

## Learning Gains through Play

### Western Cape – Showcase and Graduation 3 June 2016

A graduation ceremony and showcase was organised because teachers and principals in the project had completed the first two components of the professional development of the Learning Gains project. This comprised the ICT4RED modules from the Learning and Teaching with Mobile Devices course as well as SchoolNet's Change Leadership course for senior management teams. The next professional development component, currently underway, is Peer Coaching, which will last until the end of 2016.

The graduation ceremony was organised by WCED Metro East officials in collaboration with Somerset West Methodist Primary and the SchoolNet project manager, Ms Hlengiwe Mfeka. The venue was Somerset West Methodist Primary school and the event was well attended by teachers from the project schools, School Governing Body representatives as well as the provincial and district WCED officials, including the District Manager, Mr B. Schereka.



The Deputy Principal from Christmas Tinto, Mr Mzwandile Nkohla performed his duties in a highly professional style as the master of ceremonies. He started the proceedings by introducing the Grade 7 girls' choir, who sang a number of items beautifully.



The first guest speaker was Mr Trevor Daniels who is head of Curriculum at the Metro East District. Mr Daniels welcomed all the teachers and guests to their district and gave an interesting account of how technologies are impacting on learning.

Next to speak was Janet Thomson, Executive Director of SchoolNet South Africa who provided a brief back ground to how the project started, as well as a very short history of SchoolNet South Africa. She outlined the aims of the project as well as summarising the achievements and findings so far. The emphasis in the project has been on promoting learner-centred teaching and specifically promoting “play”. The learner assessment has focused on the impact that has been made on visual literacy, oral communication in English, fine motor skills, gross motor skills and numeracy. Thomson explained that teachers in Finland, the super power of education worldwide, believe that children learn best when they are having fun, and that our duty as teachers is to produce happy children who know how to learn.



*Ms Hlengiwe Mfeka*



*Ms Janet Thomson Mr Mzwandile Nkohl*



*Mr Ben Schereka*

Hlengiwe read out a message from Katie Huston, the D G Murray Trust portfolio manager, responsible for the Learning Gains through Play programme who highlighted the dedication of the teachers. The video of this address can be accessed from this link: [https://youtu.be/DTI\\_8bX2zL0](https://youtu.be/DTI_8bX2zL0)

The District Manager, Mr Benjamin Schereka was asked to say a few words. He praised the district officials, Mr Rodney Nissen, Mr Siphon Didiza and Mr Jaco Josephs for their excellent work in firmly establishing the unit at the Metropolitan East District that is responsible for innovative teaching with learning technologies.

It was then the turn of the teachers to provide accounts of their experiences in the programme. The first presentation was by Ellhaam Isaacs and Glenda Pietersen who explained their use of the story telling strategy. Two videos of this presentation are available on the SchoolNet YouTube Channel <https://youtu.be/sjMi1ENrizM> and <https://youtu.be/66q2Cx4Btfo>

Ms Noxolo Buyeye, a Grade 1 teacher at Solomon Qatyana Primary in Asanda Village spoke next. Noxolo had already made presentations at other events such as the international Reading Association conference and the SchoolNet national conference for ICTs in the Classroom, both in 2015 and was therefore a confident and competent presenter. She gave a lively account of how she uses the learning stations strategy to enable her to teach a number of concepts at the same time. This video shows

Noxolo explaining how her tablet has enabled her to make a Birthday Chart with photos of her learners, much improved from the days when it had to be drawn by hand. <https://youtu.be/wm1KlGvIWdk>



*Ms N Buyeye*



*Ms L Melapi*



*Ms. Isaacs and Pietersen*

Ms Ntombifikile Ndabeni from Christmas Tinto Primary made a presentation in which she explained how the learning technologies had made classroom management easier. Children had learnt to become better behaved in order to warrant their “turn”. She mentioned that attendance figures had also improved. Part of her presentation is available from this link <https://youtu.be/OYQvJ8SUiDE> .

Bianca Beyer from Temperance Town Primary in Gordon’s Bay shared about a role play teaching strategy. In her sharing it was revealed that she carefully and creatively plans for her lessons, putting the learner at the centre of learning by allowing them to have a say or make decisions on issues that interest them. She explained how role play is a problem solving teaching strategy which develops learners’ critical thinking as they solve real life problems or issues. Her interesting emphasis was on the importance of involving learners on a discussion/debrief after the role play so that at the end they get real meaning/lesson out of their acting. A video of her presentation is accessible from this link <https://www.youtube.com/SchoolNetSA>

Next, Ella Klaasen also from Temperance Town Primary School gave a presentation about their use of tablets when using their favourite teaching strategy, role play. Ella’s video can be access here <https://youtu.be/MMa43HzGJBc> and was followed by Ms Lizeka Melapi, a Grade R teachers from Nomsa Mopangwana Primary in Khayalitsha. Lizeka is well known in the project for being one of the most innovative users of Xbox Kinect games for her grade R class. She explained how her learners were still learning to read, so barely recognising their own names or sounding phonics, and yet they were very capable of selecting the Kinect games that they wished to play while she scrolls through menus. It was a great pity that her video of this was not shown but can be viewed here from this link: <https://youtu.be/k3x6rW3pWJc> and the same class using the Xbox here [https://youtu.be/iC\\_rqHjYU5o](https://youtu.be/iC_rqHjYU5o)

The senior management members were next to make presentations. The first address was given by Mr Hindley, Principal of hosting school Somerset West Methodist Primary School. Mr Hindley spoke in detail of the collaborative process at the start of the project to establish a school mission statement. This was reinforced by SWMPS SMT member, Trevor De Waal.



Next up was Ms Nokwazi Mniki, Principal of Solomon Qatyana Primary School in Asanda Village. Ms Mniki spoke of how the impact of the Learning Gains through Play Project had been life-changing for her school. The effects had not only been felt by the teachers that have been directly involved, but by her whole SMT team and the teachers of the other grades, who were all eager to implement the teaching-with-technology strategies that the project has introduced in her school. Ms Mniki's enthusiasm and praise for all involved lifted the excitement levels for the forth-coming handing out of the certificates. However there was still time for Mary-Anne Meyer of Temperance Town Primary School in Gordon's Bay to offer the vote of thanks for the opportunities afforded to all involved in this exciting project.



*Ms Ntombifikile Ndabeni*



*Ms Mary-Anne Meyer*



*Mr Rodney Nissen*

The next speaker was Mr Rodney Nissen who congratulated everyone in the Learning Gains through Play project. He invited Mr Schereka to come up and hand out the certificates to the school teams. There was a celebratory air as teachers and their SMT staff came up to be congratulated and photographed. Mr Nissen thanked everyone for all their efforts and invited all to share in a sumptuous spread, topped off with a delicious chocolate cake!



*Dignitaries from the WCED, SchoolNet SA as well as Tracey Butchart, the programme evaluator are featured in this photo with the teachers who made presentations at the graduation event.*

At the end of the ceremony teachers grouped with their colleagues for proud Kodak moments.



*Temperance Town Primary*



*Solomon Qatyana Primary*



*Nomsa Mapongwana Primary*



*Christmas Tinto Primary*



*Somerset West Methodist Primary*