

# Learners need creative-thinking, experiential problem-solving

Schools have an antiquated approach to education and both public and private schooling systems are failing to prepare a large number of children for real world work and business.



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While the quantity of education is increasing, it has done so at the expense of quality. The result is overanxious children who are under enormous pressure to perform consistently, without any regard for their strengths and weaknesses.

It seems there is no shaking the teacher-centred instruction approach that was introduced at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to address mass production requirements. This system boxes children into stringent categories that do not encourage the development of complex problem solving skills or creative thinking.

## More than university streaming needed

Jane Lyne-Kritzinger, md of Youth Dynamics (YDx) explains, “There is an obsession for children to prove they are academically ‘smart’, while real life doesn’t demand that of all our children. There are many vocations the country, and world, desperately need that the system does not cater for, or worse, has made obsolete... like technical schools. These seem to have disappeared for some reason in South Africa... in a climate that sees a huge number of young people unemployed and possibly unemployable because they have been led down a narrow road that dictates that university degrees are the superior route to a successful career.”

Grouping children by age instead of ability has led to the great calamity of large number of learners being promoted to the next grade when in fact, they should be kept back to grasp concepts and fundamentals before moving on to more complicated work. The result of sparing these children the ‘stigmatising distress’ of being kept back a year is that 47% of learners drop out of school in Grade 10, and of those that stay on, only 78% pass matric.

## Exploring an outcomes-based approach

Businesses strive to look ahead in order to forecast and plan, which should be the approach of the schooling system. An outcomes-based approach identifies the desired results and then works backwards to achieve them.

For example, schools should focus on harnessing the foundation of skills the country, and global economy, will need by continually developing the curriculum.

Research director at YDx, Andrea Kraushaar, adds, “Already now, experts are predicting there will be over 160 new jobs in the next 15 years that do not exist today. These relate to industries such as personal rapid transit systems, atmospheric water harvesters, commercial drones and other modern innovations.”

School is about children creating their identity, instead of choosing between the lesser evil of two or three mostly incompatible choices when it comes to subjects and types of schools.

“In Finland for instance, they have a very short school day, followed by school-sponsored extracurricular activities because they understand that learning happens mostly outside the classroom. They cater for all skill levels and strengths so that children get an opportunity to experience different cultural enrichment and skill-based activities that are forming the foundation of their adulthood,” continues Lyne-Kritzinger.

## **Predicting talent is long term**

“Predicting talent is not obvious in primary school. Someone that excels in soccer in the foundation years, for instance, could end up being trumped by others who develop a latent talent for the sport. However, if children are intrinsically motivated, they will find their strengths, as they experience learning in a non-stressful environment and become proficient in those skills so that by the time they leave school, they have a solid inclination for a particular vocation.

“In addition, they will be able to apply their aptitude to problem solving and think creatively with any newfound knowledge they garner all through life. Hence, schools, society and business need to embrace a host of diverse talent, interests and skills and encourage more educational and training opportunities.

“Let us prepare our children adequately for the real world by embracing and creating opportunities for individualism, creative-thinking and experiential problem-solving,” she concludes.

For more information, go to [www.ydx.co.za](http://www.ydx.co.za).