

86% of SA parents want their kids to learn online *and* in classrooms

By [Philip von Ziegler](#)

23 Oct 2020

Recent lockdown conditions threw the gauntlet down at South Africa's education system: adapt to the online world quickly to keep up with the syllabus during unforeseen circumstances, or face stalling learning completely, compromising the future of South Africa's youth.



© Cathy Yeulet – [123RF.com](#)

Now that conditions have relaxed and most children are back at school intermittently, it's time to look at lessons learned, and see how the virtual and 'real' worlds can work together to enrich our children, giving them the knowledge they need now, and the skills they need for the future.

Smartick, a maths, coding and logic e-learning programme with advanced AI technology to adapt to each student's skills and progress, recently conducted a survey among parents of children in South Africa that use the platform, with findings highlighting that a balanced blend of online and traditional learning fits with the vision that most moms and dads have for their children's education.

While 70% parents felt that the pandemic will help people rethink the current education system, and consider digital learning programmes more seriously, an overwhelming 86% of responding parents said that they were in favour of a mixed learning model, blending traditional and digital methods, to be taught and managed at school.

Three-quarters of surveyed parents said that good-quality e-learning programmes provide their children with a more personalised and engaging learning experience, with 86% saying that they found maths learning online to be more effective than online lessons in the sciences, reading, and language.

However, despite this strong endorsement for online learning in maths, more than three-quarters of parents surveyed felt that their child's school had performed well during the pandemic, with 48% of respondents' children being at public schools, and just one third being at private schools.

A blend of online and traditional learning could overcome various challenges faced in the classroom. For example, children can concentrate on one task for two to five minutes per year of their age, although a particularly active child, or a child with learning disabilities, may have a shorter attention span.

Children also lose quickly lose interest in a subject that doesn't engage them, and boys and girls have different attention spans and rates of learning too. Changing things up a little and engaging children in shorter, more participative learning methods could see them achieving better results.

An AI-based adaptive learning programme makes sure that each child's learning experience is unique and adapts to their own skill level and pace, keeping them interested, challenged and engaged – and there are no workbooks that have to be marked by parents or teachers either.

A blended approach would also provide a pathway into a personalised learning approach, where schooling is no longer 'uniform learning' where age grading and common assessments emphasise that every child should be learning the same things at the same time and same pace.

Similarly, a blended approach would still position teachers as experts who can share expertise and softer skills, while online learning programmes offer access to diverse sources of knowledge and capability.

While traditional in-classroom learning still seems to be here to stay for most South Africans, a blended online and conventional approach may well be the best way we can prepare our children with the skills they need to succeed in a post-fourth industrial revolution world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Philip von Ziegler is the Smartick country manager for South Africa.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>