

Peer coaching programme takes off in KZN Learning Gains through Play project

The KZN peer coaching programme in the Learning Gains through Play project finally took off on July 28th 2016 at Thembelihle primary in Howick. Regardless of the freezing afternoon, teachers from the four project schools out of five attended the workshop – each school consists of two coaches either from Grade R or Grade 1. These teachers were nominated by their peers, guided by specific criteria relating to the attributes of an ideal peer coach. Hlengiwe Mfeka from SchoolNet SA is the facilitator of the peer coaching programme.



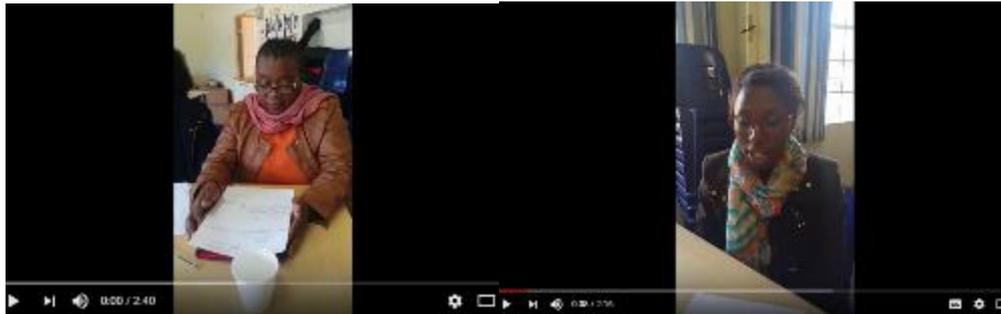
Peer coaching is a highly collaborative professional development experience that assists teachers to develop the skills they need to coach colleagues to succeed in integrating learning technologies and to promote 21st-Century or deep learning activities. The PC course excels at creating a community of practice within a school but also prolongs and extends whatever professional development courses the teachers have already received through a project.

The main objective of this first session was to orient participants to the peer coaching programme so as to understand what is it we are trying to achieve or improve and be able to identify how peer coaching can play a role in effective professional development.

The first activity used a jig saw teaching strategy to unpack roles and responsibilities of peer coaches and to explore what peer coaches need to know and do to support teachers' needs.

These teachers had previously participated in the jigsaw teaching strategy during their professional development training and they are experimenting/using it with their learners – therefore they were very familiar with how it works and how effective it can be. They were deeply and actively involved in discussions. During the debriefing, after the jigsaw, participants were able to define their major roles and responsibilities as peer coaches. They identified that characteristics and impact of effective professional development that offers teachers the most opportunity to collaborate. Here below are two videos of peer coaches' feedback.

Jabu Mkhize giving group feedback on the impact of effective professional development



Mpume Hadebe defining roles and responsibilities of a peer coach

<https://youtu.be/cYnaH6LRzWE>

<https://youtu.be/o-7vLqXINCM>

The coaching cycle and planning template was handed to the participants. Then the



facilitator took them through the instructions on how to complete the template. The facilitator also asked participants to make examples of how they would approach the listed questions. This helped to ensure that everyone understood the requirements and expectations of completing the plan. The coaching plan

helps coaches to identify who they will collaborate with as well as the goals that they will plan in collaboration with those teachers. Participants were told that they need to have the coaching plan ready prior to session 2. Teachers left the session feeling confident and committed to embark on this new journey. Once again we thank Thembelihle Primary in Howick for their hospitality in hosting the workshop.