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Technology, Work Roles and Competencies of Educators Facilitating Fully or Partially Via a Distance

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ABSTRACT The education sector as a whole is being transformed by changes in funding, fierce competition, the increased use of technology and an increased emphasis on learner-centred education. As a result, the clear divide between learning via a distance and a traditional blackboard context is rapidly disappearing, mainly due to the increased use of technology within and outside of classrooms. The use of tablets in classrooms, the popularity of social media, learner management systems and other emerging technologies have permanently changed the education landscape. Within this highly complex context, educators have to fulfil various work roles, one being a technology expert. This paper considers the various roles of distance educators and the place of being a technology expert within the broader conceptualisation of the roles and competencies required by educators, fully or partially facilitating over a distance. A review of existing literature on the roles and competencies required by distance educators, including both a quantitative content analysis, as well as a qualitative content analysis component is offered, where amongst others the results indicate the importance of the role of educators as technology experts. The information offered through this study may be used to form the basis of a framework for the professional development for educators facilitating fully or partly via a distance.