



Western Cape
Government
Education

Quality learning @ home

LET'S STOP THE SPREAD

Part 1: Quality digital resources to download @ home

Minister Debbie Schäfer | 30 March 2020

While it is officially school holidays and schools are closed – learning is open!

During the lockdown period the WCED would like parents and learners to keep themselves busy. That is why the WCED has updated the e-Portal to ensure that our learners will be able to access Quality Learning @home in a variety of ways.

Given the current situation we are all faced with, we have escalated the work that has been done over the past 5 years on e-learning to make our learning environment digital. E-learning is an important part of our vision to ensure Quality Education to all learners, and a means to “Leapfrog inequality”. It is also a skill required for the 21st century.

The WCED has been working hard to ensure that our teachers are trained in e-learning, that our learners are exposed to a variety of learning platforms and that e-Resources are made available to suit their curriculum needs. Our strategy over the past five years has been aimed at ensuring that learning can take place at anytime, anywhere.

Today, I am unpacking how we are providing Quality Learning resources to our learners @ home through the WCED ePortal. The ePortal is just one element of the WCED’s “Quality Education @home initiative” and in the coming days and weeks, we will outline further what parents, teachers and learners can do to ensure that while “Schools are closed – Learning is open.”

Part 1: Quality digital resources to download at home

There are hundreds of resources on the internet. However, how does one determine which resources are in line with the CAPS curriculum, or are factually correct? What are our children even meant to be studying?

The WCED ePortal (<https://wcedportal.co.za/>) was first developed in 2015 in support of the WCED’s e-learning initiative. It hosts a vast number of digital resources for learners, teachers and parents to access for self-learning and support.

In the last two weeks, this ePortal has been updated with additional features to support Quality Learning @home during this very uncertain time.

So what is available on the ePortal?

In summary, the ePortal comprises the following features:

1. WCED ePortal Resources

- Over 14 000 e-Resources categorised per grade and subject – 8 000 of these resources are free.
- **<https://wcedportal.co.za>**

2. Learner Dashboard

- Learners in Gr 10-12 can register on the WCED e-Portal to receive e-Resources
- **<https://wcedportal.co.za/register>**

3. School Closure pack

- Curriculum suppliers offering eResources at no cost across a variety of subjects and grades
- **<https://wcedportal.co.za/partners>**

4. Sharing eResources

- Teachers are encouraged to share e-Resources with peers by contributing them to the ePortal
- Sign up: **<https://wcedportal.co.za/user/login>**
- How to contribute: **<https://wcedportal.co.za/add/eresource>**

1. WCED ePortal Resources

The ePortal houses over 14 400 resources, of which 8 200 are free resources, consisting of video clips, audio clips, digital documents, lessons and lesson plans. They are available to all school communities at any time.

Learners can access past examination papers, look at videos on certain topics in certain grades and subjects, or download images explaining certain textures, processes or functions, such as the different types of soil.

Visit: <https://wcedportal.co.za>

2. Learner Dashboard

The WCED has recently communicated with schools in a drive to encourage learners in Grade 10-12 to sign up to the Learner dashboard facility of the ePortal. Learners are required to register and indicate the subjects that they are registered for in their specific grade.

The ePortal will then push related content on their specific subjects to their profiles. This is done by our Subject Planning teams, who drop content to learners based on curriculum planning schedules.

This function eliminates the need for continuous searching, and provides learners with quality, relevant and local e-Resources as per CAPS standards and requirements, selected by WCED subject advisors.

Learners can sign up on this link: <https://wcedportal.co.za/register>

3. School Closure Pack

The School Closure Pack is a landing page on the ePortal with links to sites with free eResources that have been identified by the WCED Curriculum Directorate as useful sites for continuous learning.

They are categorized for easy browsing so that parents, teachers and learners can choose sites relevant to the Grade. It also houses a variety of free reading resources, and free coding and robotics apps.

There is also a “Let’s have Fun” section which comprises fun educational games (puzzles, crosswords, etc.)

The School Closure Pack also includes Grade R-12 Teaching and Assessment Plans (TAPs) which indicate what content, skills and assessment activities were planned for each grade and each subject for each school term. The TAPs should serve as a guide to learners of what was planned as they continue studying at home. The information available on these year planners will also help parents and other support organisations to ensure that learners do not get too far behind. The TAPs and a comprehensive remote learning guide for teachers will be unpacked further in a later statement.

To visit the School Closures Pack, please click here: <https://wcedportal.co.za/partners>

4. Sharing eResources : Our Curriculum friends

The ePortal is constantly being updated. The Sharing of E-resources section of the ePortal encourages the sharing of content by local producers for upload onto the ePortal.

The ePortal is a collaborative shared platform, consisting of curated and hosted resources, no IP belongs to the WCED (apart from WCED official documentation). We are setting a national standard of working collaboratively with service providers and forming relationships with other role-players in the education sector.

Any teacher, NGO or education institution can submit content for the ePortal.

Once the submitted content is sent by the contributor, it is then checked by the WCED to ensure that it falls in line with the Curriculum and is beneficial to our users. It is then uploaded to the ePortal and categorized according to grade and subject.

We encourage further contributions towards the ePortal.

Visit: <https://wcedportal.co.za/add/eresource> to add a resource.

We are very aware that some learners do not have the opportunity to access certain resources because they do not have access to wifi or sufficient data. It is therefore very important that educational content is zero-rated so that they get free and fair access to e-learning opportunities, in order to ensure that no learner is prejudiced because they are poor.

I was thus very pleased that the national government published Government Gazette No. 43107 of 18 March 2020 on Electronic Communication and Postal Broadcasting. Section 9 thereof provides that “Electronic Communication Service Licencees must provide zero-rated access to local educational content”.

I have accordingly sent a letter to all the major telecommunication companies this weekend requesting that this portal be zero-rated. We have already had positive responses from some companies, and are hopeful that the rest will follow suit. This will help hugely to ensure broad access.

We are extremely excited about we have in store for our learners in terms of Quality Learning @home. While the Covid-19 virus has resulted in the temporary closure of schools, learning is most definitely open!

We also see this as an opportunity to improve the digital expertise of our teachers and our learners.

I look forward to sharing more on what lies ahead as we prepare for a new learning era!



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