

Capacity Building for Eastern Cape Officials

Sponsored by Microsoft

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In order to help support the Eastern Cape Department of Education in its initiatives to integrate ICTs into education within the province, Microsoft agreed to sponsor initial capacity building of trainers and facilitators within the province. This workshop took place in Chintsa between 12 and 14 March 2008 and included 30 recently appointed e-Learning specialists from all the Eastern Cape districts.

The participants represented a large variety of experiences relating to ICT in education, from very little to very focused (curriculum delivery and curriculum focus without ICT integration experience). The strengths of some more experienced participants lay in technical and programming activities rather than pedagogical and integration activities. The participants did engage well with the e-Education White Paper and Guidelines for Teacher Training and Professional Development, which give clear indications of the learning involved in e-Education.

The first activity involving the common language of e-Learning (understanding terminology such as e-learning, ICT literacy, ICT integration and curriculum delivery) was well done. It was evident that the participants had engaged with such topics before, although there was not a great amount of common language coming from their interpretations. The distinction between ICT Literacy and ICT Integration was not clear and it was also not clear whether e-Learning or Curriculum Delivery was the primary aim of the e-Education White Paper. It took several subsequent activities to clarify the relationship between these aspects.



Discussion was animated in some groups. Participants had to draw a visual representation of their understanding of the terminology.

The second activity was focused on establishing a learning vision. This is regarded as critical to understanding and focusing efforts in implementing e-Education. The activity was well done through the use of the blog. Almost all participants had never used a digital resource such as a blog for collaboration before. It was very encouraging to see how easily they engaged with it and how tidily they kept the collaboration space. This definitely gave more

participants a chance to publish their ideas more regularly. The success and value of this activity is an excellent justification for ensuring that these officials receive Internet connectivity as soon as possible.

The learning vision that was prepared by the group is:

All learners will become ICT capable in learning about, with and through ICT by participating in:

- Lifelong independent learning
- Development of higher order thinking skills
- Collaborative learning within and beyond the community
- Enquiry-based learning
- Development of information literacy
- Learning that is engaged



Following this the participants were asked to identify what competencies teachers would need to achieve this learning vision. Their responses on the blog did not show that they had much insight into this. This could stem from their lack of classroom experience of ICT integration and the kind of learning identified in the learning vision.

Even though the responses to the Critical Success Factors activity were seemingly disparate it was possible to draw together some common threads that had alignment with the Teacher Guidelines competencies and the environment that makes professional development and ICT integration possible. The critical success factors are potentially an

important element in providing focus to an implementation strategy and short term provincial policy. The following critical success factors were identified.

We will spend time and resources on:

- Fostering the development of pedagogical and ICT integration skills in educators
- Making opportunities for learners to use ICT and become globally competitive
- Developing education managers that use ICT and play a leadership role
- Ensuring that school communities are connected
- Advocating ICT in education
- Developing and publishing guidelines for ICT in schools
- Establishing and maintaining support structures for educators that practice ICT integration
- Foster collaboration between learners, educators and educational ICT stakeholders
- Ensuring that the learning environment is conducive to e-learning, that is
- Equally accessible to all
- Fully utilised throughout the day
- Secure
- Open to community participation
- Ensuring that teachers manage ICT resources effectively

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