

Keep disrupting: advancing role of tech in education

Education is critical to moving South Africa forward. It can help to solve skills gaps and contribute towards decreasing unemployment and poverty, and growing GDP. Technology is a central enabler in this context, and can improve access to quality of and engagement with education for learners of all ages and backgrounds across a broad range of subjects.



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“Technology impacts education on multiple levels,” says Matthew Louw, corporate marketing supervisor at LG South Africa. “Not only are educators and learners producing and consuming education materials differently, but education itself is shifting because of technology. Different skills are required, because technology has made old methodologies or tools obsolete. Think of how slide rules were replaced by pocket calculators, and we now use an app on our phones. New teaching subjects have emerged for the digital age, from starting to teach coding at primary school level to offering courses in cyber security, data science and social media at tertiary education levels.”

Professor Yusuf Karodia, a founder of Mancosa and Regent Business School, [points out](#) that while digital education is vital to the country’s future, currently only about 28% of public schools in South Africa are using computers and other devices to enhance teaching and learning.

This may be due to a number of reasons. One remains access to technology and connectivity. Another could be that regulators, educators and parents remain suspicious of “edtech”, preferring traditional teaching methodologies.

This is beginning to change, however, with local education institutions beginning to [implement digital-centric or blended teaching models](#), such as the “flipped classroom”. [Teach Thought explains](#) this model as follows: “In this blended learning approach, face-to-face interaction is mixed with independent study via technology. Students watch pre-recorded videos at home, then come to school to do the homework armed with questions and at least some background knowledge.”

Louw believes that as these sorts of teaching methodologies prove themselves locally, as they have done abroad, and the demand for education continues to grow, more educational institutes, parents and students will embrace tech in education. “When people see the roles that technology can play, both in pure online learning environments, blended learning models and even traditional education spaces, they will start to understand the benefits on offer,” he says.

“We’ve moved from chalkboards to projectors to PowerPoint presentations, and beyond. Today, there are interactive screens available for classrooms, video content for learning in any location and a myriad of other tech applications in education – from digital administration (receiving notices via email or text) to having digital classroom signage to show what’s happening in a particular venue at any given time. Like every other industry, education will continue to be disrupted by technology.”

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