

Spotlight on Mr J.E Khumalo from Habeni Primary School



KwaZulu Natal teachers participating in the Telkom Connected Schools Project have been an awesome group to work with and this is mainly attributed to the change in thinking by the school management teams.

This month's spotlight is on the enthusiastic Mr J.E Khumalo, the principal of Habeni Primary School who is also the Social Science teacher at the school.

Mr Khumalo reports that being part of SchoolNet's Change Leadership in ICT Integration program has helped him immensely as it has helped him realise that leadership is not about working in isolation but that it is more about sharing the workload with his team, where delegation does not mean abdication of responsibility. His senior management team has learnt that much is achievable when the school has a shared vision which pushes all stakeholders to work towards achieving the same goal for the school community. In the six months of Change Leadership for ICT Integration training has taken place, the SMT members have gained confidence in their leadership skills and are now more actively involved in the management of the school.

Mr Khumalo says, "Haben Primary School will never be the same. This course has helped change our view on using ICT's through changing our attitude. This has created an awareness on what is accessible for improved teaching and learning."

For a number of years, Mr Chinsammy was the only teacher who had the skills to create mark sheets and use computers effectively and this caused teachers to constantly require assistance from him and this in turn created an additional burden on him. Habeni teachers attended Intel's Getting Started and since then things changed; teachers have become independent and are creating mark sheets, typing exam papers and creating lessons using PowerPoints. Some teachers are now also exploring Encarta for offline research.

Mr Khumalo who also attended the ICT skills training said "I used to write all my question papers by hand then make copies for learners but now I type ALL my documents and this saves me a lot of time. I still struggle a little with PowerPoint but I am not worried because I attend after school computer lessons with my colleagues and I know that in time I will get it right." The teachers at the school practice their newly learnt skills daily and sometimes work till late in the afternoon because practicing these skills can be fun!

Using Encarta excites Mr Khumalo. He reports that his learners love the fact that they are not limited to their text books for learning. They are now able to do research in class for projects and learning has become practical. Learners watch Social Science experiments, short videos and find pictures of which makes learning much more meaningful.

Looking into the future, Mr Khumalo says that he would like his school to have internet access so that his teachers can prepare and present more exciting lessons and allow learners the opportunity access more learning resources. His ideal school is one where each of his learners has access to a connected laptop or tablet throughout the day.

"This project requires a lot of time from us, and it is all worthwhile. This is personal and professional development that helps us go beyond our call of duty to help our learners be hopeful of a better future" Mr Khumalo can't seem to express in words the joy and fulfilment that the Telkom Connected School project has brought to the school and he encourages all teachers to be actively involved when opportunities like these arise.

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