

Why SA needs to embrace, incorporate immersive learning

Immersive learning will fundamentally change the way young South Africans absorb information, and forms an integral part of the learning revolution the country needs to embark on to keep up with the demands of the future.



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According to Marco Rosa, managing director at Formula D, immersive learning has been scientifically proven as one of the most effective ways to learn. Formula D is an interactive experience design firm that seeks to make learning effective, accessible and fun using interactive strategies, technologies and game design principles.

He explains that immersive learning using virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) – an interactive computer generated experience that takes place within a stimulated 3D 360 degree environment, refers to a virtual or physical environment that completely immerses a child or an adult in content in a way that allows for no distractions. It's tech-driven, interactive and engaging and encourages a different, contemporary way of learning. Rosa recently returned to Cape Town after presenting a talk on immersive learning at a World Forum in the Middle East. His talk touched on the future VR tech developments, mixed reality and the current challenges of the tech.

“Immersive learning needs to play an even bigger role in the way we educate the youth. It's a lot better if teachers can virtually take kids to the place they're trying to teach them about, instead of simply showing it to them on a piece of paper or even a screen. The saying 'Tell me and I forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn' really does ring true, and is especially important for millennials and generation Z,” he says.

Rosa says VR is on the brink of completely transforming the face of learning around the globe in unfathomable ways. Once it becomes more accessible, especially in developing nations like South Africa and other sub-Saharan African countries, it will have the power to do the same here.

“When we reach the point where VR is ubiquitous, hyper real, and the tools for creating the content widely available and easy to use, we’ll have so much immersive and interactive educational content at our fingertips that it will change the fabric of our society,” Rosa says.

However, it’s currently not easy to create immersive learning experiences, they’re tech intensive and often quite complex, but will become easier as the concept is more widely embraced and the tools and processes to create the content become more user-friendly. He says South Africa is far behind when it comes to making use of immersive learning, and the only way to catch-up is if corporate SA comes on-board.

“We can fast-track this much-needed process if the private sector gets involved. Implementing CSI initiatives and other immersive learning programmes is needed in order to develop interventions that can scale and afford everyone an equal opportunity to access this type of learning with tech. Collectively we can get it right to fundamentally change the way everyone learns,” Rosa says.

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