

3 ways tutors can help learners foster a love for STEM

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In South Africa, the development of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) skills is necessary for the modern age of advanced technology, but many learners often find these subjects particularly difficult to grasp.



This is due to a lack of adequate resources in the country's education system, as well as historical inequalities that have led to the majority of South Africans having to overcome so much more to get a decent education.

Fortunately, with the help of tutoring and support, many learners can fill the learning gap and even develop a newfound love for STEM subjects.

One good example is Investec's Promaths programme, which year-on-year accounts for 5–8% of our country's national distinctions. In the wake of Covid-19 lockdowns, Optimi Workplace's Tuta-Me helped migrate Promaths online to support over 2,000 learners who could no longer attend in-person classes.

In that year, the Grade 12 learners who wrote mathematics achieved a 99% pass rate (compared to a 53% national pass rate), with approximately 90% of these learners achieving 50% or more for the subject. The programme further yielded approximately 5% of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) schools' mathematics and sciences distinctions.



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The only way these kinds of results could be made possible during the pandemic was via online learning channels and with the help of tutoring.

Listed below then are three ways that tutors can help learners foster a love for STEM subjects.

Supportive and engaging educational resources

When learners are struggling to understand complex STEM subjects, they may need additional help and guidance. This support can come in the form of hiring a professional tutor or signing up for supplementary classes. By providing learners access to quality educational resources, they are more confident and motivated to learn.

With a tutor's expertise and support, learners can more readily understand difficult concepts. Supplemental classes can also be of great benefit in that they provide learners the opportunity to work on their skills through practice and review.

Added to this is also using mobile technologies and putting educational content in easily accessible online channels. If learners struggle with affordable data, making this content available in offline mode will also help hugely. If mobile networks do more to zero-rate educational content online, this will further assist learners in our country.



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Compelling mentorship programmes

Mentorship programmes can also help learners to develop a love for STEM subjects. A tutor can become a mentor for the learner, driving them to succeed, and helping learners feel more inspired and motivated to learn. Mentors can also provide valuable advice and assistance to those who need it, and can help to create a more supportive and encouraging learning environment.

Gaining confidence through practice

Sometimes, learners need that extra nudge of encouragement to keep going, and what better way than to start getting better results and feeling more confident in subjects such as maths and science? Sometimes it's about breaking negative thought patterns and helping the learner believe that through practice and repetition they can achieve success. This can help to keep learners motivated, and can instil a sense of pride and accomplishment in their achievements.

Tutoring and the inclusion of support in South Africa can be great sources of encouragement and enthusiasm for STEM learning.

Companies in South Africa can drive STEM advancement by sponsoring tutoring programmes as part of their CSI spend. At Optimi Workplace, we make it easy to uplift communities and empower young minds with STEM subjects through

programmes like Mobi-Tuta. As we continue to connect quality tutors with learners across the country and make it possible for learners to achieve their academic goals, we challenge corporations to step up and prioritise the advancement of STEM subjects.

By helping to uplift education, we will all benefit and have a more inclusive economy in years to come.

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