



**Report to KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education  
on Microsoft Partners in Learning Training  
conducted between 2007 - 2009**

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## **1 Introduction**

SchoolNet SA is the preferred service provider for the Microsoft Partners in Learning courses. Since the beginning of this programme, KwaZulu-Natal has been the recipient of various Microsoft funded training initiatives and more recently the province has invested its own funds in offering Partners in Learning training to its teachers. In addition to Microsoft and DoE funded training, SITA and the Culture of Learning organisation have also funded Partners in Learning Training for selected schools which they support. This report outlines the Microsoft Partners in Learning training that has been conducted in KwaZulu-Natal in the past three years sponsored by the various stakeholders.

## **2 Training sponsored by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education**

### ***2.1 ICT Skills for Teachers Training for Richmond Teachers***

The intention of this project was to equip 50 teachers from the Richmond area with computer skills. Two groups of teachers underwent the ICT Skills for Teachers course at Masakhuxolo, Richmond's Educational Centre in the July 2008 school holidays.

Teachers from the following schools participated: Bernard Mizeki Primary, Byrne Primary, Congco Secondary, Huba High, Illovonek, Indaleni School for the Deaf, Indaleni Primary, Inguquko, Kwamlamuli, Magoda Primary, Majwabu, Makanene Primary, Masakhulo Education Centre, Masangazana Intermediate, Menziwa Primary, Misikhenende, Mkhobeni, Nyambayi Junior Primary, Richlea Primary, Richmond Combined, Richmond Primary, Roselands Primary and Sapekoe.

With the first group, training started late due to registration delays and training progressed slowly as many teachers were using a computer for the first time. Despite these challenges, the group put in extra time and by the end of the course the teachers had gained confidence and had started to work on their own. By the final day of the course the teachers were able to present some of their artefacts to Alfie Moore from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education who had come to observe some of the training.

The second group mainly comprised younger teachers and training progressed at a faster pace than with the previous group. The trainer reported: "Teachers were very enthusiastic about their work in such a way that they will go back to the computer room before the end of their lunch time to continue with their work. I think they found the course interesting and very relevant to their needs as educators."

Some selected participant quotes provide an indication of how much the teachers enjoyed this course:

*"I enjoyed this training. It gave me a lot of experience because it was my first time to do computer lessons. My teacher was very good to us all. She was doing everything slowly and step by step."*

*"The course was good and the facilitator was confident to which she was doing and also helpful to us. All the participant were active and the numbers of each and every group shared ideas in order to help each other. The facilitator was always willing to help those who were struggling with their activities."*

*“The workshop is useful to me because it is my first time to face a computer in front. The facilitator is too nice and some of our colleagues helped us, because there small knowledge of computers. I will be very glad if I can get another chance to make advice of knowledge.”*

*“I am very glad that now I am able to operate computer. I thank the Department of Education and our facilitator to develop us with the computer skills.”*

## **2.2 ICT Literacy Training for HODs and Education Managers in the Umlazi District**

SchoolNet SA was contracted by the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education to conduct ICT Skills for Teachers training for 120 HODs in the Umlazi District (Chatsworth and Maphundu Wards) between March and June 2009. Training took place at Lamontville Education Centre and Microsoft’s Smart Exchange Lab.



At the outset of most training sessions the majority of teachers rated themselves as beginner users of ICT. During the course the participants gradually acquired confidence and showed eagerness to complete scenarios independently and the teachers with some prior ICT experience were willing to help others. Whilst it was disappointing that the sessions were not attended by as many teachers as there were available computers it was encouraging that the teachers who were present were punctual and worked very hard to complete the tasks at hand.

It was unfortunate that there was not internet access for teachers at either venue. Whilst the trainers used 3G modems to demonstrate how to navigate the Web and create email addresses the teachers could not go online themselves. Despite this – at one of the sessions some teachers came back the next day demonstrating how they were able to set up email addresses using their cell phones. This shows remarkable ingenuity and also that the training was exciting enough to inspire teachers to implement what they were learning in their own time.

Some teachers who received training through this project reflected that they had not completed previous training courses as they did not see the value; however this course was viewed as the first step toward something different. They promised that they would use the CD as a resource and that they would complete other activities at home. Most found that they were well supported by the trainer and were also able to use the tip sheets when they needed detailed step by step assistance.

Teachers enjoyed the fact that they were able to work at their own pace and in terms of their individual needs. They also reported that both the scenarios and examples were very useful.

Below are some of the comments that were received:



*"I'm very pleased to be trained by the trainer we had. He was very good, he treated everyone equally. I wish the department to provide us for more computers in our schools so that we will use these skills"*

*"I enjoyed the whole session more so because it was my first time to have a chance of being face to face with the terminologies of the computer. I am very thankful for the opportunity I have been offered."*

*"The course was interesting. It broadens our horizon. We gained a lot of practical experiences. One wishes to have a follow up course."*

*"This course is very informative. I wish we were exposed to it two years ago. Such courses should be compulsory to educator training courses in order to eliminate administrative work which is done by educators"*

*"The course was an eye-opener and fruitful as it moved us from computer illiteracy to being literate. We hope to have further trainings so as to be confident and independent."*



On the whole the training sessions were enjoyed by participants. The heads of department who attended the sessions were exposed to a wealth of new resources and gained new skills to improve their administrative tasks and general computer literacy. For future courses we would suggest that teachers be invited long before training to ensure that the maximum number of possible participants. Venues should also have internet connectivity so that participants can practice sending and receiving email and using the internet as opposed to just having these skills demonstrated. The ICT Skills for Teachers course lays an important foundation for using ICT effectively and we hope that in future we will get to work with these teachers again as they continue in their professional development in ICT.

### **2.3 ICT Literacy Training for 30 teachers in the Pietermaritzburg Area**

Between 6 and 10 July 2009 twenty nine teachers from Kokstad, Jozini, Newcastle, Bergville, Nongoma, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Empangeni participated in an ICT Skills for Teachers course held at Mbumbulu KZN Coastal College.

As most of the participants were accommodated at the college training began punctually each day. The trainer described the participants as being "hungry for computer skills" and said that those who already had some skills were willing to help the others. The college was a good venue – with sufficient working computers and internet access, although the broken air-conditioners meant that some participants were uncomfortably hot.



The first day of training included the trainer demonstrating the “Create a simple mark book scenario”. Many of the teachers had never used Excel before and were very impressed by the calculations as “they realized what they had been missing”. As training progressed the teachers were expected to do more work independently. Whilst some participants were nervous at first they gradually developed confidence and the trainer encouraged them to apply the “ask three before me” rule (i.e. use the tip sheets, help index or ask a colleague before asking the trainer for help).



Later on in the training the group worked through the “using internet information in the Microsoft word” scenario. During this activity they learnt about surfing the internet, evaluating a website and copying and pasting pictures and text from the internet into Word. After completing this scenario the participants all created their own email addresses as only five participants had email addresses prior to training. They teachers then enjoyed sending and receiving email messages with one another.

On the final day of training groups of teachers showcased the PowerPoint presentations that they had developed. These had been enhanced by accessing pictures and information from the internet. The training culminated with the participants each receiving a certificate and a group photo was taken. All agreed that this had been a most successful training session and that the teachers had learnt valuable skills.



## **2.4 Newcastle Deploying Student Technical Support Solutions (Helpdesk) Training**

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education has equipped many schools in the Newcastle area with computers. The intention of this training was therefore to ensure that educators from these schools will be able to maintain these computer facilities and conduct basic troubleshooting. Training took place during from 13 – 17 July 2009 at Sekusile Secondary School in Emadadeni. In addition to two teachers per school the district CAT & IT subject advisor and Mr. Reggie Masondo (DCES, Maths, Science, Technology & ICT Directorate) from KZN Department of Education attended the training. Mr. M.T. Mfusi and Mr P. Dikgomo also visited the workshop, much to the delight of the participants.

Amongst the highlights of this course are participants getting to work with different computer components, learning how to identify them and put them back together. On the second day groups were each given a computer to dismantle and on the third day these were safely reassembled. The participants were thrilled that all computers that had been working continued to work after reassembling! In addition to working with hardware this course introduces participants to repairing



and installing the Windows XP operating system. The group watched a demonstration of how to install the operating system and they also learnt about some of the tools found in the control panel.



By the fourth day of training the group knew about hardware drivers and they were also shown how to update, rollback, delete drivers and configure some hardware. Common problems and how to overcome these using special tools like safe mode and system restore were demonstrated. These skills can be applied to XP and Vista as they both have the same tools to troubleshoot the operating system.

On the final day of training participants were introduced to the common language that computer network devices use to communicate with each other. A really useful chapter introduced troubleshooting and participants benefitted from simple tips such as re-sitting a component which may allow a school to avoid an expensive call out fee from a computer technician. Participants also enjoyed sharing computer problems that they had encountered at their schools and discussing ways in which these problems may have been overcome. Discussing ways of securing computers – both physically against theft with devices such as clamps and electronically against viruses -will also help the participants to better care for the equipment at their schools.

On the final day of the training, there was a closing ceremony where participants were given certificates by Mr. Masondo. The comments below give an indication of just how much this course was enjoyed by the participants:



*“This has been an experience of a life time that I never thought I would be able to do. The training has equipped me with the knowledge that the school will use, without having to spend money they have spent. The trainer was exceptional, and could lead us if he saw that we not clear. I hope such training would avail itself to help teachers.”*

*“I have developed an insight of networking which I never had before. The programme was fruitful because as an educator I can solve problems which I could not before, only the technician was able to solve them. There is going to be less frustration on my part as an educator, problems such as passwords, printing problems, freezing of computers etc can now be sorted out. I can load an operating system and even repair it without being charged by the technicians. We had an excellent facilitator, combining theory & practical; dismantling and reassembling computers without a problem.”*

*“I would like to thank everybody who was involved in organizing for such a workshop. It was so fruitful to me. I can do much about troubleshooting, networking of computers. Before I couldn't touch or open a computer, and see what is inside, what components are there, what is a hard drive, CPU, RAM, now it's all like ABC. The trainer himself was so patient and he was willing and prepared himself for teaching us. He is a born teacher. I wish I could get another chance to attend such a workshop.”*

### 3 Training sponsored by Microsoft

#### 3.1 ICT Skills for KwaZulu-Natal FET Colleges

This project provided four days of ICT Skills for Teachers training to college lecturers from the following institutions: Mthashana: Kwa-Gqikazi Campus, Mthashana: Vryheid Campus, Elangeni FET College, Majuba FET College, Thekwini FET College, Umgungundlovu FET College, and Coastal FET College. Training took place between October 2006 and August 2007.

Whilst on the whole training went well, problems included no internet access in some centers and computers not being networked or not functioning properly. Many of the lecturers failed to arrive for training or failed to complete the course, indicating a negative attitude towards training. In many cases the trainers also noted that the lecturers generally had weak ICT skills.

Despite these setbacks the trainers also reported positive experiences:

*“The group on average was able to engage with the basic skills, able to login and logout and to do some basic manipulation...This was a small group and easy to manage. They were eager to learn and cooperated fairly well. Given enough access to computers and practice, they will be good teachers in the integration of technology into the curriculum.”*

On the whole, trainees were very positive about both the materials and the cognitive apprenticeship training method, as is illustrated by the following quotations:

*“Although I’m a computer Lecturer, I still learned new things that would be able to help me in future. CD is very helpful and thorough and will be kept for future reference. Facilitator was also available for assistance.”*

*“This is a nice and dynamic tool to teach and you learn difficult Microsoft applications in context. It would be better if a tool for students can be developed.”*

*“It was quite meaningful. Valuable, enlightening and enriching. It is a must have! I love it!!”*

#### 3.2 ICT Skills for Teachers

In 2006 – 2007 Microsoft and SchoolNet SA embarked on a project to offer 60 Schools the Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers course. This project also involved liaison with provincial department officials both to request their permission to conduct training in schools and to ensure that they developed an understanding of what the Partners in Learning approach hoped to achieve.



Whilst all provinces were offered the opportunity to nominate schools for this intervention, KwaZulu-Natal was very proactive about nominating schools and a number of schools were trained through this project, including the following schools that received training in 2007: Moy Primary School, Africa Centre (Ikusasaletu), Africa Centre (Ingaqa Primary School), Intakemazolo Intermediate School, Kwazenzele High School, Silwanetshe Primary School, Masihambisane, Funulwazi Primary School, Bhekameva High School and Mtwalume High School.

During this project trainers often were faced with inadequate computer facilities and teachers who had little prior computer experience. Despite these challenges most found that staff was very receptive to the training.

### **3.3 WebQuest Training in Dinaledi Schools**

The aim of this course is to introduce ICT literate teachers to a simple project structure for implementing ICT-integrated projects in the classroom, namely the WebQuest. As Dinaledi schools had shown the most promise during ICT Skills for Teachers training, these schools were offered WebQuest training through this project with the intention of helping teachers from these schools take the next steps towards implementing ICT integration.



The following KwaZulu-Natal schools benefited from training offered through this project during 2007: Hlamvana High School, Ikusaselihle High School and Bergville Centre.

The course has been well received by some teachers – especially where they have good internet connectivity and are confident computer users

### **3.4 Bergville HelpDesk Training**

The aim of this training was to offer technical support training to a cluster of schools that were already engaged with the Partners in Learning programme. It was hoped that through providing Help Desk training that ICT integration would be more sustainable as learners and teachers at the schools would be able to conduct basic troubleshooting and maintenance themselves.



The Bergville HelpDesk course took place in September 2007 and included one teacher and four learners from each of the following schools:

Amangwane High School, Bangani High School, Thsanibezwe High School, Mafu High School, Insukangihlale Primary School, Bambanani Primary School, Nogaga Primary School, Tabhane Primary School and Mqedandaba High School

In describing the trainees, the trainer commented: “trainees were as if they have been thirsty for such knowledge for quite a long time. They were concentrating and participating in all activities as if they depended on it. By so doing, they ended up surprising themselves in so many ways. Nobody could tell that there was a mixture of educators and learners sitting behind the desk.” The trainer also highlighted how important it was for schools to develop their own technical skills in rural areas such as Bergville where technical support is not readily available.



### 3.5 *Mbazwane ICT Skills Training of Trainers*

SchoolNet SA and Microsoft were asked by the Culture of Learning project to help develop capacity amongst staff at the Mbazwane Education Centre, KwaZulu-Natal. As the centre is a resource that local teachers can use it made sense to train centre staff to be able to run the ICT Skills for Teachers course so that they could share this course with teachers in the area. To maximise the training opportunity CAT and IT teachers from the area were also invited to the training so that they could potentially also become trainers. This course took place in July 2009 and was divided into two parts. Firstly the trainees experienced an abridged version of the ICT Skills for Teachers course as participants for three days. Then for the final two days, trainees were then trained by a master trainer in how to facilitate the course themselves.

The trainer who conducted the initial training reported that the participants started at a slow pace on the first day with some people arriving late and only thirteen of the twenty people who had been expected arriving for training. Among the participants was the Lab Manager who disappointingly did not really attend the course but who instead chose to browse the CD in his office whilst completing his daily tasks. As the majority of participants were CAT and IT teachers with advanced knowledge they were not really challenged by the scenarios however an activity which they really enjoyed involved using formulae to develop a time table on a spreadsheet. They found this very interesting and challenging.



The master trainer who conducted the train the trainer session noted that whilst this group was better skilled than many previous groups that he had recently encountered when they got to advanced scenarios it became evident that only six were able to meet the challenges with ease that one would expect from a trainer. He was also disappointed with the lack of interest shown in the cognitive apprenticeship model of training. This may have arisen from the fact that this was the group's fourth consecutive day of training or it may have been attributed to a lack of pedagogical skills.

On the final day the focus was on facilitation strategies. It was disappointing that few participants actively participated and the presentation skills shown were generally weak. The trainer noted that "the teachers all seemed too intent on explaining by talking and took a long time to latch on to the fact that they should be showing primarily and talking to model what they were doing and thinking".

In the end a total of six new trainers were recommended based on this session. We hope that these new trainers are suitably familiar with the ICT Skills for Teachers training approach to conduct successful training sessions on their own.

### 3.6 Peer Coaching Programme

KwaZulu-Natal has had active Peer Coaching clusters since the start of this programme in 2007.

In 2007 the following schools participated in the Hilton Peer Coaching Cluster: Esigodini Primary, Hilton College, Mpophomeni High and Zamazulu Secondary and the following schools participated in the Durban cluster: Northlands Primary, Inanda Seminary, Mzwamandla High School, Chelsea Drive Primary and Greenwood Park Primary.

At the Hilton cluster the teachers who attended the first training session “seemed to be excited about making changes in their schools, and were keen to use Peer Coaching as a way to do that” but disappointingly only one principal was present. The trainer reported that “In general, the course went very well. In particular he found that the simulation is an effective way to get talking about planning – setting priorities, thinking of a strategy, etc. It led to much debate and useful discussion. So when it came to



thinking about their own situations they were ready with lots of ideas. It is quite exciting when people are so involved in discussions etc that they just don’t want to go to lunch!”



Peer Coaching got off to a good start in the Durban cluster with the “Why peer coaching?” session “unlocking a robust discussion between the coaches and the principals.” The trainer reported that “the participants seemed to master the communication skills fairly easily and it was evident in how some got the insight into the questioning types of paraphrasing, clarifying and probing. The group session was really invigorating to listen to.”

In 2008 the Durban Peer Coaching Cluster involved Northlands Primary, Inanda Seminary, Mzwamandla High, Chelsea Primary and Greenwood Park Primary. The trainer noted that when the sessions first started teachers were complaining more than finding solutions but by the end of the programme it was very evident how the mindsets of coaches had changed completely and how acutely they are aware of the road blocks to coaching. Their main mission now is to solve problems.

Peer Coaching continues to be offered to the Durban cluster in 2009 – although now this cluster is sponsored by SITA whose two schools are also included in the cluster. This valuable contribution has meant that Microsoft has been able to sponsor additional Peer Coaching clusters in other provinces without losing the momentum gained with the Durban cluster.

### **3.7 80 Sessions Project – Durwest Primary ICT Skills for Teachers**

Although the main intention of the 80 Sessions project was to continue to work with schools where SchoolNet and Microsoft had had some prior engagement, some additional schools were offered training where we had a compelling reason to believe that the teachers at the school had the potential to truly embrace the use of ICT to enhance their teaching practices.

A teacher from Durwest Primary school has been writing to SchoolNet SA's Executive Director, Janet Thomson for some time. Firstly she asked for assistance in acquiring donated computers for her school, and once this was achieved she pleaded for training for staff members.

The trainer was amazed by the enthusiasm of the staff – who gave up their weekends to attend training without complaining, and the school management who laid on delicious meals for the participants. He reported: *"I had a wonderful rapport with the educators, their enthusiasm and their genuine eagerness to learn and share was evident in their determination"*.



### **3.8 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum and Innovation Workshops**

The Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum is an annual event that recognizes teachers who are using technology in creative and engaging ways in the classroom. KwaZulu-Natal has outperformed all other provinces in this competition as it is the only province that has had a winning teacher for three consecutive years.

In 2007 KG Pillay from Burnwood Secondary School represented South Africa at the Worldwide Innovative Teachers Forum held in Helsinki. At this event he won the Innovation in Community category for his m-Learner project which involves using cell phones for learners to access maths and science content.

In 2008 KwaZulu-Natal produced two winners at the South African Innovative Teachers Forum. Peter de Lisle from Hilton College won the Innovation in Collaboration category with his project "Thinking Tolerance - Do We Hate?" and Thamsanqa Makhathini from Mpophomeni High School won the Innovation in Challenging Contexts category with his project "Local is Lekker@Mpophomeni". Both of these winners participated at the Worldwide Innovative Teachers Forum held in Hong Kong in November 2008.





In 2009 Hlengiwe Mfeka won the Innovation in Community award for her project “My Community, My Place, My Pride - Can I make a difference?”. This grade 10 Life Orientation project involved learners identifying a contemporary problem in their community and exploring it using various technological tools. Hlengiwe will represent South Africa at the Pan-African Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum being held in Mauritius in September 2009.

In 2008 Microsoft began offering Innovation Workshops in various provinces to help teachers come up with creative ideas for projects that use technology in the classroom. The workshops involve teachers brainstorming ideas, looking critically at previous winning projects and obtaining input and guidance from a skilled facilitator on how they can enhance their current teaching practices to produce a project suitable for this competition.



In 2008 the KwaZulu-Natal Innovation Workshop was held in Hilton and in 2009 the workshop took place in Durban. Both of these workshops were well attended by enthusiastic teachers and in each case finalists emerged from the workshops.

#### **4 Training sponsored by SITA**

SchoolNet SA is currently involved in training two clusters of schools in KwaZulu-Natal sponsored by SITA. These schools will complete all of the courses in the Microsoft Partners in Learning bouquet and they will also go on to receive Intel Teach training.



The first two schools - Buhlebemfundo and Albin Girls school are situated in the Pinetown area. These schools are receiving a range of courses to develop their ICT literacy and the ability to integrate ICT into teaching and learning. To date the school management teams from these two schools have had ICT Leadership for Education Managers training and the teachers have received ICT Skills for Teachers and One Step Further training. Selected teachers and learners have also participated in the HelpDesk course and teachers from these two schools have been included in the Durban Peer Coaching Cluster.

The second cluster of schools supported by SITA is in the Midlands. These schools are in the process of having their computers replaced and updated by SITA. Once this process is complete the teachers will begin to receive their training and the cluster of schools will be supported by a full time ICT support person who will mentor the teachers and offer ongoing coaching and professional development. The school management teams from these schools have already received ICT Leadership for Education Managers training so that they will be well equipped to effectively manage the computer resources in their schools. It is also hoped that they will support the professional development process.





## 5 Training sponsored by Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning organization used to have a staff member based in Bergville who conducted many rounds of ICT Skills for Teachers training with local teachers. Now that this person is no longer living in Bergville, the organization wanted to ensure that training continued to take place and that the computer centre used by local teachers remained in good working order. To achieve these aims, Culture of Learning appointed SchoolNet SA to conduct three rounds of training, with each visit being preceded by a technical support visit to ensure that the computers remain fully functional.



One round of training was conducted in the April 2009 school holidays and a further two rounds of training were conducted in the July 2009 school holidays.

The first round of training got off to a slow start as participants had not all received the information about the training. Despite this eventually nineteen teachers were trained and they managed to make up the lost time. The second and third training sessions were well organised with the participants all being informed and arriving at the Ukhahlamba Training Centre on time. The trainer said that the second session of training was one of the best courses she had ever conducted with beginners as the teachers were able to follow instructions from the tip sheet to complete the scenarios and they also attempted complex tasks with little fear. The third group of participants was difficult as they were dominated by “old rigid ladies”. Despite this the trainer was able to manage the diverse group and by the final everyone presented their work with confidence and a smile.

Typical comments about this training included:

*“The computer course opened our eyes in basic computer skills and now we are confident to use the computers. The facilitator knows her work and she is patient in guiding her learners. Our school work will now be easier and presentable since now we will be able to type any document. We will gain more respect from parents because we will send typed notices and letters. We will now receive our e-mails through our e/mail addresses. We will appreciate it if we can receive more courses.”*



*“The workshop was useful. I gained computer skills. I wish to come again. Keep on empowering the nation. I find it easy to use the mouse, to maximize etc. The following day it was a little difficult. I was lost in the morning, but when days went I was confident. I need more practice as the duration was short. I will be glad if we can get another week. We can be glad if we get the same facilitator as she accommodated the need of us all.”*

## **6 Conclusion and Recommendations**

We are proud of the training that we have offered to teachers in KwaZulu-Natal and believe that we have helped to empower teachers to begin to use ICT effectively in education. Our hope is that we will be able to continue to offer training to more teachers at more schools in this province and that we will be able to go back to schools where we have already offered some training to continue to develop skills further. We look forward to working with the Department of Education, Microsoft and other stakeholders to continue to offer professional development opportunities in KwaZulu-Natal.

**Megan Rademeyer**

**Programmes Manager**

**SchoolNet SA – August 2009**