

EduWeek 2016 – Gaming in Education

This year #EduWeek16 partnered with the SABC, the headline sponsor being Intel. Other major sponsors were Microsoft, Pearson and Dell. Educational exhibitors were there in large numbers (120). The conference theme was “Education for Sustainable Development” and the choice of parallel sessions was greater than in previous years. There were five choices of conference threads which included Early Childhood Development, Vocational and Higher Education, Inclusive Education, general basic education and Educational Technology.



The Opening Plenary was well attended as can be seen from this photo above. Brian Gonzales from Intel, Jaye Richards-Hill from Microsoft and Maurice de Hond from Steve Jobs Schools (Netherlands) all preceded the closing remarks given by National Minister Motshekga. All the speakers were engaging but Maurice de Hond captured the imagination of the audience when he explained the reason he had opened his first school in the Netherlands. He had been compelled by the fact that his 7 year old daughter was about to attend the same school as his 30-something sons and the school had not changed in the least in those intervening two decades. He said if Bill Gates had died around the same time he might have named his school after him. He announced that he had just opened two Steve Jobs schools in Gauteng. This year, Steve Jobs Schools have been named Most Innovative Schools in the world by Tech-Insider Magazine. Maurice de Hond and Minister Motshekga are pictured here <http://stevejobsschool.world/4221-2/> on the Steve Jobs schools website.

Next up in the E-Tech theatre was a panel discussion, chaired by Angela Schaerer of Microsoft entitled, “Rock, Paper, Tablets – will technology save our schools?” The speakers were: Riaan van der Bergh,



Deputy Provincial Manager, FEDSAS; Brian Wafawarowa, Executive Director, Learning Services, Pearson South Africa; Jaye Richards-Hill, Teacher Engagement Manager, Microsoft South Africa; Dr. Sabine Huber, Worldwide Education Specialist, Intel Education, Intel Corporation and Elias Chipimo, Commercial Director, Mwabu. The speakers came from a wide range of countries and backgrounds but were all very much on the same page and in favour of the effective use of technology in classrooms. One question from the floor was quite difficult for

panel members to answer, “Save our schools from what?”

Due to SchoolNet’s involvement with the D G Murray Trust project, Learning Gains through Play (LGP), we found ourselves drawn to the new EduWeek conference thread, Early Childhood Development. One of the presentations that aligned closely with the LGP project was a presentation by Norman Mphake from the Physical Education Institute of South Africa, entitled, “[Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes](#)”. Norman explained how important it is for children to have early positive experiences of physical activity. Another of his main points was the relevance of motor development to cognitive development in ECD, which is one of the focal points of our Learning Gains Research when using Xbox Kinect games. Details of other presentations are available from the [EduWeek 2016 website](#)



Robyn Beere – Ladders for Learning



Siraj Ghoor – Open Minds Campus



Nompumelelo Mohohlwane and Stephen Taylor – EGRS Early Grade Reading Study– DBE



Elizabeth Nadler –Nir Literacy Gym UCT

The Awards Dinner was a glamorous affair, magnificently hosted by Hlubi Mboya, pictured below. A wonderful surprise was the Lifetime Achievement Award being won by Phuti Ragophala, Principal of Pula Madibogo Primary in Limpopo. Phuti magnanimously thanked SchoolNet South Africa, Coza Cares and Microsoft for all the support she had received during her digital journey.



Above: *Dynamic Hlubi Mboya*

Right: *Brian Wafawarowa, from Pearson South Africa awarding Phuti Ragophala the Lifetime Achievement Award*



Other awards winners were:

Brain Booster for Early Childhood Development as well as for the Innovation product award, Edit Micro Systems for Special Needs Education, The Reach Trust for the NGO award and Siyafunda Community Technology Centres for the Community Award. The Institution leader of the Year award went to Sehoole Moses Sello, Principal of Mankuroane Technical and Commercial Secondary who also won the Educator who Cares award and the Teacher of Tomorrow was awarded to Lindsay Wesner, ICT integrator and Subject Head of Life Orientation at Parklands College in Cape Town.

SchoolNet's involvement in EduWeek in 2016 was due to the D G Murray Trust and our Learning Gains through Play project that precipitated an invitation from Intel to participate in a panel discussion on Gaming in Education. The objective of this Intel presentation was to unpack as many

diverse aspects of Gaming in Education in the short window that a panel discussion allows. The panel therefore included gaming experts from varied fields; [Koos de Beer](#), Junior Lecturer, University of Pretoria, Andreas Cent Hadjipaschali, Director & CEO, [Bravado Gaming \(PTY\) LTD](#), South Africa, Janet Thomson, Executive Director, [SchoolNet South Africa](#), and Hitendra Hits Naik from Intel Corporation, South Africa. The discussion was facilitated by Ryan Macquet from Intel. Ryan started off by setting the scene around Intel's involvement in education and then introduced the wider topic of gaming. He asked Koos to clarify the terminology by distinguishing between gamification, game-based learning, gameful design and serious games. Part of Koos's explanation can be viewed here <https://youtu.be/yzzbfHAzduM> Ryan then asked Janet to outline the benefits of using gaming in the classroom which she did by describing the research that is being undertaken in the Learning Gains through Play project. Her reply can be viewed here



<https://youtu.be/gTSVpae2aP8> Janet mentioned that Microsoft had released their education edition of Minecraft and that it was downloadable for free to educators for three months from this link <http://education.minecraft.net/>



Koos then discussed his unique use of Minecraft with his university students studying BSc. Multimedia where they can earn rewards such as bonus marks and assignment extensions by completing challenges that he poses. However, the main purpose of requiring students to undertake challenges in Minecraft was for the purpose of developing a shared gaming vocabulary with his students once they have all played the same game. He highlighted the features of Minecraft Education Edition that provides teachers will the tools to create goals and set challenges for their learners.

Ryan introduced Andreas 'Cent' Hadjipaschali and asked how he had managed to grow his company, [Bravado Gaming](https://youtu.be/FOF4GcPb-Mw), into the premier e-sports organisation in South Africa at age 29. Andreas's response and interaction with Ryan is available here <https://youtu.be/FOF4GcPb-Mw> He provided the facts around just how big e-sports has become including it now being on DSTV Super Sport. The panel discussion was concluded by Hitendra Naik, the Director of Innovation for the Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Intel who shared instances of gamification as applied in other industries and made special mention of Intel's commitment to gender equity with **My Digital Journey App** for girls in Kenya and Intel's **She Will Connect** initiative.



There was time for questions from the audience. The first question concerned game designers and their chances of employment in the South Africa of the future. Koos gave a comprehensive response which can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/T4uHyvGODRM>. The second question concerned the

likelihood of gaming becoming a regular feature of the South African classroom. Janet responded that SchoolNet's experience had not been encouraging because it had taken 4 years since their first Xbox project before finding an education sponsor willing to invest in gaming. However she was expecting that the very positive results from the current research into Learning Gains through Play would be sufficiently encouraging for education decision makers to sit up and take notice. Response available here <https://youtu.be/OSM4P9RH-PE>



A press round table discussion followed the presentation and a number of news reports have been published already. So it seems that the panel discussion raised a good deal of interest around the role of gaming:

http://www.itweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=153957

<http://techgirl.co.za/2016/07/01/child-will-soon-educated-playing-games/>

Andreas's Facebook page report here <https://www.facebook.com/bravadogaming/>
Photos from EduWeek 2016 are available on the [SchoolNet gallery](#) and the videos on the [SchoolNet channel](#)

Janet Thomson and Hlengiwe Mfeka 30.06.2016