

Report on Department of Correctional Services Training- Westville Correctional Centre

Background

In 2012, the Department of Correctional Services purchased Intel tablets for a number of its facilities. In 2016, it was reported that many staff had moved on from its facilities and as a result, further training needed to be provided to new staff in order to maximise the spend on the devices and in particular master training needed to be provided so that adequate capacity building can be hosted at each facility as required.

SchoolNet's, Ms Hlengiwe Mfeka, conducted master training from 15 – 19 February 2016 at Durban Westville Correctional Centre. The workshops started with a welcome from Deputy Director, Ms Marion Johnson. The Director of the Westville Correctional Services facility, Mr Taljaard and the education centre managers, Mr Pillay were also on hand to welcome the participants. The workshops started with a background to the course and the activities that would be covered during the week.



Twenty-four participants were present from 9 Correctional Services facilities and these were: Mdantsane (2), East London Medium A (1), Rustenburg (3), Durban Central (2), Pretoria Female (1), Boksburg (2), Empangeni, Qalakabusha (3), Durban Westville (8) and two from the head office. The skill levels of participants varied from those being not-literate to advanced literacy.



The computer lab has one big trolley which stores and charges laptops for teaching purposes and for UNISA students. The laptops are loaded with the latest software i.e. windows 8 and Microsoft Office 2013.

Participants cited the following expectations for the workshop:

“How do I transfer knowledge that I have to someone else” – how to teach using a computer

“Skills of using a computer so as to share with students”

“Access information using computers”

“To better assist students with their technological needs”

“My students know more than myself” – I need skills to be more comfortable to assist them”

“Know more about network connections – access information”

“To integrate computers in my learning area”

“To become familiar with online environment – PowerPoint and advanced excel”

“Improve computer skills – PowerPoint, advanced excel and data base”

“Learn more about online registration, advanced skills for computer – researching online”

“How to monitor what the offenders are doing on their devices”

Two courses, Intel Getting Started and Microsoft One Step Further were covered over the five days as well as an orientation to the Intel Classroom Management Software. Participants were not able to practice their Classroom Management skills due to the serial codes for the classroom management software not being processed in time by Pinnacle.

Getting Started Training

Intel® Teach Getting Started is an entry level ICT skills course that includes activities focused on basic computer skills and 21st Century teaching which deals with learner-centered approaches to teaching and learning.

The course included an introduction to 21st century teaching and learning skills and approaches, and involved Planning, executing, reviewing, and sharing meaningful and relevant activities.

Individual action plans were required at the end of the course and these display how the participant plans to apply new skills and approaches to enhance productivity and professional practice over time.

Participants were excited to learn that the Intel Getting Started course was not restricted to ICT skills, also strategies to improve their teaching and equipping learners to survive in the 21 Century world of work.

One Step Further

The One Step Further course focusses on helping teachers develop information skills and the ability to design simple learning objects for teaching and learning. This course is developed in Microsoft One Note and further allows the participant to experience this for gathering and working with information from multiple sources.

There are four modules to the course: Information gathering, Simple research, Learning objects and Mathematics and Science resources. Participants found these very useful and were enthusiastic to learn how to critically evaluate information and the UNISA coordinators felt that they were really empowered to assist students to do research. All participants thought that the information they gained from the course needed to be shared with their students.

Demonstration of Classroom Management Software

The Classroom management software offers teachers an environment where they can closely manage and monitor what learners are doing on and with their devices; look at ways to stop any untoward behavior; how to share learners' screens, offer individual assistance without causing disruption in the classroom.

The teacher trial version was used at Westville for demonstration in the absence of the software licenses being available for use during the training.



Installation & Training of Intel Management Software

Three weeks later, after much effort on SchoolNet and Intel's side finally ensure that Pinnacle provided the correct serial keys and links to the software. This software was trialled and tested whilst a secondary installation and training session was organised for Durban Westville. SchoolNet's trainer, Mr Themba Mabaso, arranged for installation in the week of 7-10 March 2016.

After much backwards and forwards, the software eventually did work in the way it is supposed to and instructions were then provided to both Mr Mabaso and Mr Classen on Wednesday, 9th March 2016. Both technicians worked on installations on Thursday and Friday. Eventually, Mr Classen felt confident that he could complete the installation of remaining devices rather than Themba having to stay an extra week.

Lessons learnt....

Software needs to be ordered well in advance of training in order to ensure that serial keys are provided timeously as these are sourced through IT companies.

Sufficient time must be included for the software to be trialed and tested so that we are assured of instructions for a working solution, which in turn will ensure quick and easy installations at the correctional services facilities.

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