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# Five ways mobile technology is transforming online learning

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The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for online learning, with UNESCO reporting that one and a half billion students around the world were engaged in remote learning due to school closures in March 2020. While some learners have returned to schools and academic campuses, it's unlikely that education systems will return "back to normal" soon, if ever, as blended or hybrid learning with the help of technology can complement and extend current learning offerings. Unfortunately, in South Africa, not everyone has access to a laptop or PC to use as a remote learning device, but 78% of young people under 25 have the use of a mobile phone. This ubiquity, along with efforts to increase cellular connectivity, enables mobile technology to come to the fore in providing wider access to online educational resources necessary for hybrid learning.

At Vodacom, we have seen how much of a need there is for learners, teachers and parents to have convenient access to digital educational content and tools. Our e-School platform, a zero-rated online education portal for Grade R-12 learners, reached over one million registered users during the pandemic last year. Of these users, 63% access e-School via a smartphone.

There's more to mobile technology than rising up to the challenges of the pandemic. As an enabling, empowering and engaging educational tool, it has a key transformative role to play in online learning.

## Anywhere, anytime learning



While in-school learning has been disrupted by COVID-19, online technology has ensured that education remains continuous by facilitating information access wherever a learner or educator is located. The portability and proliferation of mobile phones increases the possibility of anywhere, anytime learning. This means that, with the help of digital apps, learners, parents and educators can easily and conveniently tap into educational resources.

Online learning is, however, reliant on reliable broadband coverage. This is why Vodacom zero-rated the e-School platform and provided data to university students during the pandemic to ensure that data costs are not a barrier to continuous education.

## Improve learning



Mobile technology allows access to a vast number of educational resources which can be packaged and aligned with current curricula to support educators and learners both inside and outside of the classroom. This can expand and deepen knowledge of course content and offer affordable access to education materials to improve learners' performance.

With mobile e-learning platforms, there is opportunity to learn smarter – by being able to study at a chosen pace, go back and revisit concepts, and accelerate through subjects without the limitations of a classroom setting or school timetable. On a mobile phone, parents can also actively be involved in the learning process – they can download material, track their children's development and connect easily with educators during remote learning. Furthermore, with mobile connectivity, educators can communicate real-time guidance and feedback to motivate and assist learners with their progress.

## Increase engagement

As we live in a world of devices and apps, mobile technology is a familiar way of interacting with others and our environment. For learners, this makes mobile learning more relevant and interesting, which can increase engagement and, in turn, increase knowledge retention.

Digital content also allows for interactivity and creativity in how material is presented and evaluated, to keep learning exciting and fun. For example, e-School has quizzes at the end of lessons to ensure learners have comprehended each topic, as well as rewards to track learning.



## Empower learners

Education through mobile technology gives learners greater control of their school experience, as they can connect to their own subjects at their own pace on their own device. This empowers them with greater autonomy in how they access knowledge, learn and complete tasks, as well as in applying ideas discussed in the classroom to their work.

## Build future-ready skills

As a country we need to prepare our youth to prosper in a digitally enabled future. Mobile educational platforms offer learners the opportunity to immerse themselves in technology so that they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to find careers in a work environment dominated by digital advancements.

Mobile e-learning also instils adaptability, learning and collaboration – much needed attributes in a future workforce that supports economic growth and local entrepreneurship.

As we continue to bridge the digital divide, online educational resources should be part of everyday education support, in or out of the classroom. Providing access to greater connectivity, mobile technology is leading the way in online learning, enabling students, teachers and parents to learn and teach smarter.

To register for Vodacom e-School users need to visit [www.vodacom.co.za/e-school](http://www.vodacom.co.za/e-school)

