

New tutoring programme to make maths fun again

Pearson South Africa has launched an innovative mathematics tutoring programme designed to improve each learner's mathematical skills using engaging and interactive methods.



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“Due to the immense pressure on schools in the country to achieve high pass rates, a vast number of schools are dropping students to mathematical literacy. This has severely damaged the quality of students that are entering the tertiary education system,” said Seshni Naicker, director of Business Development at Pearson South Africa. We have also found that because the curriculum is so broad and lacking in depth, learners are demoralised and demotivated to continue with the subject. This is why we are taking a fun approach to mathematics.”

The whole point of Math Tutor Programme (MTP) is to make maths interesting, engaging and to foster the confidence of the learners. “As is often the case, learners lack the confidence to master their skills, it’s their own inherent sense of self-worth that gives them a vague perception of the subject and makes them incapable of excelling in the subject.” What also sets this programme apart from the others on offer, according to Naicker, is the fact that it will be facilitated by a qualified maths teacher.



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“Other programmes utilise part-time student tutors. We have learned that irrespective of the quality of content on offer, if the tutor doesn’t have the necessary experience, it won’t work. We are committing to employing a full-time tutor, who has experience teaching in a South African classroom and comprehends what is needed to create an environment where the learners will understand the work,” she says.

The MTP is offered to grades 9 - 12 learners for two hours once a week. In addition, learners will receive a free optional lesson once a week, on either a Friday or Saturday, during which individual queries will be dealt with.

“Each learner starts off the programme by writing a diagnostic test so that our tutor can pinpoint exactly where the learner’s areas of difficulty lies. Based on the marks from the diagnostic test, they receive tailor-made content that will help them to improve. The programme is specifically designed to improve the level of the learner, irrespective of where they may be on the learning curve,” Naicker explained.



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The framework developed for the tutorship programme is based on the five steps to mathematics proficiency. “This approach believes that you cannot simply start a course by teaching content, you need to ensure there is conceptual understanding. In terms of the basics, you need to ensure that the learner can actually transfer their knowledge of the concept into the exercises that they are doing. We provide the link between real life scenarios so that it makes mathematics relevant.”

In addition to this, Pearson has also developed a digital program called X-Kit Mobile, which will teach learners how to engage in an interactive environment after each session. X-Kit mobile can be accessed on a laptop, tablet and the most basic cellphone.



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The pilot programme was launched in Durbanville and Cape Town, to Grade 9 (30) and Grade 11 (40) students. Naicker hopes to have enrolled 5000 students before the end of the first year. Pearson will soon be expanding the MTP to all 12 of its campuses in South Africa.

For more information on the MTP, visit: za.pearson.com/textbooks/grade-r-12/Math-Tutor-Programme.html.