

Four keys to improving the matric pass rate

By [Cindy Glass](#)

12 Jan 2018

Every year, teachers, principals, learners and parents focus on the preparation and writing of the final matric examinations and every year we are left feeling battered and disappointed at the less-than-desirable results. With a 75.1% national pass rate, this year was not much different to years past. Only three quarters of matriculants achieved success and this, despite, increased attempts to improve the outcome of the matric exams. Why is this? What sustainable solutions are there and how do we implement them? What are we missing in our efforts to fix this worrying trend?



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

1. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence skills are key to changing the way teachers and learners approach education. Studies have shown that prioritising the teaching of emotional intelligence skills improves our ability to take in and retain new information, study smarter, concentrate better, and it improves relationships in the school environment.

These skills include self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. How can effective learning take place when a learner or teacher does not see the value of who they are and, worse, lacks the motivation that is needed to engage in learning? Emotional intelligence skills improve self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Learners and teachers work with greater courage and determination and they get to feel more fulfilled and happier in the process. It is a win-win for all!

2. Training

Attention needs to be given to changing the way teachers are being trained. Focus needs to be less on the theoretical

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

3. Reduce admin

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

4. Get the basics right

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

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

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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