

## Western Cape Peer Coaching Workshop

The first of the Western Cape Peer Coaching workshops in the Learning Gains through Play project was held at Solomon Qatyana primary on the afternoon of June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016. The principal of the host school, Ms Mniki opened the workshop with some words of welcome and the staff at her school had generously prepared for the workshop with a range of cakes and treats to accompany the tea and coffee they offered.



*Above: Hlengiwe Mfeka, project manager introducing the Principal Ms Mniki principal of the host school, Solomon Qatyana in Asanda Village, Somerset West.*

*Right: Ms Ntombifikile Ndabeni (SMT Christmas Tinto) and Tembika Tulwana (Christmas Tinto)*



### Background

The Peer Coaching (PC) Course has a long history with SchoolNet. The course that was designed by the Peer Ed group in the USA was first introduced to South Africa by Microsoft and adapted by SchoolNet for use in Africa. Peer coaching is a highly collaborative professional development experience that assists teachers to develop the skills they need to coach colleagues to succeed in integrating learning technologies and to promote 21st-Century or deep learning activities. The PC course excels at creating a community of practice within a school but also prolongs and extends whatever professional development courses the teachers have already had. There are three pillars to peer coaching, namely, communication, lesson design, and technology integration. The reason it is not undertaken by schools in all of the SchoolNet projects is that it lasts almost a whole year, involves most of the staff including

the principal and can therefore become expensive. Schools tend to nominate two or three teachers to train as peer coaches and in each successive year more peer coaches are trained.

### Module 1

The main objective of this session was to prepare teachers to better understand what it is that we were trying to achieve or improve through peer coaching and what their roles would be in taking full responsibility of being peer coaches at their schools. Through this discussion the new peer coaches will become able to communicate the philosophy to their peers or relevant stakeholders and thus take joint ownership in working towards effective integration of technology.

It was important to explain that the peer coaching course encourages reflection and analysis of teaching practice. It fosters collaboration and improved communication among teachers and provides on-going staff development at every level of ICT use. For that reason, there was a great deal of background to introduce about the purpose of the course but once underway, Hlengiwe wasted no time in engaging the peer coaches in their first module.



*Hlengiwe Mfeka, Ellhaam Isaacs, Bianca Beyer and Ella Klassen (TTP) listening to Mary-Lynne from Temperance Town Primary*

Teachers participated in a jigsaw teaching strategy which covered two main headings namely; why use peer coaching, as well as everyone's roles and responsibilities.



Expert groups were given sets of questions as well as resources to use for their research. Included, were questions such as, “What does effective professional development look like?” “What impact does professional development such as peer coaching have on classroom practice?” Essential roles that coaches should be taking on in their schools were discussed in detail. Group discussions were rich and fruitful.



The coaching cycle and planning sessions were briefly discussed with the participants but there would be more to be unpacked in the next session because principals would be required to participate in that next session. Teachers left this workshop feeling confident and committed in this new venture.

Hlengiwe Mfeka, SchoolNet SA 21-06-2016