

Learning Gains through Play Project

KZN Midlands: Module 10 Looking Back

10 March 2016

The training for the last module in the Learning Gains through Play teacher professional development in KZN was conducted at Thembelihle Primary School in Howick on Thursday 10 March 2016. The attendance was good with nineteen teachers present.



Module 10 is about reflecting and demonstrating the use of various technology skills and teaching strategies done in previous modules. Teachers are expected to brag about the badges (for teaching strategies) obtained thus far and how they have used those in their classrooms. Furthermore, teachers create a PowerPoint presentation using a provided template to share about one selected teaching strategy. The teaching strategies include; jigsaw, story-telling, role-play, learning stations, mind-map, game-based learning, field-trip and gallery walk.

The training session started off with a sharing session on how teachers have recently used technology with their learners or personally. The sharing took longer than expected but was worthwhile, inspiring and equally enjoyed by all teachers. Below are comments made by individual teachers per school:

Nogqaza teachers

- SchoolNet visits were found to be helpful as it prompted them to start using the technology
- Technical problem/s such as X-box missing a cable were all resolved – they have then used the Xbox several times and they realised how excited their learners were
- Teachers think they are ready to use other curriculum DVD's with the Xbox as they feel confident enough to operate it
- After the visits teachers used their tablets and were amazed how the Apps assisted learners with their writing skills – teachers confessed that they hadn't believed this would happen and felt guilty that they have been depriving their learners during the first term
- Teachers already were beginning to implement peer coaching strategies as they helped each other with tablet skills when they needed to upload documents to the project website

Qhamukile teachers

- Shortage of tablets is a concern at this school – Mrs Shelembe who is a foundation phase HOD mentioned that the lesson took longer when learners share tablets in big groups
- Ivy, a grade R teacher shared that she's been using tablets as early as the first week of the schools re-opening. She explained an alphabet musical App which helps with listening and speaking skills – learners learn correct pronunciation as they follow a leader singer in the App – also they quickly learnt the days of the week in their correct order
- Ms Buselaphi Shelembe added that learners learn better when using a tablet - hand and eye coordination is improving. They enjoy the Magic marker App because it helps them to learn to write the alphabet.

Cedara teachers

- Ms Linda Zuma, the principal of Cedara Primary made a confession that after the SchoolNet team visit and their encouragement, having tried using tablets made them realize that they can actually use them in the first term
- She continued to say that her eyes had been opened, she couldn't believe when one of her grade one learners who is repeating the grade and who couldn't write her name previously, was able to do so using a Big Fat Canvas App
- She had also used an App for colours and shapes and her children had loved it
- She mentioned that the Xbox issue was resolved and both grade R and 1 have used it

Triandra teachers

- "Our learners use technology everyday" – "our principal, ms Flo Buthelezi encourages us to teach using technology daily" said Thembi Maphumulo

- When Thembi asked by other teachers what made them to be confident in integrating technology in their teaching, she simply made this powerful statement “DURING YOUR OWN TIME PLAY WITH THE GAMES”
- She also mentioned that the way learners enjoy learning with technology is sufficient encouragement for them as teachers

Thembelihle teachers

Ms Nonhlanhla Khambule who is a grade R teacher at the school mentioned that she had only received the tablets two days before the workshop and therefore she had not used them.

These sharings were followed by a hot discussion around the question ‘what are the challenges in integrating technology in day to day teaching?’. Ms Buselaphi Shelembe summarized everything in two words; Attitude and confidence – or lack of confidence or knowledge (ie. which games are available for specific content) and ALL teachers agreed with that statement.

Module Content

The first activity focussed on tablet management techniques which made teachers realize they need more practice to become confident users. Some of the skills learnt in the beginning of the training were long forgotten to some. These include switching off automatic updates, personalising the blue-tooth name, just to mention a few. Teachers were given a mobile skills checklist to evaluate themselves. They were encouraged to use the template to practice those skills which they have not mastered with the help of the How-to document.



Some of the teachers didn’t like the idea of picking a teaching strategy to present because others had forgotten about other teaching strategies that were done a while ago. On the other hand, others enjoyed the challenge! However some were helpful to remind those who had forgotten. The content of the presentation included what the strategy was about, a brief overview of how the teacher uses the strategy in class and how it promotes 21st century teaching and learning. It

became clear that as teachers were often using the Kingsoft App to create documents, none of them ever tried creating a PowerPoint presentation, however the template became useful as a guide. Fast paced participants gladly assisted those who were struggling.

It was clear that teachers were not going to be able to complete their presentations because of time but at the end of the workshop they had an idea of what was expected. They were encouraged to support each other in completing the presentations because they were going to present these during the showcase day in April.

During the training, all teachers were very attentive, co-operative, engaged and excited about the progress they have made compared to where they had come from in terms of skills and knowledge gained since the start of the Learning Gains project. This time no one was rushing to go home – the session ended with lots of group selfies.

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