

# 6 things schools need to stop doing to grow entrepreneurs



By [Lisa Illingworth](#)

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It is no secret that the current structure of the education system was designed in an entirely different age to achieve economic outcomes that are no longer viable due, in large, to the rapid innovation and adoption of technology.



But if we are to hope to help President Ramaphosa implement his vision for entrepreneurship as stated in the SONA 2018 address as, “The establishment through the CEOs Initiative of a small business fund - which currently stands at R1.5-billion - is an outstanding example of the role that the private sector can play. Government is finalising a small business and innovation fund targeted at start-ups,” we need to change how and what schools are teaching for this to be realised on a large scale.

Here are six things that would make a significant impact on generating enterprising behaviour:

## 1. Stop teaching kids using one or two teaching methods

Typically, teachers have defaulted to talking, reading and some visual aids to impart knowledge to learners, and those children that don't learn using these primary methods are at a disadvantage and are often labelled as "challenged". There are at least six different ways in which people learn, and entrepreneurs often fall into the lesser known ones. By blending methodologies that include interpersonal, kinaesthetic and intrapersonal with the more traditional ones, entrepreneurs will learn more effectively.

## 2. Stop rewarding conformity

Maybe it comes from a fear of anarchy or lawlessness, but the stringent rules that exist in schools punish children for exhibiting individualism and reward children for staying in line. Quite literally. This unwavering adherence to the rules without question breeds thinkers of the same calibre, and releases into the world children that cannot function without set structures that they must conform to, when they actually need to be creatively problem-solving in order to make a mark for themselves.

### 3. Stop measuring memory

How well a child can retain the dates, figures, theories or equations does not indicate the measure of a child's intelligence. It only indicates how well their memory works and how adept the learner is at recalling what they have read or been taught. Remembering, according to Bloom's Taxonomy, is a lower order thinking skill. Instead, let's measure critical thinking, interrogation of ideas, application of thinking across contexts.



### 4. Stop being a teacher

When the world relied on a central person as the curator of knowledge, the world needed teachers. They were idolized and hailed as a custodian of growth and development due to the fact that they knew more about their subject than anyone else in society. Today, the internet is the purveyor of information, a teacher if you will, and children no longer need to be taught the information but what to do with it. So long as children can read, the job of person at the front of the class is to educate, not to teach.

### 5. Stop running a factory

From the uniforms to the desks to the bell that signals the start and end of lessons and the allotted amount of time dedicated to eating and going to the bathroom, schools are churning out citizens primed for factory work. The production line mentality has been conditioned into our children - so much so, that with the entry of technological automation and the removal of the human element in these mundane, routine tasks, we make them immediately redundant to the world.

### 6. Stop labelling every disruptive child as ADHD/ADD

As an educator myself and now an entrepreneur, I recognise the exhausting and relentless burden that our school-based teachers bare. They are weighed down with administration and parental expectations, all whilst trying to navigate an education system that is increasingly deficient. Any child that does not learn in the usual manners and requires more attention or additional stimulation by non-traditional teaching methods is automatically labelled and is rejected from the system.

If, as a country, we are dedicated to changing the current economic outlook, not just for ourselves but for those that will inherit this legacy, then the systems that shape our thinking must be changed too. Entrepreneurial thinking and action is discouraged and punished in our current education system and only once children leave behind the 12 years spent at school can they begin to unlearn this way of mental conditioning and become active citizens.

## ABOUT LISA ILLINGWORTH

A journalist and editorial specialist in content development across print, online and radio platforms with a particular passion for entrepreneurship and SMEs. Director and co-founder of a "for purpose" business that launches entrepreneurial kids.

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