on 8 September, we were given reason to pause and reflect on the status of literacy in South Africa. If the numbers are anything to go by, South Africa is in a better position than it has been for some time. In the 15 years between 2002 and 2017, Stats SA reports that the percentage of people over the age of 20 who were regarded as functionally illiterate dropped from 28.5% to 13.7%.

But this does not mean that young adults are adequately prepared for further learning or employment, or that they are equipped with the additional skills necessary for them to compete and succeed in the global economy.

The definition of "functional literacy" only indicates an education of Grade 7 or above, and not an individual's ability to read and write at a level suitable to acquire and maintain a job. In fact, South Africa's leading adult education and training (AET) institutions continue to supply literacy training at levels that are below Grade 9, and constantly have to create skills-related programmes.

And South Africa is not alone; this tandem issue is a global phenomenon. It's no mistake that the theme of International Literacy Day 2018 was "literacy and skills development".

### Linking literacy and skills

"In order to find a place in society, get a job, and respond to social, economic and environmental challenges, traditional literacy and numeracy skills are no longer enough; new skills, including in information and communication technology, are becoming increasingly necessary," says Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO's Director General.

The skills required to succeed professionally include so-called soft skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively, work in a team and think critically, and the hard skills that require deliberate instruction and training. The latter ranges from basic computer skills, which are essential for most positions (or at least, for acquiring them), to anything from knowing how to weld to knowing how to code. Without these skills, doors remain closed to prospective employees.

This places additional pressure on educational institutions (including AET entities), non-governmental organisations and businesses to properly train and skill their learners, students, beneficiaries and employees. In order to be successful, this task has to be undertaken collectively, and in as innovative and integrated way as possible.



### The importance of an innovative and integrated approach to learning

As technology makes demands on literacy and skills development, perhaps the best solution is to use technology to improve the way we learn and teach.

If used effectively, educational and skills development programmes based on technology have the capacity to access learners across all levels, subjects and geographic locations. They also provide a consistent level in the quality of instruction, and are not dependent on the qualifications and abilities of facilitators, which inevitably vary.

As this way of thinking gains momentum, programmes are being developed that make learning interesting, engaging and relevant in a technologically driven and demanding world. The most effective literacy and skills development programmes are using a combination of high-quality computer and paper-based course material, disseminated through a variety of media.

For example, Media Works' newly launched Accelerate Pro programme uses textbooks, which contain QR codes, to provide learners with access to short multimedia lessons via their mobile phones. A first for South Africa, these 'Bubbles', as they are called, explain complicated concepts and offer practical examples, thereby facilitating learning and improving understanding.

>> to page 4

>> from page 3



In order to be meaningful and beneficial, learning programmes need to integrate innovative technological tools. Such approaches have the capacity not only to improve the fundamentals of literacy, but also to teach a wide variety of skills, too.

Effective literacy and skills development programmes require perseverance and continuous adaptation. Embracing this concept is the cornerstone of development. ▲



### A lifelong approach to learning

Perhaps, the first step to transforming literacy and learning in South Africa is enhancing the collective understanding that learning is a lifelong activity. It is facilitated by a variety of actors and influences, programmes and opportunities, and needs to remain a constant strategic priority for all parties committed to sustained progress.

“Preparing young people and adults for jobs, the majority of which have not yet been invented, is a challenge,” adds Azoulay. “Accessing lifelong learning, taking advantage of pathways between different forms of training, and benefiting from greater opportunities for mobility has thus become indispensable.”

## e-Learning platform for aviation training

At Cranfield Aviation Training over 6 000 students are certified per year. With over 80 courses available to all flight deck, cabin crew personnel and flight engineers, Cranfield has remained relevant and embraced all advancements in the aviation industry over the past 20 years. This is made evident with its recent training addition, a remote pilot license training for drones.



Paul Hanly,  
Co-Founder of New  
Leaf Technologies

“We see a huge demand internationally for human factor training in other industries such as mining as well as oil and gas. Our goal is to take these courses outside of the aviation industry using the aNewSpring platform”, says Tebbit.

Paul Hanly, Co-Founder of New Leaf Technologies says: “We are excited about this project and look forward to the results that we know e-learning will bring to this traditionally conservative industry. We see huge benefits for people like pilots and cabin crew who are often out of the country and can now do a large amount of their recurrency training remotely, in their own time.” ▲

“We realised that the modern day learner is no longer content with training in a classroom environment, says Mandy Tebbit, Director for Cranfield Aviation Training. “To ensure our longevity as the leading provider of training in aviation, we needed to meet the demands of the new learner and embarked on a search for an e-learning platform that was feature rich yet cost-effective, and selected aNewSpring.”

She says that today’s learners want the flexibility and convenience that anywhere, anytime learning provides: “The classroom element will never disappear completely especially when it comes to courses that have a practical component. It also remains a preferred method among some of our older members when completing their annual recurrency training.”

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has given Cranfield Aviation the initial go-ahead to put six of its courses on the e-learning platform. Tebbit says that the training provider is confident that once the CAA see the results and benefits that online learning provides, approval for other non-practical courses will follow.

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## Ensuring ROI on your Professional Development Investment

As a teacher investing time, money and effort into Professional Development, it is important that you get value out of it. Consider the following when you choose your next digital education training.

A business looks for a monetary return on investment, but for teachers, the return on investment must come from the benefits received from the training. Consider this formula:

Benefit = Quality / Time x Costs

The training must benefit the teacher in the following ways. Personally, the teacher must enjoy growth at intellectual and emotional levels to allow them to feel great about themselves and their jobs. Professionally, the teacher must benefit with easier teaching, improved outcomes and the status that comes with this success.

When the teacher receives high quality professional development, others benefit too. The learners receive benefits like better career prospects and increased lifetime earnings because of their improved outcomes. And the whole education system then improves too.

**How can these benefits be achieved?**  
Research shows that quality Professional Development has the following characteristics:

- a focus on content
- active teacher participation
- alignment with teachers' teaching goals

- opportunities for higher order thinking and collaboration including the chance to reflect on the learning
- adequate training time.

Training is one thing but taking the learning back to the classroom is another. Research shows that there are several factors that come into play when it comes to teachers using the learning in the classroom. These must be considered in the design of the training to ensure its quality:

- teachers' attitudes and beliefs about, and philosophical alignment with, the PD
- teacher perceptions of, and actual support from school leadership
- teacher mindset – a change mindset is critical
- teacher life stage. A teacher nearing retirement is going to have different personal goals to a young one raring to rise up the ranks.

**Quality has to be weighed against two critical issues – time and cost.**

Time taken to do the training comes from class time (which is counterintuitive to improving educational outcomes) or from life (the time the teacher has to do marking, prep, and day-to-day living).

Research shows that adequate training time for positive impact on the educational outcomes of learners is at least 5 hours in length, and ideally 49 hours in length. Costs include the actual financial costs as

well as the effort required to do the training. Resources to do the training, and to use the training back in class must be factored in.

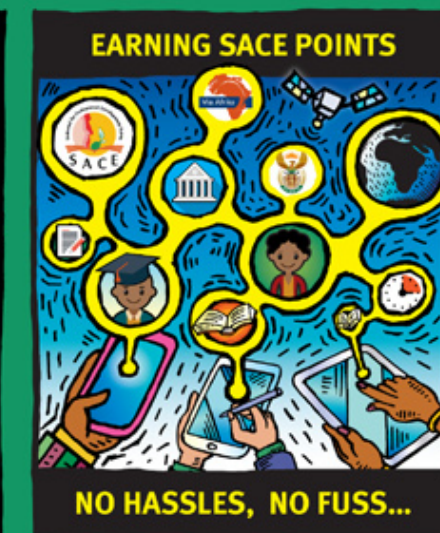
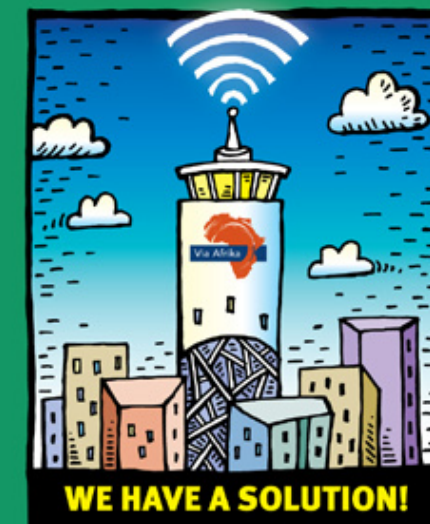
At Via Afrika we have been working hard at making sure that we are able to offer teachers the benefits of training by examining how we can get the quality, time and cost equation right.

The Via Afrika Digital Education Academy offers training for implementing digital education from developing a change mindset, through getting going with a device all the way to advanced digital education implementation. There is over 72 hours of digital education training, which the teacher can do in bite-sized pieces when she has a moment. The online system allows her to do a few minutes at a time and is supported with notes to keep her on track.

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**Have teachers found benefit in this Professional Development?**  
(Results of a pilot of the VADEA Online platform, 2018)

When asked whether teachers felt that because of this training, their knowledge of how technology can be used in the classroom to improve learning and teaching has increased, more than 55% indicated that their knowledge increased a lot. More than 29% of teachers said it increased a great deal. More than 70% of teachers agree with the statement that in doing this training, they think their learners will demonstrate improved learning outcomes, while more than 11% strongly agree with the statement.



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# Media Works' new programme takes adult education in SA to the next level

Adult Education and Training (AET) specialists Media Works have launched **Accelerate Pro**, an update of their flagship Accelerate programme – the leading and most widely used AET programme in South Africa.

Equipping adult learners with vital communication and numerical skills, **Accelerate Pro** is a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 1 programme that uses a combination of computer-assisted and face-to-face training methodologies designed to meet the literacy needs of adult learners in our country.

The programme is an update of Media Works' groundbreaking Accelerate programme, which has been used as an educational training tool for adults, throughout South Africa, for over 22 years.

"Since first launching our Accelerate programme, we have constantly been making adjustments and improvements to meet the needs of South Africa's adult learners. **Accelerate Pro** is an exciting and important next step, which takes AET learning material – both the content and the way it's presented – to a whole new level," says Jackie Carroll, CEO of Media Works.

**Accelerate Pro** harnesses and fine tunes best-practice solutions in blended learning. Through implementing new Quick Response (QR) code technology, called 'Bubbles', within the textbook pages, learners now have access to short multimedia lessons via their mobile phone.

The textbooks are also now in full-colour and boast an engaging new layout. The computer-based course material has also been redesigned and formatted to include rich and vibrant graphics, making the course material more interactive than ever before.

There have been curriculum updates across all areas, to make the content pertinent to today's adult learners. And, what's exciting is that the **Accelerate Pro** South African language textbooks – isiZulu, Sesotho, Setswana and Afrikaans – now have 'Bubbles' technology within their pages. This is a first for adult education in South Africa.

"There is a need for updated and improved AET material in South Africa, and we are proud to be leading the way in this regard. Our target audience is ever-changing, and the content needs to adjust to keep relevant to the modern learner. Gone are the age-old traditional ways of teaching and learning. A learner will not be a passive passenger, but will rather be able to drive their own learning experience," Carroll continues.

## The new Accelerate Pro programme includes

1. High quality computer- and paper-based course material delivered to learners through a combination of innovative media and technologies
2. QR codes within learner workbooks that link to 'Bubbles', which contain short, well-contained lesson summaries and overviews, which learners can easily access on their mobile devices

3. Dedicated Accelerate Pro facilitators who expertly guide and support learners through the course material
4. A dynamic learning management system (LMS) equipped with clearly outlined lesson plans, outcomes and objectives to help facilitators prepare for and facilitate learning
5. A Facilitators Guide that provides facilitators with ideas for remediation and extensions to help challenge learners where necessary

Serving South Africa for over two decades, Media Works has a national footprint and track record of developing and delivering education programmes in line with industry and employer needs.

Media Works looks forward to enhancing AET learning in South Africa through **Accelerate Pro**, assisting companies to upskill and empower their workforce. The holistic learning approach ensures that learners become equipped with the necessary literacy and mathematical skills to succeed in the workforce – while also developing the life skills needed to be and feel their very best. ▲

*If you are interested in  
accessing Accelerate Pro for your  
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# SAIPA announces top performers in 2018 National Accounting Olympiad

The South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA) has announced the names of the pupils from grade 11 and 12 who took the top 3 positions in its 2018 National Accounting Olympiad. The winners were honoured at a prestigious award ceremony held on 11th October at the Wanderer's Club in Illovo, Johannesburg. The students, their teachers and their schools were recognised and awarded prizes before an audience of peers and accounting veterans.

**Z**obuzwe Ngobese, Marketing and Business Development Executive at SAIPA says the competition has grown in popularity over the years, with more schools taking part than ever. "We're very happy with the enthusiastic response we received from all over the country," he says. "It will make a big difference to the future of accounting and the quality of the profession."

## Winners and champions

**The Grade 12 group**, Ashraf Moosa of Scottburgh High School in Kwazulu-Natal took 1st place with 95%. In 2nd place was Razeen Parker of Rondebosch Boys High in Western Cape with 94%. 3rd place was a four-way tie between Deelan Vanmari of Westville Boys High School in KwaZulu-Natal, Ahmad Mohamed of Orient Islamic School in KwaZulu-Natal, Nikiwe Dube of Edenglen High School in Gauteng, and Evashen Pillay of Stanger Manor Secondary in Kwazulu-Natal, who all achieved 92%.

**The Grade 11 category** saw a three-way tie for 1st place between Mohammed Mowzer of Fairbairn College in Western Cape, Kristine Becker of Richards Bay Christian School in Kwazulu-Natal and Timothy Murphy of Rondebosch Boys High in Western Cape, all scoring 91%. Trishane Naidoo of Avonford Secondary School in Kwazulu-Natal took 2nd place with 90%. And there was yet another three-way tie for 3rd place between Justin Knopfmacher of King David High School in Gauteng, Juan de Kock of Rondebosch Boys High in Western Cape, and Jada Freeman of Stirling High in Eastern Cape, with 89%.

## Notable achievements

Rondebosch Boys High must be commended for placing one pupil from grade 12 and two from grade 11 among the top performers. But the standout of the competition must be Kwazulu-Natal with no less than 6 pupils taking spots out of the total 13. "I don't know what their secret is," says Ngobese, "but with almost half the winners, they'll be the province to watch in next year's Olympiad."

## Creating accountants

The National Accounting Olympiad is just one of SAIPA's initiatives meant to drive the growth of the profession. "South Africa needs accountants," says Ngobese. "The number of school goers choosing the required subjects this year will determine the size of the accounting workforce in five to six years from now." SAIPA, therefore, has several active programmes aimed at ensuring



Grade 11 NAO winners



Grade 12 NAO winners

the nation's future needs are being addressed today.

Accounting is one of the top professions in the world, offering excellent prospects, job security and personal fulfilment to millions of people in South Africa and worldwide. Ngobese encourages school students with an aptitude for mathematics and accounting to choose this exciting career and work hard towards becoming a Professional Accountant (SA). "They will never regret it," he assures. ▲

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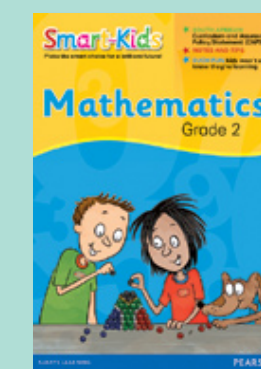
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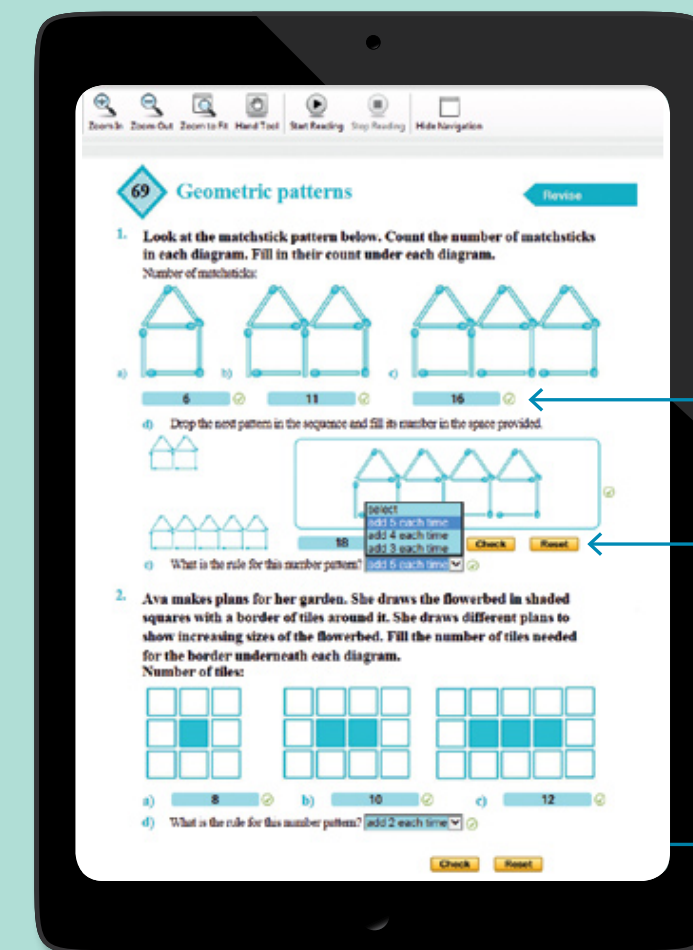
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# A solution for the lack of sanitation in SA schools

South Africans can now help put a stop to the sanitation crisis simply by buying specially marked packs of Baby Soft® White 9s. Proceeds from each sale will be used by Kimberly-Clark, in partnership with Baby Soft® and WaterAid, to construct toilets and handwashing facilities through the *Toilets Change Lives* programme.

These will be built at several schools in Limpopo where, according to Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga, 932 schools have inadequate pit latrines for the children to use.

More people worldwide have access to a mobile phone than clean, safe toilets. In fact, one in three individuals are excluded from this basic human right. With approximately 2.3 billion people not having access to basic sanitation facilities such as toilets or latrines – 892 million of whom are forced to relieve themselves in the open – the devastating impact of this is the spread of disease and deaths that could have been prevented had they had access to proper sanitation.

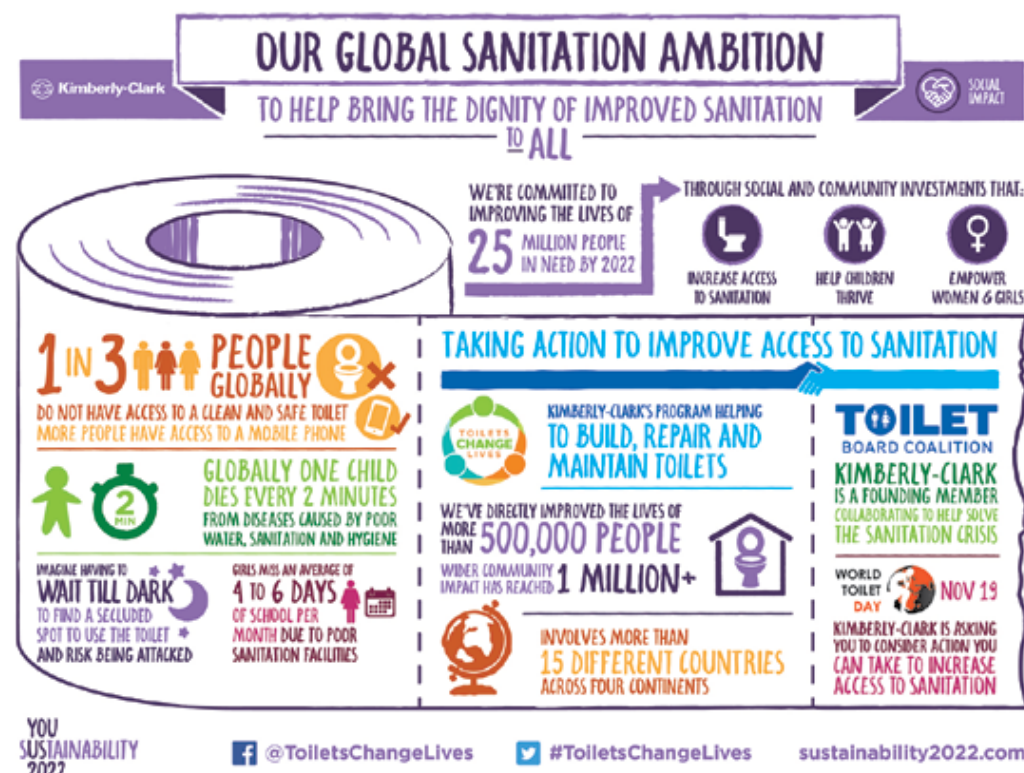
Through the Toilets Change Lives programme, Kimberly-Clark – in collaboration with NGOs such as WaterAid – is investing in programmes that build, repair and maintain toilet infrastructure in schools as well as teach communities safe hygiene practices and establish local capacity to sustain these services. Toilets Change Lives is one of several projects currently being implemented by the Toilet Board Coalition, a group of leading companies including Kimberly-Clark, government agencies, sanitation experts and non-profit organisations that aims to develop commercially sustainable and scalable solutions that address the sanitation crisis.

## Safe & hygienic schools

John Clark, Marketing Director of Kimberly-Clark South Africa, says: “The inadequate pit latrines in many South African schools are unsafe, unsanitary and undignified. Poor sanitation can lead to diarrhoea – the leading cause of children’s deaths under the age of five in our country. Furthermore, a recent report found that 630 million children globally do not have a decent toilet at school, affecting their education, especially for adolescent girls who often skip class during menstruation or drop out of school altogether if there are no decent toilet facilities.

“Improving access to clean water and decent toilets helps keep children healthy and in school. Our aim with this pilot project is to restore dignity and help children to thrive.”

Robert Kampala, WaterAid’s Regional Director for Southern Africa, said: “We’re delighted to be working with Kimberly-Clark on this project to improve sanitation for thousands of schoolchildren. Through this project, we hope to create a model for sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure, as well as behaviour change in schools in South Africa, improving day to day life for many and showing how toilets can change lives.”



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## An Open Letter To My Teacher



Dear Teacher,

I think it's time I told you why I have been acting out at school and crying sometimes. I think you know that something is wrong, because you keep asking me, "What's the matter?" The reason I haven't told you before is that I can't talk to you in the hallway with all the other kids staring at me - and until now, I didn't feel like I could talk to anybody about it.

I'm worried about my schoolwork. I keep getting in trouble for not doing my homework, and not listening in class. Sometimes I am so scared that I just get mad at everybody. I don't mean to yell. I just feel like everyone is picking on me at home and at school.

You see, my dad has a drinking problem. It's called "alcoholism." It means that he can't control his drinking. He comes home some nights really drunk and yells at all of us. Then Mom yells back at him for being drunk and spending all the money. Sometimes he hits her, or my sister and me for no reason, just because he is drunk.

Sometimes my sister and I are so scared that we hide in our room.

I used to hate my mom and dad for all that - Mom for yelling at Dad and making him even madder, and Dad for his drinking. I don't hate them anymore because I found out why they were like that.

One day a lady came and talked to my mom, and I listened, too. She was the one who explained to us what alcoholism is. I learned that my dad was not horrible, just sick. He has a disease called alcoholism. She told us that when there is someone in the house with a drinking problem, the whole family gets hurt by it. She also told my mom about Al-Anon. That is where families and friends of problem drinkers go to understand the disease of alcoholism and how they can stop being so scared and mad all the time.

Now Mom goes to Al-Anon. It works, too. Mom doesn't scream at Dad or us as much anymore. I go to Alateen, that's for kids affected by someone else's drinking. Sometimes we have friends that drink too. Now I understand, and it feels good not to be the only one with my kind of problem.

I think that teachers should know about alcoholism, because then they would understand kids like me. If you know of any kids who might have a problem with a drinking parent or a drinking friend, you could tell them where they can get help. It really helped me.

Your Student



\*\* This letter has been copied from [www.alanon.org](http://www.alanon.org). Alateen is a recovery group for adolescents ages 9 to 19 that helps children and teenagers who are relatives or friends of alcoholics cope with the issues of alcoholism that are affecting their lives in some way. Alateen was founded in 1957 as a part of its parent organisation, Al-Anon Family Groups. Every Alateen group is sponsored by an active Al-Anon member who provides guidance and support for its meetings. The structure of Alateen's meetings is based on the Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service (based on the Alcoholics Anonymous

model), and each sponsor acts as a guide to help the group stay focused on its goals.

**For more information please contact:**  
[alanongso@iafrica.com](mailto:alanongso@iafrica.com) /  
**24 hr Helpline – 0861 25 66 66 /**  
[www.alanon.org.za](http://www.alanon.org.za) ▲

## 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. **It is NOT for teens who already have a substance abuse problem**

#### 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.**

#### Where Alateens Meet

Alateen groups meet in church halls, school rooms, or other suitable places (often in the same building as an Al-Anon group, but in a separate room as **Alateen meetings are CLOSED to non-certified adults**).

#### Alateen Literature

Members are encouraged to read Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature and materials. Written from members' personal sharings, these recovery tools can help them deal with their problems.

\*\*\*\*\*

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.*



# How to optimally manage your time and life during final exams

The bulk of studying should now be over, and the limited time available during the exams should be strategically managed, an education expert says.

“The Matric exams represent the culmination of 12 years of hard work, and will play an important part in determining what options are open to you after school,” says Wonga Ntshinga, Senior Head of Programme: Faculty of ICT at The Independent Institute of Education (IIE).

“But even though the final exams are an undeniably important milestone, learners shouldn’t become overwhelmed in the face of what lies ahead, and instead enter this period with a holistic strategy to perform at their best. Essentially, now is the time to take charge of the challenging exam sessions.”

## Get organised

Just before you enter the exam period is a good time to review your study schedule. What work do you still need to cover, and how much time will you have between papers? Draw up a new roster taking into account the realities of the next few weeks and ensure you stick to it.

Create a neat working environment and a clear plan for what you need to do and study every day, and ensure that you have all the necessary materials sorted and on hand.

## Narrow down your reviewing

Once you enter the exam period, you should have adequately covered all your materials. With little time available between papers, you must now focus your attention on the sections of work that are almost certainly going to be tested and master them, rather than trying to re-read all your textbooks in their entirety.

## Breathe, and get your head in the right space

Your biggest weapon right now is the ability to remain calm and perform under pressure. Download one of the many mindfulness apps available online (Headspace is a good one), and invest 5 to 10 minutes in calming down your nerves before you step into the exam room. Managing your anxiety ahead of each paper will go a long way towards helping you avoid mind blanks during the exam.

## Stay healthy

Don’t start stress-eating or staying up into the early morning hours before an exam to cram. No matter how hard you worked, if your body and mind are



tired and worn out, you won’t be able to accurately reflect your effort in your papers.

Take regular scheduled breaks, get plenty of water, exercise and sleep, and ensure you eat as healthy as possible.

## Don’t stress about papers already written, but don’t relax too soon either

As the exam progresses and the list of subjects you still need to write become shorter and shorter, don’t start relaxing too soon. Keeping the focus right until the end and working for each mark can mean the difference between being accepted into the institution and course of your choice, or having to look at other options.

On the other hand, if things didn’t go well in one subject, let it go and focus on what lies ahead. Stop stressing about the subjects you’ve already written, because there is nothing more you can do about those results. You can, however, still make up for a disappointment by focusing and performing as well as possible in upcoming papers.

## Defer your concerns, but keep the end goal in mind

What if I don’t pass as well as I need to? Have I left applying to university too late? Don’t let questions such as these take up mental energy during the exams. Instead, keep a laser focus on the task at hand – doing as well as possible on each paper, and earning every point you possibly can.

It is helpful to continually visualise your plans for next year, and match that dream with the performance you need to get there. But don’t let these motivational thoughts turn negative. After the exams, you still have time to investigate all your study options, and to match your interests and performance to the amazing higher education paths available.

“It is worth taking stock now of where you are, determining what still needs to be done, and getting to a space where you are able to stay strong, motivated and effective right until the end of the exams,” says Ntshinga.

“Matric learners have a challenging yet exciting few weeks ahead of them, and going into it with the right frame of mind and a clear-cut strategy can mean the difference between average performance and an exceptional one.”



# Writing exams fearlessly

If you had to listen to the conversations that are taking place about the Matric exams, you will find that they are most often rooted in fear.

“Learners, Parents and even Teachers experience moments of fear when they focus on what is needed to successfully navigate the challenges associated with writing exams. Fear of not being sufficiently prepared, fear of not understanding all the work, fear of going ‘blank’ during the exam, fear of failure,” explains Cindy Glass, Director and Co-founder of Step Up Education Centres. “It is unquestionable that fear comes knocking at this time, but it is also essential that we understand that fear, given the opportunity, will slow us down and even stop us from achieving our goals in the exams.”

Cindy shares some practical tips to help tackle the current Matric exams, fearlessly:

- Know that you are capable and even though the task ahead may seem insurmountable, you have within you the power to make it work for you. Do not look back at what you believe have been your failures in the past – focus only on doing what it takes to achieve the best that you can in the next few weeks.
- Use a calendar and your exam timetable to plan what you will focus on each day and tick off completed tasks. This will keep you focused, bit by bit, on crossing that finish line successfully.
- Take some time for self-care. Get enough rest, choose to eat healthily, and get some exercise. This will keep you energised throughout the exam process.
- Be mindful of the company that you keep, even on social media. Hang out with people who are positive-thinkers, determined and hard working. You can respectfully distance yourself from negative-thinking people without having to explain yourself. Fearful people will inevitably assist you in allowing fear into your own life. Choose to keep yourself motivated by keeping company with motivated people.
- Do not allow yourself to believe in the impossibility of things. You can turn any challenges around by focusing on what you can achieve instead of what you believe you cannot.

- Study using past exam papers. Ask for help when you are unsure of something. Get to know the structures of exam papers and how the questions are asked. This will give you the confidence to write the exam.

Cindy concludes by reiterating “Know that fear will slow you down and even hurt your intentions of successfully completing the exams. When fear comes knocking at your door, do not let it in. Focus on the points above, take some deep breathes and you will see how fear loses interest and disappears. You can do this.”





# Degrees of success: why you need to consider studying further

Getting a foot in the door of an agency, business or organisation you'd really love to work for is not always as easy as putting on your Sunday best and flashing the interviewer your brightest, most charming smile. Often, what they're looking for is actually just a tertiary qualification, which is why many young people place more emphasis on obtaining an undergraduate degree.

However, the mistake so many people make is believing that an undergrad qualification is all they need to build a successful and fulfilling career. Most don't even consider the possibility of taking their studies further, and pursuing honours and post-graduate studies.

"The reality is that, while an undergraduate degree might make you stand out more among other less qualified candidates applying for a job, opting against honours or post-graduate studies robs you of bigger career opportunities, and limits your ability to make a real difference within your industry and the world at large," says Dr Carla Enslin, Head of Strategy & New Business Development at Vega.

"Because you're focused on a specific area of study, you'll also have the opportunity to collaborate with like-minded people in pursuit of the same or a similar career goal – perhaps you'll join forces to turn an innovative idea into a meaningful, award-winning reality? The possibilities at this stage are endless," she continues.

Post-graduate studies allow students to delve deeper into their chosen field and gather more in-depth knowledge, where undergraduate studies are designed to introduce you to concepts and new ways of thinking. The learning gained during post-graduate studies is therefore invaluable, as students develop the mental agility and capacity to make compelling arguments, as well as analyse and conceive meaningful solutions to challenges.

Resourcefulness, interpersonal skills, and practical and logical thinking are just some of the important skills that are honed during honours and postgraduate studies, contributing toward a wider, more all-encompassing view for personal as well as professional improvement.

## Are honours or post-graduate studies the right road for me?

The deeper, more meaningful learning and engagement that happens during honours and post-graduate study is rewarding – but only if your interest (and perhaps even passion) for your field of work is genuine. There's no sense choosing to study further because someone told you to – this is when



the work can become laborious and demotivating.

Enrol for the post-graduate programme of your choice when you have no doubts that you are genuinely compelled by the complexities and challenges of the field and its relation to the world around you.

For example, you may find that you're naturally inclined towards themes and issues that are relevant to your field, whether it's in current affairs and industry news or even the plot of a new TV series. The ideal post-graduate programme should then enable you to involve yourself in your field of choice to the fullest extent while honing your abilities and skills. It should also expose you to unique opportunities to apply advanced thinking into practice, to work on real-life briefs and projects, ideally participating in trans-disciplinary teams.

Pursuing an honours or post-graduate qualification is about so much more than boosting employability – it enables students to delve deeper than what they were able to do during undergraduate studies, thereby gaining vital skills and perspectives that not only boost their chances of getting that seat at the table, but also contributing something meaningful to their field. ▲



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# Public university or private?

## How to choose the right institution for you

There have been many developments in the higher education sector in past decades, notably a rise in the number of institutions from which prospective students can choose when considering their further education. Along with the increase in public universities, there has also been substantial growth in the private higher education sector.

**F**aced with this increase in choice, it is natural for young people to be anxious about their decision – should I go to a public university, or should I opt for a private higher education institution? A massive part of this concern is whether the qualification you receive after 3 or 4 years of study will be respected in the world of work, whether it will position you well to land your first job, and whether it will help you build the career of your dreams.

Prospective students are advised to look at the following when considering or reviewing higher education institutions:

### Accreditation

Most importantly, your institution must be registered and accredited. South Africa has a single quality assurance system and one National Qualifications Framework, which means that any institution offering a registered and accredited qualification – whether public university or private – is offering a qualification of equal standing. So if your institution is listed on the Department of Higher Education and Training's list of registered higher education institutions and colleges, you don't need to be concerned about whether the institution is called a university, a college, or a private higher education institution.

This is because the only difference between public (University) institutions and private higher education institutions – which purely as a result of regulations may not refer to themselves as private universities – is that the public institutions get some subsidy from the government while the private institutions don't.

### Employer recognition

The world of work has changed dramatically over the past decade, and the economic climate is tough. That means prospective students should make sure that their qualification and their choice of institution is well respected by employers and in the market. Generic 3-year degrees with no practical experience do not provide a strong competitive advantage after graduation.

One way of determining industry recognition of your institution, is to ask about its career fairs, when the country's top companies visit campuses to meet

students. If employers are lining up to meet the leaders of tomorrow at your institution, you can be assured that you are signing up for a quality education that is respected in the workplace.

### International recognition

Many students want to know that their qualifications will be internationally recognised. If this is important for you, you should ask your institution about international links and accreditation. Does your institution have links with international exchange programmes, or is it accredited by an independent international accreditation council? All good institutions should be able to provide satisfactory answers to your questions about your potential international opportunities.

### Class sizes and student support

Class sizes and student support are crucial for ensuring student success and successful transition into the world of work. Individual attention, and being more than a number, can dramatically influence student outcomes. But an institution's involvement should go further than quality lectures and success at exam time. Good institutions will have career centres which assist students and alumni beyond academics.

To really make the right choice in terms of the best grounding for your career dreams, you have to look beyond historical perceptions and gut feelings about which way is 'the best' way, and make sure your choice is based on the facts about what makes one institution and qualification stand out from the next one. ▲



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