

## Report on Microsoft Partners in Learning Training conducted in Financial Year 2012

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# 1. Introduction

Since the inception of the Microsoft Partners in Learning programme more than 31 000 South African teachers have received training, including the more than 4 000 teachers who were trained using the Partners in Learning materials in FY2012. SchoolNet SA continues to be instrumental in helping Microsoft to develop and localize training materials for the various Partners in Learning courses and remained the major service provider for teacher training activities in 2012. In the table below the statistics of all Microsoft Partners in Learning training sessions (as at April 2012) are tabulated according to the courses offered and the provinces in which training occurred.

FY 12: July 2011 - 30 June			MS & Non-MS Funded Provincial Totals								
Training Program	YTD	PTD	EC	FS	GP	KZN	MPU	NW	NC	Lim	WC
Peer Coaching-Teachers	320	2064	82	75	22	112	0	0	0	29	0
HelpDesk-Teachers & Learners	81	1501	0	14	0	40	0	0	0	27	0
HelpDesk-Master Trainers	60	81	18	0	0	0	0	0	21	0	21
ICT Leadership-Principals	85	382	0	85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT Leadership-Master Trainers	0	89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
One Step Further-Master Trainers	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
One Step Further-Teachers	85	333	0	23	62	0	0	0	0	0	0
WebQuests-Master Trainers	0	147	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WebQuests-Teachers	58	956	0	0	0	58	0	0	0	0	0
ICT Skills-Teachers	3363	23949	27	93	3161	22	15	0	13	32	0
ICT Skills-Master Trainers	84	340	25	0	30	0	0	0	13	0	16
Live @ Edu	0	105	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mouse Mishief	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capacity Building-Department	0	77	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ITA Teachers	55	1086	0	0	55	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>4191</b>	<b>31141</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>3330</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>37</b>

As Microsoft South Africa's funding for Partners in Learning teacher training is reduced there has been a shift away from Microsoft sponsoring massive training rollouts. Instead, Microsoft sponsors the initial development of courseware and trainer capacity building and in some cases selected proof-of-concept trainings. In terms of sustaining the programme it is then hoped that either other corporate sponsors will cover the costs of additional Microsoft Partners in Learning training as has happened in the Vodacom Foundation project or that provincial Departments of Education will pay for large scale training programs for their teachers as has happened in the Free State. Whilst training sessions sponsored by other funders can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.schoolnet.org.za/reports/index.htm> this report details the various training sessions and activities that SchoolNet SA was commissioned to run by Microsoft South Africa in the 2012 financial year.

## 2. Peer Coaching

The peer coaching programme is a whole-school professional development model aimed at training teacher leaders to serve as coaches for colleagues. Through the peer coaching process, teachers are encouraged to promote engaged learning and to incorporate ICT integration into teaching and learning practices.

The peer coaching programme is a nine month programme of five workshops preparing teacher leaders how to improve lesson design and master coaching skills. Preparation for the Peer Coaching course is always challenging as the course requirements are often ignored by principals and the coaches selection criteria is often not observed. Some of the requirements for nominated coaches to participate in the programme are: ICT literacy; access to computers; connection to the internet; and a completed application form. Despite these challenges, teachers who commit to the Peer Coaching programme and who



actively participate in all sessions are exposed to a wealth of tools and resources for developing a coaching plan; they learn to communicate more effectively with their colleagues; they learn skills for improving lessons; and they engage in authentic problem-based tasks that help them to teach more effectively.

In 2011, Microsoft sponsored four clusters of Peer Coaching training in East London (Eastern Cape), Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape), Tshwane (Gauteng) and Bloemfontein (Free State) whilst three other clusters in KwaZulu-Natal and two more in Limpopo were sponsored by the Vodacom Foundation and SITA. The four Microsoft sponsored Peer Coaching clusters are described in more detail below.

### ***Eastern Cape: Peer Coaching in East London***

Stirling Primary school once again played host to the training using their spacious laboratory of 35 workstations, an administrator computer connected to a data projector, printer and air conditioning.

The 2011 cluster was composed of teachers from 11 schools and a representative from the District office. Schools were mostly clustered around East London but some participants travelled vast distances to attend training: representatives from Nxuba Primary and Cradock travelled in excess of 400 kilometres return; Kopano Secondary teachers travelled in excess of 150 kilometres from Queenstown; and teachers from Nonyaniso Primary in Middleburg travelled more than 500 kilometres return. This is evidence of the dedication of coaches to attend this course.

Twenty teachers completed the Peer Coaching course from the following schools:

Buluga Farm School  
Cradock District Office  
De Vos Malan High School  
Fikile Bhengu Primary School

Komga Public School  
Kopano Secondary School  
Matthew Goniwe Comp School  
Nonyaniso Primary School

Nxuba Primary School  
Pefferville Primary School  
Stirling Primary School  
Willow Park Primary School

Principals are usually only invited to two sessions, on the morning of the first workshop and the afternoon of the seventh workshop. However at the first workshop one principal noted “A very informative workshop. I shall attend even next time” and he subsequently attended all sessions. He further noted: “There is a good relationship between the facilitator and the coaches. Everybody’s ideas are respected. It was so nice working in groups as respect was the key aspect. I definitely hope that after this my teachers will be more than ready to coach others”.

Below are selected comments from teachers:

*“The training gives me more insight in using ICT in teaching and learning”*

*“I learned that using ICT in the classroom needn’t be complicated! It can be used to enhance a lesson. I also learned what a good lesson plan should look like, and how to revise them. We are teaching digital learners!”*

*“I have learnt the importance of setting up a well-structured lesson plan as this can make a big difference when doing projects.”*



### ***Eastern Cape: Peer Coaching in Port Elizabeth***

Training in Port Elizabeth was held at Algoa College, which had sufficient working computers with connectivity to the internet. Mr. Sammy Bouwers, a district coordinator was always on hand to assist with technical challenges.

Twenty four teachers from the eleven schools listed below participated in this course. Special mention must be made of teachers from Blueilliesbush Primary school who travelled in excess of 250km from Tsitsikamma to attend this training.

Blueilliesbush Primary School  
Daniels Primary School  
Helenvale Primary School  
Malabar Primary School

Malmaison Primary School  
Pellsrus Primary School  
Sivuyiseni Primary School  
Solomon Mahlangu

St Theresa Primary School  
Woodlands Primary School  
Zamukukhanya Primary School

On the whole coaches had ample opportunities to practice collaboration and communication skills during workshops and found that there were sufficient hands on activities to be engaging and to encourage improved skills in coaching. Participants gave the following feedback on their experiences of Peer Coaching:

*"(I) found this workshop very informative and I learnt a fair amount about what is expected of a coach."*

*"It is a challenging and exciting process"*

*"there is a lot one gains from (watching) presentations of different groups on how to improve lessons"*

*"this is a very rewarding session. I feel very privileged to part of this programme"*



### **Gauteng: Peer Coaching in Tshwane South**

There were 26 participants from ten schools in the Tshwane South District in this cluster. The venue for this training was initially Northridge Primary school but this venue proved to be too far for the majority of participants to travel. Training was subsequently moved to the Nan Hua Buddhist Temple in which was sufficiently close for all participating schools to attend training. Representatives from the following schools participated in this cluster:

Chokoe Primary School  
Cultura Primary School  
Dan Kutumela High  
Hlolisa Primary School

Mandlomsobo Primary School  
Protem Elsen School  
Sedibeng Primary school  
Sihluziwe Primary School

Sitjhejiwe Primary School  
Thereso Primary School

Participants were successfully able to log onto the PIL Network and made the following comments:



*"This session has helped me to evaluate my lesson plans and come up with new ideas that might help enhance learning through ideas and opinions of other colleagues. I'm looking forward to impart this knowledge to my colleagues at school."*

*"I've learnt many things; this has helped me realize that my lessons need a thorough improvement. I'm very excited with the progress of the workshop so far! "*

*"I can't wait to see the excitement and the improvement that ICT is bringing into our teaching and learning. It is time that all teachers start integrating ICT in their teaching and learning. This is a workshop that is relevant to us as educators in this 21st century"*

### **Free State: Peer Coaching in Bloemfontein**

Thirty two teachers from the following sixteen schools participated in this course which the University of the Free State hosted the training in its well-equipped computer centre.

Bergmanshoogte School  
Eunice High School  
Iketsetseng Comprehensive  
Legae Intermediate School  
Mafube Intermediate School  
Manyatseng Intermediate

Marang School  
Ntediseng Intermediate School  
Paul Roux Intermediate  
Refentse Primary School  
Rosenhof High School  
Thabo Vuyo School

Trompsburg Secondary School  
Unity Primary School  
Welkom High School  
Wilhem Postma Primary  
Lesotho STIC delegates

Whilst coaches actively participated in the communication and listening skills activities, challenges were initially cited in completing artifacts to explain Peer Coaching to other staff members. This was directly a result of the fact that many coaches had never before experienced using PowerPoint or Publisher and the criteria for the selection of coaches had not been adhered to. To make the most of the enthusiasm of the participants, the facilitator was able to employ just in time learning and with the help of other literate coaches she worked through basic skills needed to complete the task at hand.

After the first workshop, the poor computer skills of some coaches prompted the facilitator to request an assistant for all future peer coaching workshops. The assistant was able to work in tandem with the facilitator to provide just in time support for skills required to complete activities. This helped to ensure that the needs of all participants in this large group were met and that coaches with good computer skills were not slowed down by participant who still needed help completing basic computer tasks.

Coaches listed the following responses when asked what they thought would be their challenges to implementation of Peer Coaching at their respective schools:

- “Educators willingness to make it a success”*
- “Access to computers if the centre is locked”*
- “Attitude of senior educators who are not comfortable using ICTs”*
- “Coaching colleagues who have never touched a computer”*
- “Convincing staff that they could all benefit from coaching”*
- “To find a time slot for peer coaching and to let peer coaching become pervasive”*
- “Support from SMT and colleagues”*

It is hoped that the Peer Coaching course has provided the coaches with strategies for overcoming these obstacles to technology being integrated into teaching and learning at their schools.



### 3. Microsoft Sponsored Teacher Training

As mentioned in the introduction, Microsoft no longer sponsors large training rollouts of teachers but does still sponsor capacity building for new trainers or proof of concept training sessions. In the 2012 financial year, Microsoft paid for ICT Skills for Teachers trainers to be trained at the Edunova Learning Centre in the Western Cape and at SciBono in Gauteng; and NorthWest Departmental officials received an ICT Skills for Teachers training refresher course and were then trained as trainers in the One Step Further course. The Vele School in Limpopo which is supported by the Oprah Winfrey Foundation received ICT Skills for Teachers training and a HelpDesk course was run at Edunova as Microsoft's contribution to these two initiatives. These training sessions are described in more detail below.

#### ***Western Cape - Edunova – ICT Skills for Teachers – Training of Trainers***

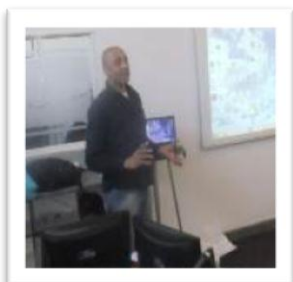
The Edunova Learning Centre has been set up in Philippi, Cape Town as a central venue where teachers and principals can use computer facilities and attend training sessions and activities to receive professional development and support. As their contribution to this centre, Microsoft agreed to offer an ICT Skills for Teachers Training of Trainers course, so that this course could be offered at the centre.

This training of trainers session took place between the 28th and 30th of September 2011. The training venue had computers for each participant and good internet connectivity but the master trainer was unfortunately not able to install the Microsoft Learning Suite software on to the machines. The training set up which comprised clusters of computers made for a relaxed, interactive environment.

A total of sixteen participants attended the training of trainers' session. The majority of participants were young people who had been placed at surrounding schools to serve as IT lab assistants. Four participants were Edunova facilitators who train teachers from the surrounding schools on the use of ICT, with the help of the IT lab assistants.



On the first day of training the master trainer introduced the Partners in Learning programme and worked through a scenario with the group. When participants were tasked with working on scenarios of their own choice the master trainer realized that despite most of the participants being IT lab assistants, the majority lacked the computer skills expected of a potential trainer.



On the second day the master trainer went through the course design principles of the ICT Skills for Teachers course. Participants were then tasked with completing an intermediate scenario within twenty minutes. At the end of the allocated time only two participants had completed the task. Of these participants Quinton Davis demonstrated to the group how the task could be completed. He did this with the confidence and clarity expected of a trainer. The day ended with an opportunity for “pair and share” to enable participants to talk a peer through work that they had completed.

The final day of training began with a Q and A session and an opportunity for participants to reflect on what they had learnt so far and challenges that they may encounter whilst facilitating this course. The group was also shown the Digital Literacy Curriculum and they discussed how this course differed from the ICT Skills for Teachers course in terms of instructional design. The day ended with participants preparing for the showcase and then demonstrating what they had achieved. Finally the master trainer worked through the logistics of setting up a training session and how to organize and document a training session.

The following five participants were deemed to have the skills to facilitate the Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers course:

- Makhosazana Klaas
- Quinton Davis
- Nolitha Ntshauzana
- Asandiswa Mankune
- Oliver Mqoqi



Unfortunately eleven of the participants were not regarded as being competent to facilitate the ICT Skills for Teachers course. In most cases, the master trainer cited a lack of communication skills and confidence in presenting as the reason for this. In other cases, participants lacked computer skills and the ability to focus on the task at hand.

### ***Western Cape - Edunova – HelpDesk***

This training session took place between 3 and 7 October 2011 at the Edunova Centre in Phillipi, Cape Town. The participants were out-of-school youth known as Information Technology Entrepreneurs (ITEs). These individuals work as school assistants and help educators in computer labs. They are paid a stipend of R1 000 a month by the Western Cape Department of Education; although this payment can be supplemented by ITEs using the school computer labs after hours to train the community for a fee. The trainer noted that this initiative has great potential as a way of supporting educators and assisting with the technical maintenance of school computer facilities whilst at the same time helping out-of-school youth to become entrepreneurs and providing skills training to local communities.



At first only thirteen participants had been invited to attend the training session. This number was boosted by three Edunova staff members joining the training and participants being asked to invite colleagues who they thought would also benefit from the session. In the end there were 22 participants.

During the introductions session the master trainer realized that whilst part of the work the ITEs do involves teaching computer literacy skills, there was also a dire need for them to have some ICT technical training in order to provide technical support to these labs. From the participant comments below, one can see that this course achieved the objective of providing the ITEs with the technical skills that will help them to perform their work more effectively:



*The course came at a right time, because I had a little knowledge about the technical side of the computer. Now I am confident enough to solve certain ticket requests. Now I am definitely level two. This skill will be utilised and (I am) willing to learn more and do more for our school. I have learnt a lot on one week.*

*The course was very good, but a bit challenging at some cases, but then, being a technician, it's all about understanding softwares and hardwares. So you don't have to panic when fixing a computer. You only have to concentrate and do your best.*

*I am currently working as an IT technician and the course gave me this and information to make my job much easier and gave me confidence as well as skills to troubleshoot and fix problems. It also helped me improve and understand concepts and terms that I did not understand prior to the course. Using safe mode and system restore was the most useful tools, and it makes a technicians life much easier.*

*To me, this course was exiting and informative. I have learnt so many things that I did not know, like fixing a computer and installing windows, now I can fix computers on my own without calling a technician. I am a technician myself now, because of the training that I have benefitted from.*



### **Limpopo - Oprah – Vele ICT Skills for Teachers**

Vele Secondary School is situated about 73 kilometers North of Thohoyandou in a deep rural area. This school is being supported by the Oprah Angels Network which had equipped the school with a computer centre. The intention of the Microsoft sponsored training to this initiative was to ensure that the new computers would be used by teaching staff.



At the initial training session, which took place between 27 and 30 June 2011, attendance was excellent and participants were punctual. Twenty-six teachers from Vele Secondary School were in attendance and they were joined by seven curriculum advisors from Vhembe District. Some of these curriculum advisors had attended the ICT Skills for Teachers course before whilst others were responsible for CAT and IT in the district. The intention of the curriculum advisors attending the training was for them to show their support of this initiative and to be able to provide follow-up support to the school after the course was complete.

On arrival the trainer discovered that whilst the Partners in Learning teacher training materials had been installed on the computers, Microsoft Office software had not been installed. Whilst this problem was being overcome, the trainer explained the training programme, presented the basics of PowerPoint using a data projector and worked through two scenarios to demonstrate the role of the tip sheets. (It should be noted that the technicians installed the Microsoft Office 2010 trial edition and it is anticipated that software problems will be encountered again when the trial period lapses.) Once the software issues were resolved the computers were slow but the technicians were able to address this problem.

Once the participants were able to work on their own the trainer noted that the availability of scenarios to cater for participants with different levels of ICT knowledge meant that each participant was able to select a scenario that would be challenging and useful. The trainer commented that once he had persuaded participants to follow the instructions and to consult the tip sheets many were able to solve their own problems and he was able to spend more time helping those who were really struggling.

The follow-up training took place on 9 and 10 January 2012. The computers were functional throughout the training and a challenge involving the computers not being able to communicate with the server was quickly addressed by the technicians. There was a further challenge related to usernames and passwords but the technicians promised to resolve this before schools reopened so that teachers and learners would be able to log in when they returned to school

The trainer noted that compared to the initial training most teachers had improved their computer skills. Whilst some trainees who joined the course for the first time at the follow-up session lacked basic mouse skills, teachers who had attended the first session and had then practiced the scenarios on their own were far ahead of the other participants.

The trainer was pleased that the curriculum advisors attended the follow up session as he believed that their continued support and involvement at the school would contribute to the success of the project. He noted that internet access would assist learners and would be put to good use by teachers at Vele Secondary School. He further suggested that because of the inaccessibility of the school, it would be advisable for some teachers to attend the Microsoft Partners in Learning HelpDesk course at some point to ensure that the school is able to do its own technical maintenance and basic trouble shooting.



### ***NorthWest - One Step Further - Training of Trainers***

SchoolNet SA conducted an ICT Skills training of trainers' session, sponsored by the NorthWest Department of Education in February 2009 and at this session nine new trainers were added to the pool of trainers for this province. Unfortunately, in recent years very few trainers in the NorthWest have conducted training and it was feared that the capacity of some of the trainers may have diminished. To provide trainers with a refresher course on the ICT Skills for Teachers course, and to build capacity to run the Microsoft Partners in Learning One Step Further course, a training of trainers session for NorthWest trainers was set up by SchoolNet SA, sponsored by Microsoft.

Training took place at the NorthWest Education Department Auxiliary Services offices in Mmabatho from 30-31 January 2012. The venue, reportedly the best available venue in the province was not well prepared. Several computers were not working and components had to be swapped around to compile working desktop PCs. This was sufficient initially, but when late comers arrived there were not sufficient computers and some participants used laptops. Problems with DVD drives, network cables and IP addresses led to the internet access being compromised on the first day of training. Training commenced just after 10:30am on the first day as the majority of the participants had to drive to Mmabatho as their accommodation had not been procured by the NorthWest Department of Education.

Training began with a diagnostic assessment of ICT Skills for Teachers trainers. This included an online multiple choice quiz with questions pertaining to the course methodology as well as an online self-assessment scenario that had been set up for use in the teacher laptop project. Surprisingly, some of the most experienced trainers did not fare well in the online quiz. However, in most cases the master trainer, Gerald Roos, noted that it is possible that the poor performance in the assessment was more a case of over-confidence or poor following of instructions. Once the quiz had been completed, the master trainer discussed the correct responses with the group and emailed the correct answers to those who had got more than one answer incorrect. All participants except one did very well in the online basic assessment of computer skills – scoring between 93% and 100%.



Based on the refresher course the following participants were deemed to still be competent to run the ICT Skills for teachers course (\*\* = very competent). A further five participants were noted as being areas of concern:

- Philemon Molapisi\*\*
- Richard Madikgetla\*\*
- Monica Senye\*\*
- Umzuvukile Tshatshu\*\*
- Francis Lubanga Nsiisi\*\*
- Justice Maiketswane\*\*
- Linda Nyundu\*\*
- Tumisang Tselane\*\*
- Emily Sebolai
- Lenah Tshoma
- Mummy Mokolometsa
- Charlotte Masinti Chukudu



After lunch on the first day the group turned their attention to the One Step Further course and focused on the “Information Gathering” and “Simple Research” sections. After each section the master trainer administered the assessments that had been developed for use in the Teacher Laptop Initiative. Based on this assessment and his observations, the following participants were recommended as trainers. (\*\* = very competent; \* = competent)

- Francis Lubanga Nsiisi \*\*
- Thabo Mishack Nkwe\*\*
- Philemon Molapisi\*\*
- Thabo Rasetsoke\*\*
- Lenah Tshoma\*
- Nelson Seakamela\*
- Charlotte Masinti Chukudu\*
- Richard Madikgetla\*
- Justice Mxolisi Tyobeka
- Mummy Mokolometsa
- Justice Maiketswane
- Linda Nyundu



Four people were deemed to require more coaching before they could be considered as trainer for the One Step Further course with the master trainer noting: “I felt that most participants that underperformed did so because of their poor attention to following instructions rather than their ability as educators or trainers”.

The master trainer concluded with the following comment: “Generally, I saw a considerable amount of increased capacity in the group since my last contact with them. I think they are all an asset to the province. My biggest concern would be that their capacity would be wasted while operating in a relatively poor organizational environment with little support for logistics and technical maintenance of facilities.”

#### 4. KwaZulu-Natal: Xbox Kinect Educational Gaming Pilot Project

Over the December holidays of 2010, Microsoft commissioned SchoolNet to install six fifty-five inch television screens above the traditional chalkboards in six junior primary classrooms at Lakeside Park Primary in KwaZulu-Natal. These television screens were connected to the Xbox 360 Kinect gaming console. Teachers spent their January 2011 holidays becoming familiar with Kinect technology and devising learning experiences that were designed to engage learners and enhance learning.

This Microsoft Xbox pilot project called for the development of specialist training materials for Foundation Phase teachers to focus on second language English acquisition for use with new technologies of this genre. The teacher training workshop that SchoolNet conducted in January 2011 encouraged teachers to mediate learning in relation to the curriculum while learners would be using Xbox Kinect gaming technology. Lakeside teachers had already mapped out their schemes of work for the following year so for 2011 the new activities had to be infused into existing lesson plans. The course materials for this workshop were developed by Peter de Lisle of Hlilton College, a former winner in the Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum competition, who deliberately focused on language supportive pedagogy and grounded this within a specific approach to education, the learner-centred approach, which is of particular relevance to gaming.



The dedicated teachers at Lakeside guided by their Deputy Head, Karen Kirsten and their Foundation Phase Head, Dian Ogle, readily addressed these challenges throughout the 2011 academic year and found numerous ways of enlivening the learning experiences that they developed for their classrooms. Teachers and senior management reported that learning through play is the most effective for this age group and that, *"... this learning increases their intrinsic and cognitive understanding of aspects of the curriculum. The use of this gaming technology has aroused their interest and it has energised the classroom atmosphere."*



Mindset was commissioned to evaluate the success of this pilot project to determine the extent to which gaming using the Xbox Kinect improved literacy. The research team noted: *"There is a marked change in the levels of competency of the foundation phase learners. A comparison between assessment aggregates of 2010 and 2011 shows that there is a distinct movement of learners away from Level 1 (Not Achieved). This concerns both numeracy and literacy irrespective of grade."*

The evaluation study recorded an overall marked improvement in vocabulary which in turn impacted on comprehension and overall literacy skills. The researchers also documented an increase in general knowledge and an increased enthusiasm for learning.

*"The incorporation of the XBOX within the literacy curriculum focuses on improving the vocabulary of the learners. Through this improvement, learners can express themselves better which results in an improved comprehension which in turn influences the grammar and the sentence structure of the learners."*

If a school has connectivity then the Xbox Kinect console allows the TV screen to become a normal internet browser that can be used for an infinite range of activities of educational value. The cost of an Xbox and a TV is not high when one considers that six classrooms can be equipped with Xbox Kinect technology for the same cost or less than one traditional computer lab. Based on the success of this initial Microsoft funded pilot project, SchoolNet South Africa is now looking for additional funders to sponsor the scaling of this Xbox project in other schools.



## 5. Support for the Africa School Technology Innovation Centre

The Microsoft School Technology Innovation Centre (STIC) is located in the SciBono Centre in Newtown Johannesburg. This centre is a showcase of educational technologies as well as a hub for professional development for teachers wanting to learn more about integrating ICT into their teaching and learning practices. STIC Manager Victor Ngobeni is based at the centre in Johannesburg where he regularly conducts training sessions and demonstrations for teachers visiting the SciBono centre. Victor also conducts training of trainers' sessions in other South African and African cities so that the pool of Partners in Learning trainers can be increased and potentially more training can be rolled out.



In the 2012 financial year, Ngobeni conducted ICT Skills for Teachers training of trainers' sessions at the Vodacom ICT Resource Centres as follows:

- Nkangala, Mpumalanga Resource Centre (21-22 May and 12-13 July 2011)
- Sunnyside, Gauteng Resource Centre 7-9 June and 12-13 July 2011)
- Lady Frere, Eastern Cape (21 – 25 November 2011)
- Upington, Northern Cape Resource Centre (14 – 18 November 2011)

Microsoft's contribution of Ngobeni's time and expertise to this Vodacom

Foundation project have helped to make it possible for the ICT Skills for Teachers course to be cost-effectively run at various locations in South Africa.

As the STIC centre is located within SciBono it makes sense for these two organisations to work together. SciBono trainers have been trained to run the ICT Skills for Teachers course and subsequently have rolled out training to more than 3 000 teachers in 75 underperforming schools in Gauteng. SciBono training has been quality assured by SchoolNet SA and SchoolNet has also provided CDs and certificates for these training sessions. Two of the training sessions that took place at STIC in the 2012 financial year are described in more detail below.

### ***Gauteng - One Step Further Training for Johannesburg North Teachers***

On Saturday 17 and 24 March 2012 a One Step Further training session took place at the Africa STIC at SciBono.

Fourteen participants attended from a number of schools in the Johannesburg North District. Some of the teachers in the training were ICT coordinators for their schools, while some were school managers. Three people in the group had low levels of ICT competence but all were enthusiastic teachers who demonstrated a willingness to learn.

As an introduction to the course the trainer gave a brief overview and demonstration of the OneNote Office application. The teachers appeared to enjoy the first activity which required them to experience OneNote by "fiddling" with it, inserting, copying and pasting data on a blank page. All of them were using OneNote for the first time. The group then completed the session on "Information Gathering" and discussed why it is important for teachers to set appropriate tasks that require students to gather information and data. At the end of the session, teachers created their own gathering tools using an Information Byte, a Scavenger Hunt or a Graphic Organizer. The group then designed classroom research tasks. Before the close of the day participants showcased their research tasks, while encouraging input from others.

The second day of training started with the section on Learning Objects. After viewing examples of Learning Objects, teachers went on to create their own examples and later presented their work to the class. This is one part of the course where the teachers demonstrated a lot of creativity, and one could see this during the showcase session, near the end of the training. Finally the course was wrapped up by Mpho Sentsho (District e-Learning Facilitator) who encouraged the participants to go and try out the resources that they gained during the training and to seek help from the district whenever necessary.

Below are selected participant comments on the training:



*"We should have more of this workshop more often. Especially to educators who are not computer literate"*

*"The course was very fruitful and I hope I will use it in my teaching and learning. With more practice I will excel. Thank you very much"*

*"Can the workshop be done during the week, please. Otherwise I really learnt a lot and enjoyed the course. Thanks Victor"*

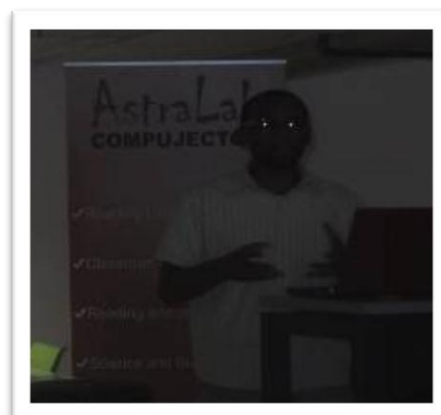
### **Gauteng – ICT Skills for Teachers – Training of Trainers**

On 25 and 26 March 2012 a group of 22 potential trainers underwent the ICT Skills for Teachers training of trainers' course at STIC at SciBono. The intention of this training session was to develop more capacity to be able to offer the Microsoft ICT Skills for Teachers course through SciBono.

The group comprised three educators, two District eLearning facilitators and seventeen young people with IT backgrounds. Being a young group, the trainer noted that they were very enthusiastic to try out new things, especially the Learning Suite tools.

Of the twenty two participants, the following thirteen people were deemed to have sufficient grasp of the course design and training methodology as well as adequate computer and presentation skills to be facilitators for this course:

- Sylvester Mangale
- Ntweng Emmanuel Mohlala
- Dorothea Molobane Moeketse
- Nomasonto Namane
- Matshere Zephora Masha
- Cynthia Sibongile Lukhele
- Thembelihle Mfaba
- Thabo Refiloe Mpshe
- Gabainewe Nelly Tebello
- Refiloe Gladness Rakitla
- Nhlanhla Samson Ramonotsi
- Madoda Isiah Mkwanazi
- Ayanda Dhladhla



During the introduction session on the first day the trainer noted that the majority of the trainees boasted about their IT credentials. To test these, the trainer, Victor Ngobeni set the group the task of completing an intermediate level scenario in fifteen minutes. At the end of the allocated time only three people had completed the task and Nhlanhla Ramonotsi volunteered to do a step by step demonstration of the of the "interactive picture" scenario. It was interesting to note that with the professed abundance of IT skills in the group, quite a number of them struggled with this activity. This gave the trainer an opportunity to stress the importance of using the tip sheets if one is unsure of how to complete an activity.

As many of the participants lacked an educational background, the master trainer led a discussion on the ICT Skills for Teachers course design principles. He then carefully worked through the components of the scenarios and explained how the structure supports self-directed and independent learning. Thereafter, the participants were released to work on scenarios of their choice, with the aim of acquiring a more concrete understanding of the course structure and content. While this was taking place the master trainer moved around and observed what the trainees were doing. He noticed that a few were doing scenarios that they were comfortable with, and he encouraged them to move to more



challenging scenarios. The day concluded with a “pair and share” session for participants to talk through what they had produced.

On the second day the group had a Q&A session to reflect on the course methodology; as well to reflect on the anticipated challenges of the instructional design. The participants then finalized their scenarios in preparation for the showcase. This session allowed the master trainer to get a sense of the computer skills of the presenters as well as their ability to explain and demonstrate to a group. The final session was conducted by Enoch Mankune from SciBono, and covered issues related to scheduling of training.

## 6. Lesotho School Technology Innovation Centre

The Lesotho STIC is situated at the Lesotho College of Education in Maseru and it is managed by Dr Kasongo Kalanda who is a lecturer at the college. In the 2012 financial year Microsoft Partners in Learning training was offered at the Lesotho STIC and at other schools in the outlying districts of Lesotho. These training sessions have been supported by Microsoft, through SchoolNet SA, in the form of a contribution to trainer expenses, STIC running costs, training materials and certificates.

The following ICT Skills for Teachers training sessions took place in Lesotho in January 2011:

Date	Schools Represented	Participants
10-15 January 2011	Get Together Primary School Itekeng High School Khakeng Primary School L. E.C.Primary Liraoheleng L.E.C. Primary Maboee Primary School Mapetla High School Mejametalana Ntlo-Kholo Primary School	19
24-29 January 2011	Get Together Primary School Khakeng Primary School L. E.C.Primary Liraoheleng L.E.C. Primary Maboee Primary School Mejametalana Ntlo-Kholo Primary School	11
7-12 February 2011	'Mabathoana H.S. St. Joseph H.S.	10
14-19 February 2011	Lebohang E.M.P.S. Mabathoana H.S. Mabote L.E.C. New Millenium	12
15-22 March 2011	'Tsoeneng Eng. Primary Masite Nek P.S O.B. Collins Rothe E.C.C.	12
7-12 March 2011	'Tsoeneng Eng. Primary O.B. Collins Masite Nek P.S Rothe E.C.C.	9
14-16 April 2011	Arise English Medium Primary School Father Manad Fatima R. C. C Likotsi R.C Maseru Academy High School Maseru Academy High School Mejametalana Primary School New Millenium Phethahatso English Medium	46



	Community School S. O. S Thetsane High School Toloane Primary Tsoaing Primary School Tsolo Primary	
18-22 July 2011	Koponang Massiabiele Moshoeshoe 2 High School NUL Rankhelepa Sekamaneng Tiny Tot Zenon High School LCE 3rd Years	30
1-5 August 2011	Fika- Le-Mohala Primary Hloahloeng Primary Kopanang Primary St. Kizito Primary	5
22-26 August 2011	Maseru L. E.C Primary New Millenium Primary Maseru East Government Primary	8
19-24 September 2011	Adventville High School Khubetsoana High School	12
11-13 November 2011	Bethesda High School John Maund High School Johnson Baker High School Kubung Secondary School Lerotholi Secondary School Lesaona Secondary School Lesia High School Likuena High School Makaota High School Makintane High School Maletsema Secondary School Morapeli High School Morifi Community High School Mt. Tabor High School Paul Vi High School Phethahatso English Medium Community School Sekameng High School Siloe High School Thabana-Tsooana Secondary School	23
4-6 November 2011	American International School Lesotho College Of Education Mokhokhong Primary School Phomolong High School Roma St. John Tlali High School St. Mary's High School St. Rodrigue High School Thuto-Ke-Leseli High School	9



Some schools such as Mabote and Masite have been able to send all of all their teaching staff to attend training whereas other schools have chosen five to eight teachers to attend training whilst their colleagues tend to the children at schools. In schools where this has occurred, training is offered more than once to a school so that eventually all teachers can have an opportunity to attend the course.

As word has spread about the benefits of this professional development opportunity, the Lesotho STIC has received more than twenty letters from schools outside of Maseru requesting training and attempts have been made to accommodate interested schools in the training programme. There are also plans to conduct more training sessions with school principals as it is believed that computer literate managers help to drive the use of technology in schools. To date more than 900 pre- service teachers of the Lesotho College of Education have undergone training in ICT Skills for Teachers. As teachers are becoming aware of the fact that ICT skills being listed on a curriculum vitae boosts the employability of new graduates, in-service teachers who are products of the College are appealing for training so that they too can enjoy the benefits of having computer skills.

Teachers who have received Microsoft Partners in Learning training through the Lesotho STIC have been most appreciative. They have noted that since attending training they are able to work towards more learner-centered teaching and that they have been able to save time by using computers to perform administrative tasks. Gratitude has also been expressed for the fact that no fee is charged for the training, that tea is served, and that transport costs have been subsidized in some cases.

Teachers who have attended courses at STIC have made the following requests: Teachers who have had some training have appealed for more training so that they can keep their skills up-to-date and can acquire more advanced skills. Teachers who attend full-day training would appreciate lunch being served. As some schools lack electricity and most schools have old computers or no computers at all there have been numerous requests for hardware or laptops to be made available to teachers.

The following comments from participants show how well received the training has been:

*"We stand better chances when we go for interviews competing with others, because we will know the use of a Smart board and other programmes as we play around with the computer, as well as responding to parents letters promptly".*  
- Me' Mathabo Nkuebe teacher at Kopanang Primary School

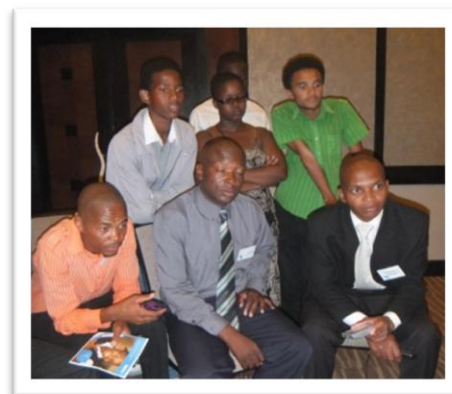
*"We came not knowing anything, but we are leaving now knowing how to design a certificate, copy and paste photos, turn photos into a collage, create a folder, calculate and make a mark sheet , type a document, sort notes - a whole lot. It's amazing what I can do with Technology."*

*"We all thought we knew, but when being a part of the workshop, we have realised that we knew nothing. We'll be able to integrate ICT into teaching, hence a better performance from our learners".*

*"We are equipped and now wonder how you chose our school as a Path finder. We are going to hold on to what we have and improve our way of teaching. When you come back again, you will see the difference" – Principal of St. Boniface High School*

## 7. Lesotho Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum

The Lesotho Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum has been held annually since 2009. At the 2010 Innovative Teacher Forum three Lesotho teachers (Malatela Monaheng, Mpho Phakisi and Thejane Malakane) were chosen to represent Lesotho at the Middle East Africa Forum in Jordan. At this regional event Malatela Monaheng placed second in the "Innovation in Challenging Contexts" category and Thejane Malakale was part of the group that won the collaborative group-work activity. These successes meant that these two teachers were invited to participate in the Global Partners in Learning Forum held in Washington DC. These opportunities were life changing experiences for the Lesotho teachers who relished the opportunity to learn new skills and to see what other teachers from around the world produced.







Dr Kasongo Kalanda's participation in the regional and global Forums as a judge has equipped him with a sound understanding of the judging criteria and a sense of what makes an outstanding project. This knowledge has been shared with teachers who have participated in the Innovation workshops at the Lesotho STIC and has helped to ensure that Lesotho teachers are able to produce projects that are competitive at a regional and international level. Including past Lesotho Innovative Teachers in the workshops and as STIC trainers has also helped to provide other teachers in Lesotho with role models.

In January 2012 two Innovation Workshops were held for teachers who had expressed an interest in entering the Lesotho Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum. These workshops were attended by 28 and 29 teachers respectively. During these workshops previous winners showed their projects and prospective participants were able to get feedback on their projects. A total of 35 entries were submitted into the competition and of these 15 projects were selected as finalists by the Lesotho STIC judging panel.

The Lesotho Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum took place on 15 March 2012 at the Lesotho Sun in Maseru. Each finalist was given ten minutes to present his or her project whilst judges scored the entries and other teachers observed what their peers had produced. Whilst the judges deliberated the finalists and observer teachers enjoyed a workshop entitled "Making a move with Mobile". This workshop led by Saretjie Musgrave, head of the ICITISE Unit at the University of the Free State, showed teachers how with simple equipment any space can be turned into a learning environment.

At the awards ceremony the following three teachers were announced as winners:

Lucille Kabelo Mahlatsi -	Literature at our fingertips
Khutlang Leshuta -	Juvenile Delinquency
Emmanuel Ekoe Gyasi -	Our Soil, Our Soul

All three of these teachers were sponsored by Microsoft to attend the South African Microsoft Partners in Forum followed by the South African Basic Education Conference in Durban in April 2012. Lucille will be sponsored by Microsoft to attend the regional Forum in Morocco in August 2012 and it is hoped that local Lesotho sponsors will cover the costs of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners attending this event.



## 8. South Africa Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum – Innovation Workshops

As in previous years Microsoft sponsored a range of Innovation workshops to expose teachers to creative and engaging teaching practices and to encourage them to enter the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum. As the 2012 Forum was held earlier in the year than previous Forums had been, workshops were set up to capitalize on existing relationships with teachers and in conjunction with organizations and departments of education where there was a commitment to nurturing potential innovative teachers. It was hoped that this strategy would increase the likelihood of strong candidates being selected for the workshops who could then be mentored as they worked on submitting their projects.

All of the Innovation workshops were run by former Microsoft Innovative Teachers as these trainers have proven themselves to be excellent facilitators and role models for other teachers. It should be noted at this point that whilst only a few workshop participants in each province go on to submit projects in the year that they attend the workshop, many finalists had attended an Innovation workshop either in 2012 or in a previous year. In addition to the formal Innovation Workshops, past winners were also encouraged to promote the competition to teachers in their networks



and many did this with enthusiasm by email, through social media and at face-to-face meetings, conferences and TeachMeets.

For the first time ever an online Innovation Workshop was held as a series of webinars and blog posts giving participants links to online resources. Many former winners generously agreed to share their projects and tips as guest presenters in the webinars and these were then recorded so that they could be viewed by teachers who were unable to attend the webinars “live”. In addition to the usual promotional activities of sending emails and SMSs to the SchoolNet SA database, SchoolNet members were given additional encouragement and both the SchoolNet and Partners in Learning Facebook and Twitter feeds gave regular encouragement and reminders. The various Innovation Workshops are described below.

### ***Gauteng - Innovation Workshops***

Peermont has equipped seven high schools on the East Rand with computer rooms and Apple laptops and through SciBono these schools have participated in a number of the Microsoft Partners in Learning Courses including ICT Skills for Teachers and One Step Further. Three workshops were held in Gauteng to encourage teachers from the Peermont schools to use their equipment and computer skills to develop projects that could be entered into the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum.

#### **Thembisa High School, Thembisa: Thursday 10 November 2011**

According to trainer Chris Gatsi the ten participants at this session “asked constructive questions and participated by presenting their own ideas on the provided template”. He noted that the teachers’ presentations demonstrated an “amazing fusion of 21st Century Skills” and showed an understanding for the need to shift pedagogy and be innovative. During the sessions the participants worked well with their partners and collaborated fully.

#### **STIC @ SciBono, Newtown: Saturday 12 November 2011**

There were 27 participants at this workshop. According to trainer Chris Gatsi “the educators enjoyed learning the new paradigm of education and realised the advantages attached thereto. They promised to polish areas of concern in their current teaching methods and to enter the Innovation competition next year. Unfortunately SciBono had set the teachers a deadline of submitting a project with learner/community involvement within two weeks of schools opening in 2012. The group thought that this was unreasonable and said that they would need more time to develop and implement a meaningful project. There were a number of grade one teachers in the group who questioned whether such young children would be able to use computer tools. The trainer provided the group with a number of examples where teachers had implemented projects with young learners and passed on Fiona Beal and Linda Bradfield’s contact details in case teachers wanted to network with teachers who had successfully used ICT tools in the junior primary phase. Below are some comments from the participant feedback forms, praising the trainer and the course:

*“Very well presented – Chris knows his stuff”*

*“It is really interesting seeing finished results of Innovation and ICT combined”*

*“The trainer was brilliant and managed to take us through different programs to be able to understand and be encouraged”*

#### **Thuso Lesedi High, Vosloorus: Saturday 19 November 2011**

This workshop was attended by ten teachers. The trainer, Victor Ngobeni noted that “what we have always struggled with in the last couple of years is making sure that the ‘right people’ in terms of skills and expectations, attend the course. In this case, I think I think it was better because as part of the Peermont programme these teachers have committed to ultimately enter for IEF as part of their contract with Peermont. As a result, the discussions we had during the course were fruitful and purposeful.” Unfortunately – despite this commitment to enter the Forum, only two Peermont teachers actually entered the Forum and of these neither made it to the finals. Still we remain hopeful that some Peermont teachers have implemented projects that they may enter in future years.

### **Princess High School, Roodepoort: Saturday 04 February 2012**

Karen de Jongh-Ali is a passionate ICT coordinator in Gauteng West. She organized this workshop in the hopes that some teachers who she had already identified in her district as using ICT in their classrooms would be inspired to develop projects and enter them into the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum.

Fourteen participants attended this workshop as well as the district e-Learning coordinator who was proactive in motivating the trainees to implement their ideas. The participants were eager to learn and were engaged in throughout the training session. In particular, educators enjoyed the road to innovation, particularly having to analyse and go through past winners' projects and demonstration of a few tools on the Microsoft Learning Suite DVD.

A total of ten entries from Gauteng teachers were received for the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum and from these entries, two teachers were selected as finalists. Hafeza Mayet who had previously attended an Innovation workshop at STIC and who had also won the Mouse Mischief competition in 2010 entered a project called "MatheCity". Caroline Adelaar from St Marys in Waverly placed second in the "Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom" category and won the "Cutting Edge Use of Microsoft Technology for Learning" category. Caroline's "Trees for Africa" project was also one of the overall winners and she will be representing South Africa in the Middle East Africa Partners in Learning Forum to be held in Morocco.



### **Mpumalanga – Witbank Innovation Workshop**

This workshop took place at the Vodacom Nkangala ICT Resource Centre near Emalahleni on Saturday 11 February 2012. Teachers who had been using the Vodacom ICT Resource Centre and those that work at schools in the area serviced by this centre were invited to attend by the centre trainer. In total, twenty nine teachers of mixed abilities attended the session. Of these teachers five had attended the ICT Skills for Teachers training of trainers session held at the centre a few months previously. The trainer noted that for these teachers it was not a huge transition to now talk about ICT integration and project-based learning. Other teachers admitted at the start of the session that they had little or no prior experience with ICT – but were nonetheless interested in innovative teaching practices. The trainer also noted that there were quite a few school leaders in the group which he believed was a good sign for ICT adoption within the district.

The trainer for this session was Victor Ngobeni, a previous Microsoft Innovative Teacher Forum winner and the current manager of the Africa STIC. Victor had recently attended the Global Forum in Washington DC and was able to play a video from this event to set the scene for the training. He then began the course by going through the Innovative Teaching Checklist which he believes is a very useful way to get teachers to reflect on their innovative practices. The participants enjoyed reviewing past entries and identifying what made the projects innovative but battled with the activity that involved thinking of ways that good lessons could be improved. Through the use of the ideas generator the teachers discussed briefly their project ideas, and also received input from their peers.

Whilst seven participants indicated that they planned to enter the competition, unfortunately no entries from Mpumalanga were received for the 2012 Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum. Nonetheless, we are sure that the seeds of innovation have been sowed in Nkangala and we are confident that with continued support from the staff at the Vodacom ICT Resource Centre that some teachers may go on to enter the competition in 2013.

The comments from participants indicate the teachers enjoyed the workshop and were inspired to implement innovative teaching practices:

*"The course was an eye opener that I can overcome the challenges to become an Innovative Teacher" - Zanele Mohlatole*

*"I really enjoyed the workshop and I am encouraged to be innovative" - Queeneth Mazibuko*

*"I am prepared and committed in developing a project to submit in the Innovative Education Forum" - Bhekiwe Tonge*

### ***North West – Mafikeng Innovation Workshop***

After Philemon Kotsokoane, NorthWest Department of Education ICT Services head, had served as a judge in the 2011 Microsoft Innovative Teachers competition he had pledged that in 2012 his department would do more to identify potential entrants for the Forum and would encourage them to enter. In collaboration with the provincial ICT Coordinator, Emily Seboli, SchoolNet SA set up an Innovation workshop for NorthWest teachers and various district personnel were encouraged to invite teachers in their areas who were using ICT with their learners.

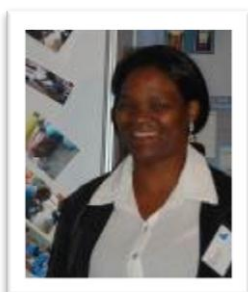
The workshop was held on Saturday 18 February 2012 at the Department of Education offices in Mafikeng. A total of twenty three participants attended the training and according to trainer Chris Gatsi, “This group is the best for all the workshops I have facilitated so far. They were keen, inquisitive and contributed well throughout the session.”

Seven entries were received from the NorthWest province compared to not one entry in 2011. Of these entries, three teachers had attended the Innovation Workshop and one teacher, Nkosilathi Dlodlo was selected as a finalist. At the 2012 Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum, Nkosilathi’s “Serving Water to Save” project won second place in the Innovation in Challenging Contexts category.



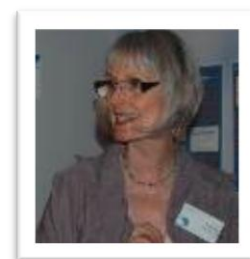
### ***KwaZulu-Natal – Pietermaritzburg Innovation Workshop***

On Saturday 18 February 2012 an Innovation Workshop was held at the Olwazini Discovery Centre of the Golden Horse Casino in Pietermaritzburg. Former Microsoft Innovative Teacher winner, Hlengiwe Mfeka had been employed by SchoolNet SA to work with a cluster of six schools in the Natal Midlands and to offer training in the Microsoft Partners in Learning and Intel Teach courses. It was hoped that some of the teachers who had shown promise in this SITA sponsored project would be ready for the challenge of implementing a project using technology in the classroom and thus all the SITA teachers were invited to this workshop.



Nombuso Mnguni a teacher at Asithuthuke Combined School – a small, rural school in the Umgungundlovu district of KwaZulu-Natal was part of the SITA project and she attended the Innovation workshop. After receiving training from former Innovative Teacher Charli Wiggill, Nombuso was mentored by Hlengiwe Mfeka and she participated in some online sessions. Her project on “Designing and building a model of bridge” made it to the finals of the Partners in Learning Forum – a fantastic achievement for a teacher who could barely type at the start of the SITA project.

A total of nine teachers from KwaZulu-Natal entered the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum and of these five teachers were selected as finalists. In addition to Nombuso, Gaye Pieterse and Joan Martin from Durban Girls’ College made the finals for their pair entry called “Project Runway”. Neith Moore who had been a finalist in 2011 was so inspired by that experience that she built on her project and her mobile digital classroom “Flipping a Studio” project won a judges’ award for Use of Technology.



Charli Wiggill from Eden College won the Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom award for his project on “Braille Memory Game and Toys for the Blind” and Gaye Pieterse of Durban Girls’ College won the Knowledge Building and Critical Thinking” category for her project entitled “Inside Outside”. These two teachers were amongst the teachers selected to represent South Africa at the Middle East Africa Partners in Learning Forum in Morocco.

### ***Western Cape – Philippi Innovation Workshop***

The Western Cape has been well represented in previous Microsoft Innovative Teacher competitions, but most finalists and winners from this province had come from well-resourced schools. In an attempt to encourage more teachers from township schools to enter the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum SchoolNet arranged to do training at the Edunova Learning Centre in Cape Town. The idea behind this was that Edunova could invite teachers in the area who they were already working with to attend the sessions. Whilst we were aware that many teachers in the Philippi area would not have access to good computer facilities at their schools, our hope was that they would be able to use the computers and internet access at the Edunova Learning Centre to work on their projects.

The Edunova manager Quinton Davis said that it is almost impossible to get teachers to come to a course on Saturday and suggested breaking down the course into short weekday courses. Edunova invited all their teachers by sending fliers to schools in the area and SchoolNet SA sent out SMS invitations to teachers on the Edunova database. Two afternoon sessions were conducted by former Innovative Teacher and SchoolNet SA Online facilitator Fiona Beal on the afternoons of 15 and 21 February 2012. Unfortunately the courses were poorly attended but the teachers who did attend were eager to learn more and were motivated by Fiona's presentation on what former winners from very poorly resourced schools had been able to achieve.



At the first short course Maxwell Funo from Mkhanyiseli Primary School in Nyanga East was one of the attendees. Maxwell loved the idea of taking a burning issue in his community and using this as the basis of an authentic project. Whilst Maxwell's computer skills were limited, Fiona was able to provide him with assistance in putting his entry together and uploading it. Once Maxwell's project had made it to the finals of the Partners in Learning Forum, Fiona met with him again at Edunova to go through the judging rubric and to work on his final presentation and to give him some assistance with his poster. Fiona noted: "He was very responsive to help and I was thrilled when he smsed me just after he had heard to say he was a winner!". Fiona is continuing to work with Maxwell to help him to take his project to the next level before the Middle East and Africa Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum.

Maxwell's principal, colleagues and learners have been excited by the success of this project as according to Maxwell it has shown that a community can take up a cause that means something to them do something about it and be recognized for it.

### ***Free State – Innovation Days***

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August and 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2011 Innovation in Education Workshops were held at the University of the Free State. These workshops were run by the ICT Innovation in School Education unit and the e-Learning division of the Free State Department of Education with Microsoft contributing catering and Learning Suite DVDs. More than 600 teachers attended the workshops at the University and these were followed by workshops in each of the five Free State Districts. These workshops, held in Bloemfontein, Welkom, Sasolburg and Bethlehem were attended by more than 160 teachers from both primary and high schools.



The aim of these workshops was to encourage teachers to implement their new skills and to hopefully then enter their projects into the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum. According to facilitator Saretjie Musgrave "The focus of each of the workshops was to bring together a community of teachers to learn and exchange expertise, while fostering dialogue on best practices, innovation and pedagogy. Teachers were engaged intellectually when exceptional innovative practices of technology integration in the educational process were shared."





Nine entries into the Partners in Learning Forum were received from the Free State, and from these three Free State teachers were selected as finalists. All three of these teachers went on to win prizes at the Forum. Lerato Mazimba of St Bernard's High School won second place in the Collaboration category for her "From Trash to Couture" project. Riathe Engels of Harmonie Primary School won the "Educators' Choice award" for her project on "Innovative Ways to Recycle – TRASH ART" and Anita van Vuuren of Primêre Skool Universitas won an "Innovation and Change Agent" judge's award as well as second place in the "Cutting Edge Use of Microsoft Technology for Learning" category for her project entitled "TjokvolLEER".

### **Online Innovation Workshop**

Former Microsoft Innovative Teacher winner and SchoolNet SA online ICT facilitator Fiona Beal set up the online innovation course as a wiki (<http://partnersinlearningforum-sa.wikispaces.com/>). The online course included content from the face-to-face Innovation course; a wiki which was regularly updated with supplementary resources; a webinar program featuring past finalists; and blog posts providing advice and encouragement.

The course was run from 16 January until the end of March 2012. In total 72 teachers in all signed up for the course which later grew when teachers who had been finalists in the ISPA Super Teachers competition were encouraged to also enter the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum. Of the people who signed up for the course, 24 teachers interacted with Fiona on a regular basis and a further ten teachers wrote to Fiona on a regular basis requesting assistance with their projects.



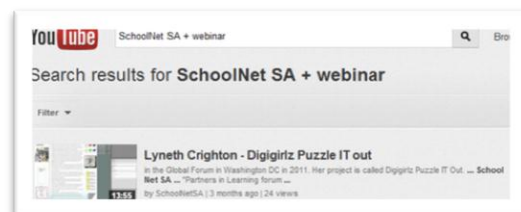
In addition to running the course, Fiona helped to promote the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum online through the SchoolNet SA blog, Twitter feed and Facebook posts and at face-to-face meetings with the St Cyprians Innovation Team and at the Edunova Learning Centre. Fiona was invited to speak about the Partners in Learning Forum at the Elkhannah House TeachMeet and it was at this event that four teachers who were later selected as finalists were encouraged to enter the Forum (Jenny Martin, Sioban Louw, Gilmour Gordon and Lisa Gair).

There were twelve webinar sessions in total which were later converted into twenty three videos that have been uploaded to the SchoolNet You Tube channel, Slideshare and podcasts. Of these webinars, three general sessions on innovation and preparing one's entry were presented by Fiona. Then several former Innovative Teacher winners and finalists were asked to tell the listeners about their projects and their tips for producing a winning entry, namely: Natalie Meerholz, Louise Clarke and Kim Jackson, Lyneth Crighton, Wessel Theron, Peter de Lisle, Linda Bradfield, Ngaka Ralekoala, Charli Wiggill, Glen Williams, Chris Gatsi, Marlene Redelinghuys. Saretjie Musgrave and Victor Ngobeni were able to speak about the competition from various perspectives as both have been winners, judges and Innovation workshop leaders. Megan Rademeyer spoke about a range of previous projects that have made it to the national, regional and worldwide finals that she had attended and she talked participants through the judging rubric.

Attendance at the webinars fluctuated and a number of participants who tried to attend experienced technical problems with Adobe Connect. In some cases teachers could not get on to the webinars and it was assumed that 3G or ISP problems prevented this. In other cases people kept dropping off the webinars and then coming back – including the speakers. In some cases the sound quality was poor or the PowerPoint presentations did not synchronize with the sound. Hopefully if the webinar programme is to be repeated we will be able to offer it using Microsoft Lync and will not have the same technical problems.

Adobe Connect does not collect viewing statistics but where webinars were converted into YouTube or embedded into Slideshare files it is possible to see how many times these have been viewed. Below are some of the statistics where webinars have had an impressive number of views:

Natalie, Kim and Louise, Lyneth:	YouTube - 59 views; Slideshare - 1187 views
Sarietjie, Wessel, Ryan, Helen:	YouTube - 37 views; Slideshare - 1056 views
Ngaka, Charlie, Glen:	YouTube views – 29; Slideshare - 1649 views
Get started on a project 1: Fiona:	Slideshare – 695 views
Peter, Linda, Lisa + Megan:	YouTube - 54 views
Get started on a project 2: Fiona:	Slideshare - 130 views
Chris:	YouTube views – 9
Warren:	YouTube views – 11
Neith, Hlengiwe:	YouTube views – 21 views



Fiona estimates that the online course took a minimum of four hours per day to administer. As the competition deadline drew closer Fiona assisted teachers by sms, on the phone and via email and on the day the competition closed she uploaded entries until after midnight. It is a credit to Fiona's persistence, mentorship and encouragement that thirteen of the teachers who participated in the online Innovation course entered the Forum and that of these four were selected as finalists (Nombuso Mnguni, Maxwell Funo, Neith Moore and Caroline Adelaar). Three of the online workshop participants were then amongst the winners (Maxwell, Neith and Caroline).

Fiona noted that "the problem with an online course of this nature is that the participants are not really producing anything tangible to send in. What people really seemed to like was to have someone to answer their emails almost immediately with queries." Fiona suggests that the online course should not replace the face-to-face innovation courses but instead should be used to supplement the face to face courses and to provide additional mentorship to teachers. In future the online course should include a webinar on the Leap materials to give participants an indepth understanding of the judging criteria and rubric.

## 9. 2012 Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum – Durban, South Africa

From the almost 100 entries that were received for the Partners in Learning Forum, twenty finalists were selected to present their projects on 1 April 2012 in Durban. As the competition is usually held later in the year we had anticipated a poor response in 2012, but were pleasantly surprised when in fact more entries were received than in previous years. A number of factors played a role in this including the Innovation workshops, the increased use of social media to promote the competition, various provincial departments promoting the Forum, and previous winning teachers encouraging colleagues to enter. When asked what had encouraged the finalists to enter the competition the 14 finalists who completed the online survey responded as follows.

a colleague or friend who had participated before	35.7%
previous good experiences with the Innovative Teachers Forum	21.4%
the online Innovation Workshops / Fiona Beal	28.5%
attending a face-to-face Innovation workshop	14.2%
an sms reminder	0.0%
an email containing information about the Forum	28.5%
a printed flier promoting the Forum	0.0%
my principal	0.0%
my district e-Learning coordinator or other provincial official	7.1%
SchoolNet SA Facebook or Twitter	7.1%
Partners in Learning Network Facebook	0.0%
Facebook or Twitter from someone in my personal network	0.0%
Other	14.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

A further two finalists indicated that attending the SchoolNet conference in Durban in 2010 and seeing the 2010 Innovative Teachers winners being recognized at the SchoolNet / Intel conference in Johannesburg in 2011 had motivated them to enter.

Whilst the past few Forums have involved finalists each presenting their projects to all finalists and judges, the 2012 competition saw finalists each erecting a poster describing their projects and individual interviews being conducted between each finalist and three or four judges. The change in format drew mixed reactions from the group. Whilst the format used was in line with the regional and global events participants complained about the poor lighting in the venue, the expense of producing posters and the fact that only some judges saw their entries. A number of teachers who had participated in previous forums said that they preferred the format where they got to hear about each project as is indicated in the feedback below:

*The posters were expensive to make, and we're only valuable to the winners. However, I do understand that they helped the judges to initiate a conversation with each competitor.*

*I enjoyed meeting the finalists. Felt that the way it was done last year, when presented to judges, & able to hear & see all projects was way better. This year I felt I never really knew all that each project entailed. Hearing a project presented to the judges ensured that we all heard everything about a project and was more inspiring.*

*I experienced the judges as friendly yet firm. They listened enthusiastically and asked questions that were relevant. Even though the one on one interviews are more nerve wrecking than presenting something in front of an audience, I do believe that this approach is more effective for choosing the winners.*



All the finalists who responded to the post-event survey reported being either very satisfied (78%) or somewhat satisfied with the event (24%). They enjoyed the networking, commented on the professionalism of the judges and noted that their travel and accommodation arrangements were superb. Below is selected feedback that indicates how much the Forum was enjoyed:



*I think this is a wonderful opportunity. Firstly to give some credit to teachers that goes the extra mile. Secondly, in applying for this it forces you to rethink your own teaching and how you can improve.*

*I really enjoyed the experience and found the networking most valuable.*

*A totally new experience for me- the judges were professional and the feedback I got from them was helpful and encouraging. I had never had my work displayed for other people to see - it gave me more insight to what I could do. Loved every minute of it.*

As part of the prize for making it to the finals, finalists were invited to attend the South African Basic Education Conference which was held at the Durban ICC immediately after the Partners in Learning Forum. Unfortunately the presentations at this conference did not appeal to the group as a whole and many preferred the informal session on the judging criteria run by Saretjie Musgrave as well as her workshop on "Learning all around us". Those who had attended the SchoolNet/Intel ICT Classroom Conference in 2011 found that to be a more relevant conference for innovative

teachers and a number of respondents noted that they would have enjoyed more sessions directly applicable to using ICT in teaching. The following views were expressed:



*Unfortunately, the conference wasn't as relevant to me as I'd hoped it would be. I was looking forward to the SABEC conference, but it was a bit of a let-down: some sessions were informative, but overall it was not what I expected. Our informal session at Hilton Hotel on the final morning was invaluable, thank you!*

*The best part for me is other teachers work and meeting them. The ICT Conference last year was far more up my alley than this one, but I did meet some great people in education and this has left me hopeful and inspired.*

The 2012 finalists offered the following suggestions for encouraging increased participation in the Microsoft Partners in Learning Forums:

- *Free, travelling workshops that help teachers integrate technology into lessons - not just workshops around entering the competition.*
- *A formal letter being sent to schools stating that a finalist is able to present a workshop as part of professional development*
- *Schools being encouraged to spot innovative teachers and to then motivate those teachers to enter an existing project, the awareness will spread.*
- *The department or unions sending out a message giving the details of a contact person (maybe a previous finalist) for teachers to contact if they think their project can be enrolled.*
- *Hosting a display of projects in each province before the closing date – using this to jolt people into action and to prepare new entrants for what lies ahead.*
- *Having a meeting of all previous winners and the novices so they can share experiences.*
- *A twitter handle should be created for the Forum, and the hash-tag must continue to be used.*
- *Get more people to visit schools as a personal presentation is better than an impersonal advert. Teachers need to connect with a person before they start feeling like they could take the risk.*
- *Invite teachers to attend the judging of projects in which ever city the Forum takes place in. Make the session longer so there can be a dedicated judging time and then an open to the "public" time.*
- *Fiona's doing a fabulous job with the PiL site and the webinars on offer appear to be attracting some conversation at schools. If the site offers info, free tools, information on the best websites and free tools and appropriate webinars and 'How to...' videos, it will become more of an active hub where teachers go for ideas, info and stimulation. At the moment it appears to be going towards that route/hub.*
- *Top 20 Finalists should be featured at Ed Department district meetings, presenting their incredible work to district managers and principals. This would spread the word very quickly - though we all know, the reality of attempting to co-ordinate presenters at these poorly organised meetings can be a nightmare.*
- *I chatted to a number of people who were impressed with the line-up at last year's forum awards ceremony at the Tech Conf at St Johns - and that is how they heard about the PiL. Linking it with an IT / ICT / Tech conference will be great.*
- *I think the TeachMeets are a great idea and Fiona is amazing in how she manages to host workshops, webinars, blog, etc. It really does go by word of mouth.*
- *TeachMeets for me is the small beginning in terms of getting people to PIL - show them what can be done, get them to try it, inspire them to think wider, and enter a project. Perhaps trying to get people to TeachMeets and then having 'ambassadors' attend these to advertise PIL would be an idea?*
- *The winning teachers could be paraded around showcasing their projects and help other teachers willing to do the same thing. It's always better from the horse's mouth.*
- *I think by sending letters to schools and department and also through the media like SABC 1 if possible and adverts that encourage teachers to have emails addresses and send them to you*



At the awards ceremony held at the South African Basic Education Conference on 2 April 2012 teachers were recognized in various categories. The following four teachers were announced as the winners of the 2012 South African Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum and they will be attending the Middle East and Africa Partners in Learning Forum to be held in Morocco in August 2012:

Caroline Adelaar, St Mary's School, Gauteng – Trees4Africa  
 Maxwell Funo, Mkhanyiseli Primary School, WC –  
 Our Community Our Pride  
 Gaye Pieterse, Durban Girls' College, KZN –  
 Inside Outside  
 Charli Wiggill, Eden College Durban, KZN –  
 Braille Memory Game and Toys for the Blind



We hope that the 2012 finalists will go back to their schools with new ideas and that many of them will motivate teachers in their networks to enter subsequent Forums. Based on their enjoyable experiences at the 2012 Microsoft Partners in Learning Forums finalists made the following commitments:



*I already have spread the word at my school - I'm excited about what lies ahead.*  
*I can't wait to get more staff from my school involved and participating.*  
*You know I'm the PiL's greatest fan and will always sell this concept - wow!! Two colleagues have already agreed that they'll enter next year (and I'll ensure they do).*  
*I would and have recommended to tons of people! Fabulous experience and wonderful networking opportunity!*  
*We are already preparing for the next competition.*  
*I have already spoken to my colleagues and to the teachers that are in my cluster*

## 10.2011 Microsoft Middle East Africa Partners in Learning Forum – Aquaba, Jordan

This event took place in Aqaba, Jordan between 6-8 August 2012. SchoolNet SA was involved in the Regional Partners in Learning Forum in two capacities – making the travel arrangements for the South African and Lesotho delegation and coordinating the judging process.

The principals and ICT coordinators of two South African Innovative Schools participated in the Forum – St Cyprians as a Mentor School and Rondebosch Boys Preparatory School as a Pathfinder School. Three Lesotho teachers and five South African teachers participated in the Innovative Teacher track. A further South African teacher, Susan Ausmeier had won the Partners in Learning Network competition and attendance at this event was awarded as her prize. Megan Rademeyer and Dr Kasongo Kalanda were judges for the competition and Dr Oliphant of the Lesotho College of Education participated in the policy maker track.

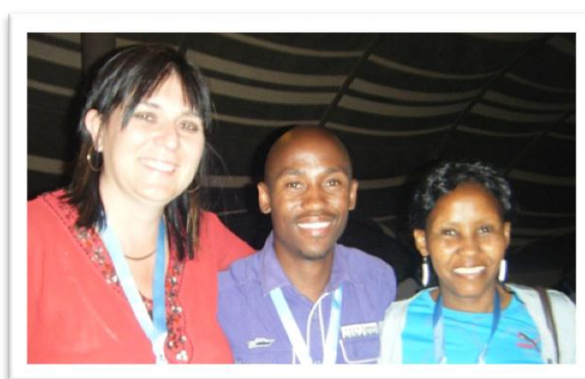


Educational ICT Consultant Gerald Roos was contracted by SchoolNet SA to run the judges' workshop and to coordinate the judging process. Roos had attended the European Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum in Moscow where the new judging template and judging workshop process had been used for the first time. It was hoped that by using the same rubric and workshop process at the Middle East Africa Forum that this regional event would align to other regional events and that the Middle East and Africa winners would be better prepared for the global forum. At the regional Forum, Roos explained the new judging process to the jury and the group worked through coding exercises in an attempt to make sure that everyone shared a common understanding of how scores should be awarded.

At the awards ceremony the following teachers from the South Africa/Lesotho delegation received awards:

Natalie Meerholz -	4th Place - Beyond the Classroom
Louise Clarke and Kim Jackson -	1st Place –Collaboration
Lyneth Crighton -	1st Place - Cutting Edge Use of Technology
Malatela Monaheng -	2nd Place – Innovation in Challenging Contexts

During the Forum teachers were divided into groups and taken to a range of attractions in the Aqaba area including an aquarium, film school and citadel. They were then tasked with taking themes and discussion points that emerged during these visits and designing a collaborative group project using this as inspiration. Groups began working on their projects at the Forum and judging took place a few weeks after the Forum to give teachers an opportunity to implement their ideas. Wessel Theron (South Africa) and Thejane Malakane (Lesotho) were part of this winning group meaning that they, along with the winners listed above were eligible to attend the Global Microsoft Partners in Learning Forum.



## 11.2011 Microsoft Global Partners in Learning Forum – Washington D.C., USA

This event took place from 7 to 10 November 2011 in Washington DC USA. SchoolNet SA was tasked with making the travel and accommodation arrangements for the 20 people in the South African/ Lesotho delegation. The group comprised representatives from the three South African Innovative Schools (Eunice, St Cyprians and Rondebosch Boys Preparatory); Linda Bradfield who had been selected to attend the Partners in Learning Forum; Megan Rademeyer, Gerald Roos, Saretjie Musgrave and Kasongo Kalanda who served on the judging panel; and the Lesotho and South African teachers who had won places at the Global event at the regional Forum.



Highlights of the event included the opening ceremony held in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and the awards evening which was celebrated in the National Portrait Gallery. The group also enjoyed a range of keynote speakers, workshops and off-site sessions at various Smithsonian museums and research facilities. Whilst it was disappointing that none of the South African or Lesotho teachers were awarded prizes at the Global Forum, the event was a once in a lifetime experience for teachers in the group. They enjoyed displaying their posters and sharing their innovative projects as well as networking with global peers.

## 12. Gauteng - Microsoft TeachMeet

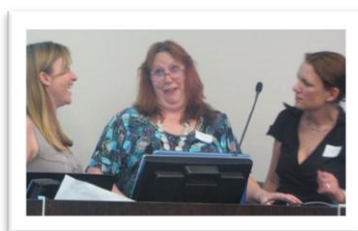
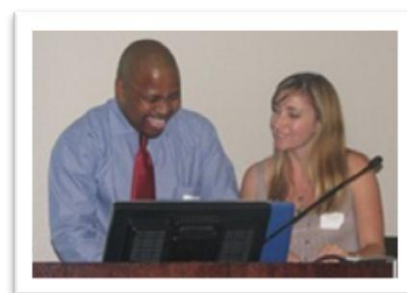
On 13 October 2011 Microsoft South Africa held the first TeachMeet in South Africa at their offices in Bryanston. Essentially TeachMeets are 'teachers teaching teachers' in a prescribed amount of time, usually three minutes, using the provided laptop and a data projector. These gatherings of teachers are fast becoming a very popular form of professional development in the field of technology integration internationally.



Fiona Beal from SchoolNet SA had participated in a TeachMeet at the Partners in Learning Institute in the USA and she was instrumental in helping Angela Schaerer from Microsoft to get the South African TeachMeet off the ground. She created a TeachMeet wiki (<http://teachmeet-southafrica.wikispaces.com>) as a resource for other teachers who want to hold TeachMeets in their areas and encouraged teachers to volunteer to present their ideas.

Microsoft and SchoolNet SA both sent invitations to their databases of Gauteng teachers and over 100 Gauteng educators responded to the open invitation to be part of the TeachMeet. Some of these teachers offered to be 'Keen Beans' who would bring along a presentation to share and the remaining Enthusiastic Lurkers' came along to learn from their peers. The following twelve teachers each gave a three minute presentation:

- Shireen Peters from Parkview Junior spoke on designing a 'Shopping and Money using Word' theme for Grade 2 using Microsoft Word.
- Fiona Beal from Fish Hoek spoke on "Making a collaborative e-book" using the free applications iEtherpad.com, Slideboom.com, along with any illustrative programme and Microsoft PowerPoint.
- Daniel Maedi from Gauteng e-Learning spoke on using a 'Spreadsheet Solution' - a drill and practice activity to assist the learners in Mathematics.
- Jeneanne Hultzer from Brescia House School spoke out about using 'Excel in Maths Literacy'.
- Helen Robertson from Cornwall Hill College spoke about using 'Boogie Board RIP, e-Reader and cellphone as m-Learning tools'.
- Natalie Meerholtz from Holy Rosary called her presentation 'Challenge your students to crack the code – QR codes'.
- Maggie Verster from Pretoria spoke about 'Organising your life in one click' using Diigo for bookmarking.
- Paul Wilton from the Oprah Winfrey Girls' Academy in Gauteng called his presentation 'Life Sciences Grade 12 on Moodle'. He generously offered to share his multitude of 'Moodling Life Science' resources with others.
- Aurelliah Rosenberg, Head of Educator Empowerment at ORT SA named her presentation 'Camera, action, lights – teaching with movies.'
- Linda Bradfield from St John's Prep spoke on Collaboration versus Cooperation versus Coaching.
- Lyneth Crighton from Brescia College had some great ideas for 'Recording with cell phones' in schools.
- Charmaine Hart from Bryandale Primary School Grade 5 showed how she integrates the curriculum in her advertising unit in English First Language She called it 'Advertising in English'.



Maggie Verster, a well-known social networker, managed the Twitter backchannel and gave a humorous presentation urging teachers to join Twitter. Many participants enjoyed participating in the backchannel chat and a screen at the front of the auditorium made it possible for everyone to follow the chat. After the Teachmeet Megan Rademeyer from SchoolNet urged teachers to consider entering the Microsoft Innovative teacher competition in 2012 and to start planning their projects soon. A number of the presenters at the TeachMeet had been previous Innovative Teacher

winners and it was hoped that the TeachMeet would inspire other teachers to develop projects using ICT. Finally, Fiona Beal spoke on Microsoft's free tools and each member of the audience was given a copy of the Microsoft Learning Suite DVD so that they could try out the tools that had been demonstrated with their learners.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

SchoolNet SA is grateful to Microsoft for their continued support – both in terms of the materials development and training sessions that they sponsor and for continually promoting SchoolNet SA as a training service provider to other funders. We are proud of both the quantity and quality of events and training sessions that we have been a part of the in the 2012 financial year and look forward to continuing to build on this success. We are equally excited by the new opportunities and projects that continue to arise such as the X-Box project and research into innovative teaching practices. We believe that projects such as these keep SchoolNet up-to-date on the latest trends in the use of technology to support teaching and learning.

**Megan Rademeyer**

**Programmes Manager**

**SchoolNet SA – May 2012**