

I am a TVET lecturer. Here are suggestions for helping teachers and learners during Covid-19

By [Sean Butler](#)

30 Apr 2020

I am a lecturer at a TVET college and as Covid-19 has interrupted our year, my concern is for our students. Teachers around the world have moved online, posting lessons and material on the various available platforms. Educators are being innovative and learning how to use tools and apps to facilitate learning. There is also a new level of sharing taking place between educators and publishers which is quite inspiring.



The author has written to President Cyril Ramaphosa with three suggestions for making education accessible during the Covid-19 pandemic. Archive photo: Ashraf Hendricks / GroundUp

But I fear all this could be of little consequence to the majority of our learners if access to online material is not made available to all who are studying. That access to the internet can determine your future is being highlighted by this pandemic.

I am sure many educators share my experiences.

I held an online meeting for my Level 4 class but only two students could attend. I created videos and posted them online but not all were able to download them. I sent out documents for exercises but many do not have computers, printers, or data. Students without internet access are tragically being hindered from moving forward. This pandemic is revealing to us that internet access must be for all if we are to continue to rise as a nation.

We have to address this challenge with great urgency. We may have lost some time, but we do not have to lose the academic year. Here are three ideas:

- Most schools and colleges have a website where educators are able to post recorded lessons, audio files, slideshows, and documents. We need to make these educational websites freely accessible so students are not hindered by the need to buy data. Telkom has done so and other providers could easily follow suit. This must be done as a matter of urgency as every day lost sets students back even further.
- Many students need assistance getting technology which will give them access to the internet, namely smartphones, computers, and laptops. Surely we have companies willing and able to rise to this call?
- Finally, many lecturers and teachers need further training in teaching online best practices, how to operate different platforms, apps, and so on. This training can easily be done by our colleagues across the campuses who are currently using different applications.

These suggestions can disrupt the unacceptable disparity that exists between rich and poor. Getting technology to students could take some time, but there need not be a delay in opening educational websites as free portals. These are uncharted waters which I believe can provide us with an opportunity to create a national educational environment in which all can participate and all can benefit.

This is an edited version of a letter the author sent to President Cyril Ramaphosa.

This article was [originally published](#) on [GroundUp](#). Views expressed are not necessarily GroundUp's.

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