

No barriers to entry for digital learning

Newly-elected president, Cyril Ramaphosa says South Africa's success depends largely on its ability to capitalise on the demands of the 21st century, and using advanced technology effectively to help move the country forward is one of them.



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Richard Rayne, CEO of corporate learning solutions provider iLearn, agrees. He says South Africa is “absolutely” ready for digital transformation in learning. “It’s a reality the world over and we need to get on-board. If we delay, we will get left behind,” he says.

Rayne, who attended the Digital Learning Realities Research Conference 2018 in London last month, says the key take-home was simple – digital learning is gaining ground worldwide. He says research from the conference indicated that digital transformation in learning has surpassed that of HR in many organisations. A whopping 71% of global organisations indicated that digital transformation in learning is in progress and 20% say it’s in the planning phase. Only 4% of organisations say it’s not applicable to their business.

“These statistics speak for itself. Digital learning is on an upward trend around the globe and South Africa needs to be a part of it. With the dawn of the new millennium, it’s become the preferred way for people to communicate, learn and upskill themselves in areas where we need it most in SA,” Rayne says.

Most of the larger organisations in the country like banking institutions and insurance companies have embraced digital learning, Rayne says small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) need to come on-board too. “We need to position South African employers as world-class employers, and world-class employers provide employees with the necessary skills to grow and develop on a personal and professional level,” he says.

The good news is – there are no barriers to entry when it comes to digital learning, and learning platforms can be accessed easily at the office and even at home.

“It’s on-the-go type of learning and there are no limits to geographical locations, which means people from diverse communities can participate. All you need is a laptop computer or smartphone with internet to plug into the learning platform and you’ll be on your way,” he says.

He says placing the learner at the centre of the learning process is the first step towards creating learning environments for the future. iLearn has recently launched the first MICT SETA approved Blended Learning Learnership this year and Rayne says this learnership innovatively merges all the advantages of digital learning, with the “tried-and-tested benefits” of classroom learning in the NQF space. Furthermore, he says the organisation has just confirmed an exclusive partnership with Nextex Learning – developers of world class cloud-based online learning solutions, which will enable iLearn to roll-out its digital learning solutions using Nextex Learning’s LearningCloud platform. Breaking free from the constraints of the traditional Learning Management Systems, LearningCloud adopts an applications-based approach to provide learners with a more personalised and engaging environment in which to learn.

“Digital learning is extremely important for the age in which we live and necessary to make those giant strides with regard to upskilling and development. Employers, large and small need to channel more attention into it and make it a priority. It’s highly beneficial for the learner and the organisation,” Rayne says.

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