



No student left behind

Transforming teacher training to support students with disabilities is critical in the time of COVID-19.

Professor Sindile Ngubane-Mokiwa is an associate professor and curriculum transformation specialist at UNISA.

Students with disabilities face a myriad of challenges in the pursuit of higher education. With the advent of COVID-19 restrictions, students with disabilities are now facing the added problem of different forms of exclusion.

While most universities have abruptly had to move to online teaching and learning platforms, these platforms do not necessarily cater for diverse learning needs. In other instances, platforms might have special needs functionalities, but the

teachers might not know how to use them.

“A lack of access and teacher readiness in technology-enhanced inclusive teaching further perpetuates the marginalisation of students with disabilities,” says Professor Sindile Ngubane-Mokiwa.

Professor Ngubane-Mokiwa is working with international and local colleagues to seek ways in which to capacitate teachers in inclusive technology-enhanced learning. As part of this project, teachers are trained on the inclusive use of different technological offerings to cater to the various students’ needs.

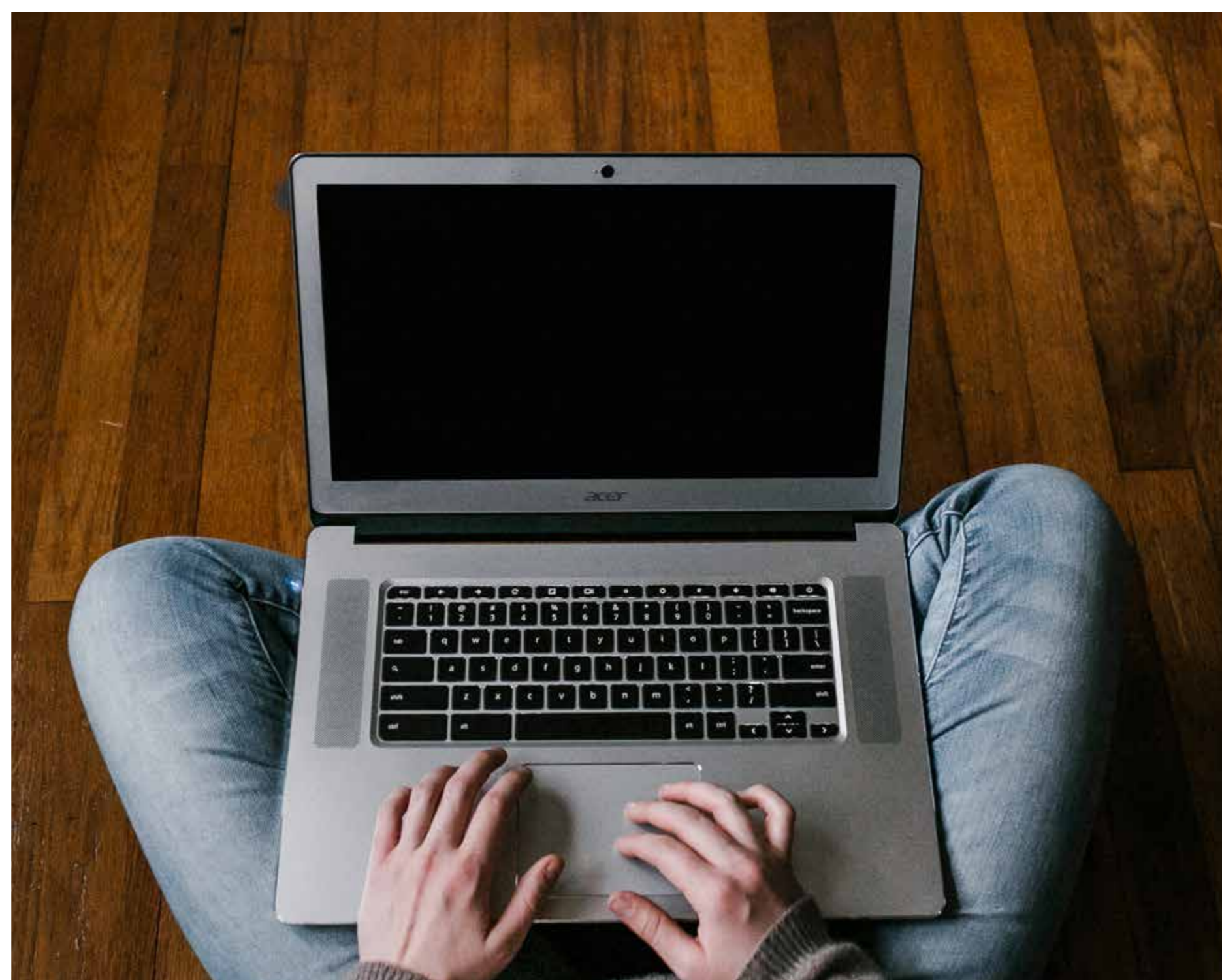
“The findings of the project point to an urgent need for collaboration among stakeholders – particularly as we wrestle with COVID-19.” Universities can, for example, partner with the corporate sector to subsidise teacher training and/or reskilling initiatives.

“Failure to transform teacher training strategically could lead to an even higher dropout rate for students with disabilities.”

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Students with disabilities should be given more support.