

## **Education Versus Certification**

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It amazes me how most parents diverge from their core responsibility once they are confronted with the schooling of their children. Parents start with a family and teach the child everything until the child enters an institution (crèche, day-care, preschool or formal school). It is then when suddenly the parent doubts in their ability to continue with the process.

The reason for this insecurity lies in the change of focus. The focus changes from **educating the child to obtaining a certificate**. To be able to obtain the certificate that would give the parent the assurance that they have provided the best education to the child to enter the adult world they also renounce their educational role. In a way, they become spectators to a procedure where they, the parents are dismantled of (from) their authority. Parents would tolerate many unnecessary demands on their family, like being stuck in traffic for hours, homework until very late every day, wrong friends, strenuous schedules, exorbitant school fees and much more for the sake of meeting their goal to acquire a certificate. The question that is rarely asked is, "Are any of these sacrifices to the advantage of my child, other than attaining the certificate at the end of the road?"

With the current educational realities in South Africa, where the effectiveness of the education system is at stake and the matric certificate clearly does not give any security to get a work or future studies, many parents are challenged with their values in life and the value they have put in certification.

Matric is the term generally used when referring to the qualification a learner gets when finishing formal school training. A matric is often necessary to get a job or admission to further education, especially a matric with university exemption.

In the past matric was under control of the heads of universities and the purpose of the matric was to set a standard according to which a person got admitted into university. With the acceptance of the new constitution in 1994, the control over matric was assigned to the minister of Education. The minister of Education changed the matric so that it not just prescribes the standard but also the content. Hereby the matric became a mean through which the state's political ideology could be transferred to the learners. Due to this, there is a growing demand for alternative routes to get a matric.

Until 2008, anybody could come in off the street and write matric, and if you passed all the examinations you got the certificate. If you studied on your own (and many did) you could get matric for about R1000 including textbooks.

The minister then proposed regulations that would, as from 2008, allow *only* candidates who had been *full time* students at registered schools for Grade 10, 11 and 12 to write the matric examination.

Within this dispensation there are primarily two ways to obtaining a matric:

- Through obtaining an academic matric (NSC, International);
- Through an occupational course that is equivalent to a matric.

There are limited possibilities to do the "old matric", and in the future government is planning on adding an adult matric to the options available.

The most common academic matrics in South Africa is the National Senior Certificate (NSC) or Grade 12 and the international Cambridge. A GED (General Educational Development) or SATs (Scholastic Aptitude Tests) can also be obtained. For more info: go to [www.sahomeschoolers.org](http://www.sahomeschoolers.org) and follow the Matric link.

Prof Jansen (rector of the University of the Free State) referred to the World Economic Forum's survey which ranked public education in South Africa 133<sup>rd</sup> out of 142 countries, and said, "Education has not improved over many years in South Africa and all the promises that were made did not bring good fruit." Errol Naidoo, founder of The Family Policy Institute, says, "The dismal state of education is beginning to bear its tragic fruit." The labour market is very sceptical as only 4 % of matric pupils currently get a job in South Africa.

The truth is that to put our hope in certification offers a narrow pathway and is only a reflection of the information that was needed to require the certificate. Education is so much wider and it involves the development of the whole person. Maturity is growing the inner resources of a person so that he can use it in the community. Education then should be geared at developing the child in all scopes of life to be effective with the greatest emphasis on the heart of the child - effectively what motivates the child. A great paradigm shift must come towards the full equipping of our children with regards to the needed skills. (See [www.21stcenturyskillstraining.org](http://www.21stcenturyskillstraining.org))

Most schools strive to develop the learners in the school to their full capacity by offering a variety of extra mural activities, and at the end of the time spent a school giving the student a certificate that greatly determines their next avenue in life. This certificate is not giving assured answers in South Africa and a pupils can go through school without any heart change, so parents are still challenged with in whom they put their trust and time.

All caring parties try to attend to this crisis in education. One example is **Hope For Education in South Africa Summit** held in October 2012 in Kempton Park, Johannesburg; it was here where church leaders committed themselves not only to exercise a prophetic role in addressing the struggles in South Africa but to get actively involved in making a difference in the lives of the poor, sick and suffering in our land today and to play a role in effecting healing, reconciliation and wholeness. They also called on government to more seriously recognise that religious bodies are key partners in bringing about change in South Africa.

Another example is the efforts of Errol Naidoo. He says, "The Body of Christ must intensify its focus on education in the country. Millions of children are indoctrinated with liberal and humanistic values in the schooling system to their detriment."

The only true change will come when parents realise that they are the main educators and that the equipping of children starts at home where the focus should be on the right values that affect heart issues. Authentic education is where the parent finds the best pathway to develop a child to the fullest, through a network of people and resources. The pathway is determined by the core elements in the child and therefore true development of people must take in account what and how God has created the person. In this way the parent or educators work with God to raise up Godly people.

My challenge to parents is to give the certificate its small and proper place that it should get but to give education the greater emphasis and value as it is commanded by God in His word, "Train up the child the way they should go and when they are old they will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). A one-fits-all pathway will never be the best. Parents and like-minded communities should take the growing of their youth into responsible and capable adults more seriously and combine efforts of skills and resources to offer learning centres where role players (mentorship) are the main focus. It can either be at home (home education) or learning centres with the right ethos. For more information go to [www.sahomeschooler.org](http://www.sahomeschooler.org) and follow the link to Centres.

It is the function of Human Government to protect (Acts 21:27-37), punish (1 Pet.2:13-14) and promote (1 Tim 2:1,2). It is the function of parents to educate (Josh 24:15). In a fatherless generation (like we have in South Africa), we will not change the future of a nation by changing systems, but we can change it by changing the hearts of fathers. Even leading schools are calling on their fathers to take up their role to change communities. Go to [engageschools.org](http://engageschools.org) and get involved as fathers of your households.

Dynamis, by the grace of God has the function to influence fathers in such a way where they take up their role again as life givers and in equipping their children for real life. It astonishes me how young fathers are taking up their roles and how it offers a secure basis for change.

Contact Dynamis to arrange a motivational talk or seminar at your church, company or school with the emphasis on empowering parents. Personal consultations with families can be done in the days after the seminar.

[www.dynamislearning.co.za](http://www.dynamislearning.co.za)