



SA Teachers get connected at ICT Conference

Over 500 teachers from across South Africa congregated at Durban Girls College for the Intel ICT in the classroom conference from the 24th – 26th of September 2009. The objective of the annual conference is to empower teachers in the use of ICT in education to ensure that learners in the country get the benefit of increased exposure to technology

The Director General of the National Department of Basic Education, Mr Duncan Hindle delivered the official opening address confirming government's commitment to ICTs in education. Delegates were welcomed to the conference by the headmaster of Durban Girls' College, Mr Ken Elliot. This was followed by a very enlightening sponsor's address delivered by the Director of Intel's Corporate Affairs for Middle East Turkey and Africa, Mr Ferruh Gurtas who outlined Intel® Teach's professional development programmes around the world.

The choir from Albini Girls High School inspired their audience and surprised everyone with their last song when they sang about ICT.



More than five hundred delegates attended the conference, including teachers, provincial and national educational department officials, sponsors, vendors and representatives from other development and training organizations. The first day of the conference was a public holiday, Heritage Day and the rest of the conference was within school holidays. Teachers readily sacrificed these holidays in order to attend. Learners from Durban Girls College as well as Northwood Boys also gave up their holidays to volunteer as helpers at the conference; their contribution was invaluable and very much appreciated by the organisers.

While local teachers and education experts provided excellent presentations and workshops, the characteristic of this year's conference was the contribution made by six highly acclaimed international guest speakers:

Bruce Dixon from Australia – Founder of the Anywhere Anytime Learning Foundation spoke about innovative schools and “One to One Computing”. Bruce developed quite a following at the conference comprising delegates who were intrigued by Bruce's unique approach to school management and leadership in the use of ICTs.

Duncan Kemp (Keynote) from Apple Computers in the UK presented a framework for 21st Century schools and gave the latest insights into the status of the use of Apple technology in South Africa and around the world.

The four esteemed workshop leaders from the USA were scheduled to work on all three days non-stop delivering a range of fantastic experiences for the conference delegates. Shelee King George from the Puget Sound Centre, Seattle, USA, ran a series of amazing workshops that captivated her audiences. Her approach to teaching – and life in general is one of sharing and the purpose of her workshops was to foster collaborative and constructive dialogue with her World Cafe concept.

“I especially liked the input of American ladies. The World Cafe session was delightful.”

Fiona Beal, Fish Hoek Primary

Karen Peterson, also from the Puget Sound Education Centre focussed on gender issues with particular reference to equal exposure to opportunities in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). Karen is the principal investigator in the National Girls Collaborative Project running in the USA which provides grants and support for projects that encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing for female students in STEM subjects.



Naomi Harm wowed teachers with her highly innovative use of Inter Active White Board technology. Naomi is the Technology Director and Consultant from Wisconsin and thrilled local teachers with her ideas for incorporating web 2.0 tools in their teaching as well as suggestions for using podcasting in teaching.

“I thought the programme was great .. Naomi especially, will impact on the portal with her podcasting tips...”

Joy Rosario, Deputy Director: Curriculum Innovation and e-Learning, National Department of Education

Shelley Shott from Intel Education in Portland Oregon gave a series of workshops primarily centred around project based approaches to learning and 21st century frameworks. She kept the participants in her workshops on their toes throughout – the stamina of all of these four ladies was astounding.



"We come back to the conference every year to see what new technologies are available and how they have improved," says Estelle Llewellyn from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. "The labs and the hands-on experience is invaluable."

A further attraction is the opportunity to network with people with a common interest and exposure to international expertise. "Listening to the international speakers, it is clear that the challenges we face in education is not unique to South Africa." Llewellyn says each year presents the opportunity to learn something new. "There are always new technologies on show and practical solutions that the teachers can take back with them and deploy at their schools."

Hlengiwe Mfeka from Mconjwana High School in Howick, has been involved with Intel Teach for 7 years. "The programme has been invaluable and has significantly improved my insight and strategic thinking," she says. "In addition to that the networking component allows me to collaborate with teachers from other parts of the country." Mfeka says her students have become a lot more interactive and she sees a definite shift in their thinking. "I have learnt how to promote higher order thinking in my students and the results are evident."

According to Mfeka, the impact of the Intel Teach Programme reaches far beyond just teachers and students. The learners are also making a much bigger impact on the communities. "They are taking what they've learnt back to their communities so that others can also benefit from this new knowledge," she concludes.

"It was inspiring from the opening addresses to the final draw and there was never a moment when any of us would rather have been anywhere else for the first 3 days of the holidays. The plenary sessions were great and the workshops really inspiring. Our staff have already put things in pace for next term... Please thank your sponsors and in particular Intel for their investment in the lives of many in this country and in our school in particular."

Principal Inanda Seminary, Mrs J Tate



The entertainment highlight of the conference was the Gala Dinner at Moyo's. Delegates were invited to "Dress Africa" –and they certainly did – even the overseas speakers!

Many colourful photos can be seen on the conference website of dress designs from a vast array of cultures that were from all parts of Africa.

"The speakers were outstanding, the food divine and MOYO was a proudly South African evening. Well done!"

Debbie Beck, ST Marys Kloof

Parthy Chetty, Education Manager of Intel SA, the main sponsor of the conference for the past four years, explains that sponsorship of the conference is just one of the many ways that Intel supports the training and development of educators in South Africa and internationally. Intel assists by providing the curriculum for educator prof development in the form of the Intel Teach Programme, which helps classroom educators effectively integrate technology into teaching in order to enhance student learning. Intel Teach is being implemented in 35 countries around the world and has trained over 4 million educators worldwide.

There were many prizes donated by a number of generous donors including a Visualiser from Photo Note valued at R 15 000, 2 Intellipens from Circuit City Electronics, a digital camera from Image Innovations, 3 ADSL Modems from ESN, Future Entrepreneurs donated an interactive Pen kit valued at R 3 300 that can instantly convert a white wall in a classroom into an interactive teaching space, a Mimio Pad valued at R5 500.

An interactive SMART board valued at nearly R50 000 was donated by SMART. The prize included a data projector, SMART software and professional development training.

*Johann Strauss of
VastraTech
presenting the prize.*



Other major sponsors included Uniforum who funded the cocktail party on the first evening of the conference and Vastratech who organised the donation of the interactive whiteboard from SMART Technologies. Vastratech also provided some additional technology used at the conference; Mustek in Durban provided two mobile computer labs additional workshops and Internet Solutions provided bandwidth to the conference free of charge. There was also a lab of Intel® Classmates on display and available for use in an Internet Cafe throughout the conference.

The digital versions of the presentations are now available at:

www.school.za/conference/CD/index