

E-learning is here to stay: Here's how to get the most out of it

By [Aunyana Mloisane](#), issued by [Optimi](#)

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If ever a single event was to highlight why schools should incorporate e-learning into their learning methodologies, it was Covid-19. Never before have so many contact-teaching schools been forced to introduce digital learning solutions so quickly and so comprehensively. A year later, with the pandemic still very much a part of our lives, it's clear that schools will continue to rely on e-learning - in full or in part - for some time to come.



While Covid has made the use of e-learning solutions necessary, their benefits extend well beyond the demands of the pandemic. As the new academic year gains momentum, here are five tips to help you make the most of the many opportunities they afford.

1. Consider e-learning as part of a broader change management process

In order to be effective, e-learning cannot be viewed in isolation. It requires that schools shift their approach to education in fundamental ways. Schools need to understand that e-learning isn't about replacing teachers, or leaving children to fend for themselves on the other side of a screen. Instead, it's about creating a holistic, productive learning environment that is adaptable and flexible and that continuously enhances children's learning experiences.

2. Provide your teachers with the necessary training

A critical part of this change management process involves providing teachers with the correct training, tools and resources. Teachers who have been

teaching the same way for many years are bound to find the online experience a bit disruptive initially. If they are properly upskilled, however, and they understand both how the e-learning process works and why it is important, they will be able to support their learners in turn.

3. Prioritise learners at every turn

Learners must always be placed at the centre of their own education. Teachers have and always will play a crucial role in this regard. And in the 21st-century classroom, teachers can use e-learning as a key tool to improve individualised teaching delivery.

E-learning helps teachers ensure that learners are achieving their intended outcomes, and that their learning experience is rich, integrated and meaningful. The monitoring and support that e-learning solutions provide, particularly for those that are part of the Optimi Classroom range of products, mean that teachers can quickly assess learners' level of engagement and understanding and intervene accordingly.

4. Engage actively with parents

Parents also need to be involved in their children's e-learning experience. One of the most important ways in which they can do this is by ensuring their children have access to a quiet, safe space where they can concentrate easily.

5. Take advantage of e-learning's flexibility

One of the most valuable advantages of e-learning is the flexibility it affords. Learners are invited to study at their own pace, and to revisit work as many times as necessary in order to understand it. Educators need to take full advantage of this flexibility, and to encourage learners to re-watch recorded classes and ask for help if they need any clarity.

Of course, the move to e-learning has shone a spotlight on the inequalities among South African schools. Those that already had e-learning systems in place, or were able to make the shift with relative ease, were at an enormous advantage over those whose educators and learners had neither the technical knowledge nor the infrastructure. If we are to educate all our learners fairly, we need to ensure that every single one has sustained access to online learning resources.

Public-private partnerships are a critical part of this, and already great gains have been seen where government has worked with private companies to equip schools and learners with the resources they need. Meaningful partnerships in this space will be critical for a long time to come.

As schools across the country further integrate e-learning into their educational processes, they are going to need to prioritise the buy-in of teachers, learners and parents. But with this buy-in secured, and with the right, high-quality learning solutions correctly implemented, it's likely that no learner will be left behind.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aunyana Mloisane is the chief business development officer of Optimi.

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