Part 5: Quality Teaching @ home

Statement by Minister Debbie Schäfer | 26 April 2020

With schools closing all over the world due to Covid-19, online or distance learning have become the new buzz words in many countries.

I am very aware of the public sentiment around online learning in South Africa. It is true that not all learners have access to online resources and equipment that can make distance learning possible. I have addressed this in previous parts of this series, and will continue to do so later this week.

This, however, cannot be a reason to stop the Department from advancing in this area, and to encourage all teachers and learners to use it, where they can.

The world has already shifted into a digital landscape, and while we have certainly made great strides in educating our teachers in e-learning over the past five years, we need more teachers to embrace e-learning during these very unusual times, and beyond.

I am not talking about teachers setting up elaborate online learning sites. I am referring to some of the most basic forms of technology or social media, which many South Africans have. These include the use of Whatsapp and Facebook for example.

The WCED has published a document which seeks to assist principals and teachers on how to harness the use of technology while learners are still at home.
(https://f3d3d181-c116-4916-98e1-e8d62066fbea.filesusr.com/ugd be1865_56627c368 82440939463f3d6c6a68b8c.pdf)

There are multiple platforms and tools for online teaching and learning that could be used. Some are more complex than others, while others are already used by many in our daily lives, but just for other purposes. Therefore, the WCED has put together some simple guides to up-skill teachers in basic, yet valuable, digital activities.

These guides cover the following:

LINKS:

- **How to use WhatsApp**
  https://f3d3d181-c116-4916-98e1-e8d62066fbea.filesusr.com/ugd/
  be1865_2f443031078b4c6f8b4343cca234d406.pdf

- **How to set up Google Classroom**
  https://f3d3d181-c116-4916-98e1-e8d62066fbea.filesusr.com/ugd/
  be1865_b7372224e011492a9b4c016859f92bc0.pdf

- **How to download videos from YouTube**
  https://f3d3d181-c116-4916-98e1-e8d62066fbea.filesusr.com/ugd/
  be1865_ddbb9d6a40434ad4a74e76fbd8dd620b.pdf

- **How to set up Facebook for learning & teaching**
  https://f3d3d181-c116-4916-98e1-e8d62066fbea.filesusr.com/ugd/
  be1865_6a6834da792f488e8e54a264aa6a4383.pdf

- **How to use MS Teams for Education**
  https://f3d3d181-c116-4916-98e1-e8d62066fbea.filesusr.com/ugd/
  be1865_116ea36eb3a2450abd238711b76c0a01.pdf

The guides are there to assist teachers in reaching their learners, where possible through sharing notes, lessons, activities, videos and assignments.

In addition to this, the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI) has developed a course on self-paced learning. The **Remote Teaching and Learning FOR TEACHERS** course covers five modules to cater for a variety of different needs and interests in online learning:-

- Module 1: DIY Home Classroom
- Module 2: Teaching Strategies
- Module 3: Finding Digital Content
- Module 4: Creating Content
- Module 5: Sharing Platforms

This course can be accessed on both computer and mobile devices at **https://wcedeteacher. wixsite.com/eteacher**, or via the School Closure Pack on the WCED ePortal.

Several other smaller "quick and digestible" training snaps will also be prepared and made available e.g. training for teachers on broadcast presenting and how to record with video.

In these unusual and disruptive times, each school should determine what is the best fit for their teachers and their learner context.

For some, it may be WhatsApp or Facebook. For another teacher, digital may not be an option at all.

As mentioned in Part 4 of the series, I indicated that the WCED is planning to send a survey to all schools to determine their digital needs. This has been distributed to principals and teachers. The results will give us a clearer picture of what is required from each school, grade, and even class.

I would like to encourage you to please read the stories of two teachers who are using technology as a means to connect with their learners using two different tools.

- **Teachers start Facebook group to support remote learning** (https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/news/teachers-start-facebook-group-support-remote-learning)

- **Teachers reach out to learners via WhatsApp** (https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/news/teachers-reach-out-learners-whatsapp)

- **Teacher gets inventive to enable remote learning** (https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/news/teachers-get-inventive-enable-remote-learning)

I would like to point out that Groendal Secondary and Klapmuts Primary School are both Quintile 1 schools. This means that they are no-fee schools classified to be in areas that serve the poorest communities.

These teachers have sought ways and means to connect with their learners despite the poverty levels that exist within their school communities. This is the kind of attitude that we like to see in our teachers.

While this might not be a possibility for every teacher and learner, we can at least try where the opportunities may possibly exist.

The first step is training oneself. We have now given our teachers the tools to do so.