



Keshma Patel - A Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert Using Minecraft



Overview

Country: South Africa

Location: Cape Town, Western Cape

Industry: Education

Software and services:

Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert program

Websites:

www.micklefield.co.za/
education.microsoft.com
'Mrs Patel's Classroom' at
<http://bit.ly/1V9zzCM>

Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts advance the conversation about improving student outcomes through innovative uses of technology in teaching and learning.

Keshma Patel, a Grade 6 teacher at Micklefield Primary School for Girls in Cape Town and a 2016 Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert, believes that "as a teacher your learning should never end. Education is ever changing. You never have a dull moment. There are always new goals to set, new ideas to explore and different ways to inspire young minds."

Micklefield Primary is a small private girls' school situated in the heart of Rondebosch in Cape Town. This school is alive with ideas and possibilities and is making great strides in focusing on technology integration. The Intermediate Phase teachers are encouraged to use the blended learning approach in their classrooms. When Keshma joined the staff in 2015 she immediately encouraged her class to bring their own computer devices to school and she set up a 1:1 blended learning program. She says "After completing my first big blended learning project with my class, I was hooked. It amazed me to see how much information the girls in my class retained and how easy it was to integrate all learning levels and styles."

Keshma is currently completing her Masters' degree at the University of Cape Town on the topic of how the use of technology develops critical thinking. At the end of 2015 Keshma decided to explore using Minecraft in her class to promote creativity, collaboration, and problem solving. Keshma felt that she wanted to use the world's most popular game as a tool for learning and introduced Minecraft in her classroom even though she wasn't entirely familiar with using it.





"Minecraft was something that was being consistently talked about at break times and whenever the girls had a free moment in class. After having endless conversations with my class about what they enjoyed about it, hearing about Minecraft at various workshops and reading posts that were being shared among the global MIEEs (Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts), I decided to give it a go and I have never looked back!"

- Keshma Patel
Mickelfield Primary

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft in Education, visit:

www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx

To find out about the Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert program, see: <http://www.educatornetwork.com/Sites/Educators/Index>

For information about Minecraft in Education, see: education.minecraft.net/

For more information about Mickelfield Primary, visit: www.micklefield.co.za/

Getting Started

"I began the lesson by allowing the girls to play. I grouped my class into those that were experts with girls that had not played the game before. They spent the first lesson teaching each other and me. Once we got the hang of it, I started introducing specific themes such as area and perimeter, odd and even numbers and square roots. I allowed the girls to direct my teaching and I soon started finding more and more that I could link with normal school activities."

The girls in Keshma's class loved the fact that they were using such a popular game as part of their learning at school and Keshma is keen to motivate others to start using Minecraft in the classroom. *"Minecraft has become my new hobby!"*

Encouraging others

Keshma is currently completing her Masters' degree at the University of Cape Town on the topic of how the use of technology develops critical thinking and she is passionate about sharing what she is doing with other teachers. Keshma is a teacher who likes to share ideas and learn from others. She organises a termly meeting of twelve Grade 6 teachers from other schools in the Rondebosch area which includes sharing different ways of incorporating technology in their classroom. Keshma places all her project outlines and examples of learners' work on her classroom website for others to use and the girls in Keshma's class keep evidence of their individual learning on their individual websites which they have created. Keshma also helps other teachers on the staff develop their blended learning projects through various staff developments.

Keshma says she would motivate her peers to start using Minecraft by *"showing them what they could achieve by using Minecraft in their classroom as the first step. I would do this by encouraging my peers to visit my classroom when I am using Minecraft in a lesson. Another way would be to encourage them to listen to what the learners in their class are interested in (technology and gaming-wise), they should not disregard these and instead try and incorporate them into their teaching. To not be afraid to let your learners teach you a thing or two is important."*

Collaboration with a global community

Keshma says, *"I would like to see teachers be more adventurous. Explore what is out there and allow yourself to learn from others, both in your community and globally. Technology is such a powerful resource, that it is a pity that there are still so many classrooms around the world that do not have access to it. If you have it, make the most of it!"*

Keshma has discovered that in just a few months the Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert program has already made a big difference to her teaching. She says, *"One of the biggest perks is the almost immediate sharing of knowledge from teachers all over the globe. It has been amazing to see the variety of project ideas, tips and tricks which has all improved my teaching."*

Key Technology

Minecraft