



**Report to KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
on Microsoft Partners in Learning Training
conducted between August 2009 – January 2011**

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1 Introduction

A range of Microsoft Partners in Learning training has been conducted by SchoolNet SA in KwaZulu-Natal since the inception of the programme in 2005. In addition to funding some of this training, Microsoft continues to fund the development of the Partners in Learning courseware and capacity building for trainers which enables other organizations, corporate social investment initiatives and departments of education to offer Partners in Learning training to more schools than Microsoft could fund itself.

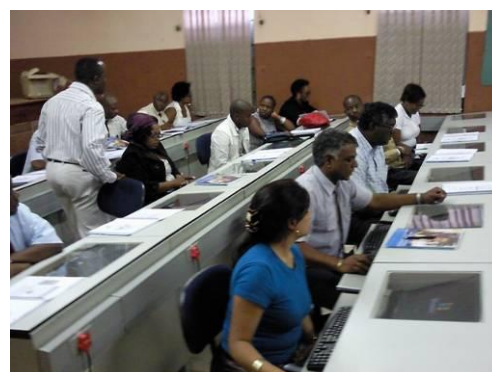


This report follows on from a previous report which outlined Partners in Learning Training which had been conducted in KwaZulu-Natal between 2007 and 2009. In this report training interventions from the end of 2009 until the beginning of 2011 are documented, as sponsored by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education; corporate sponsors and Microsoft itself.

2 Partners in Learning training sponsored by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

2.1 *Deploying Student Technical Support Solutions (Helpdesk) Training in 4 Districts*

It is a challenge for many schools to maintain their computer centres and to fix technical faults when they occur. In order to empower teachers to conduct basic technical trouble shooting, the Microsoft Partners in Learning HelpDesk course was offered to four clusters of schools in KwaZulu-Natal. The intention of this course is to assist learners and teachers to face the challenge of first line maintenance of equipment and simple network installations with confidence.



In January and February of 2010, SchoolNet SA was contracted to run four rounds of HelpDesk training in the following four KwaZulu-Natal schools.

- Gugulesizwe Secondary School
- Ingqwangele Secondary School
- Mandlenkosi Comprehensive School
- Ogwini Secondary School

At Ogwini, the participants were mainly educators and school management staff from various schools in the cluster. They had very basic computer literacy and very little technical knowledge of computers but they were eager to learn more. The training focused mainly on confidence building and learning computer lab management skills. This was achieved by familiarizing educators with





computer terminology, and encouraging them to touch internal and external hardware components. In KwaMashu most educators who attended the course had no background to computers, and only five of them were regular users of computers. During this session, the educators' role of establishing the HelpDesk teams at schools were clearly explained by the trainer. In Ngqwangele the participants were principals and teachers. The trainer established that their computer skills were lacking but gradually the group acquired some computer maintenance skills.

In KwaMashu teachers were required to cautiously remove the computer components in turns, noting carefully from where each component was removed. Leaders were to closely monitor the process ensuring that the members adhered to guidelines. The trainer moved from one group to another to monitor the process, ask questions and to provide more clarity as the process continued. In Ngqwangele the trainer gave educators an opportunity to strip the computers and they worked in groups. The trainer went from group to group to ensure that all members were actively involved in the process. Once again they seemed to enjoy the activity. In Gugulesizwe educators brought old hardware to the session and these were compared to the newer computers to show the group how technology improves over time.

The following comments extracted from the course evaluation forms indicate that on the whole the training was well received, despite challenges around the ICT literacy of some participants:

"Before the training I was not familiar with the lab material like the server, smartboard, OHP but at the end of the course I am able and with confidence to use all the mentioned, dismantling the monitor/mother board and assembling it."

"I am now confident to use the computer and help others; all my concerns pertaining to computer use were addressed."

"I gained more knowledge from the workshop and I am confident to work in our computer lab and assist educators and learners."

"Technical support solution workshop greatly helped principals who were exposed to some evident computer problems. Money that is spent for simple problems is now a thing of the past."

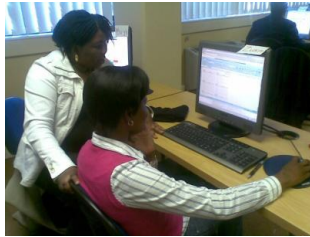
The training sessions were enjoyed by the teachers and they have gained technical skills to sustain and grow their schools' computer centres. That said – the course would have been more effective if computer literate teachers with some technical knowledge had been selected for these training opportunities. SchoolNet SA would be interested to further assist the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to implement ICT Skills for teachers' courses in other schools in the various districts to enable teachers to enhance their computer skills and to move towards integrating ICT into the classroom.

2.2 KwaZulu-Natal Three Circuit training

This project followed on from the successful provision of Partners in Learning training by SchoolNet SA to Heads of Departments from the Chatsworth and Maphundu Wards in the Umlazi District. The

intention of this project was to provide Heads of Departments with Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Principals training as well as access to the self-paced Microsoft Digital Literacy Curriculum. Training took place in three sessions and aimed to train 20 HODs per session and took place in the following areas:

- Hluhluwe
- Manguzi
- Ngavuma



Through capacitating senior management with computer skills, and by showing them how these skills can be implemented into their professional work, the intention was to encourage the Heads of Department to act as role models to the staff at their schools. As a follow on to this project we would welcome an opportunity to offer training to the staff of each of the schools that sent delegates. In this way – the HODs who received the initial training could continue to serve as role models – but more teachers at each school would be empowered with basic computer skills.



3 Partners in Learning Training sponsored by other organizations

3.1 Vodacom Foundation - Partners in Learning Training

The Vodacom Foundation is partnering with Microsoft and SchoolNet SA in a three year programme aimed at enhancing initiatives in education. The project consists of two components:

- Providing Microsoft Partners in Learning training for teachers in Limpopo and KwaZulu Natal
- Providing training and support for two Vodacom ICT Resource Centres located in Mpumalanga and NorthWest

During 2010 – participants from a range of KwaZulu-Natal schools received ICT Leadership for Education Managers and HelpDesk training in clusters and ten schools each had a round of ICT Skills for Teachers training. In 2011 these schools will be offered Peer Coaching, One Step Further, WebQuests and Innovation training. The intention of offering clusters of schools a range of Partners in Learning courses was to develop and sustain a relationship with selected schools whilst helping teachers to gradually acquire more confidence and competence in using ICTs.

Below is a description of the various training sessions that have been completed as part of this project:

ICT Leadership for Education Managers

Port Shepstone District (29 – 31 March 2010)

Port Shepstone High School was used for this training session as none of the schools in the cluster could provide adequate facilities. At the venue the trainees had access to the internet and a printer and all the computers had CD drives which facilitated easy loading of the training materials. The only setbacks were a lack of administrator rights for the trainer and a lack of sound facilities for showing videos.

One of the highlights of this course included using the Intel online visual ranking tool to rate the importance of different ICT options, which led to vibrant discussion on ICT competencies. Many of the participants at this course had not yet attended ICT Skills for Teachers training which meant that many lacked basic computer skills. This lack of computer skills was compensated for by completing some activities in the hard copy workbooks and working through ICT skills scenarios as a group.

With 19 participants, this was the most well attended ICT Leadership for Education Managers course that was held for this project. Nonetheless, the trainer noted that in many cases the principals did not attend the training themselves, but instead sent the deputy principal and/or a few members of the school management team. He noted, "I sometimes feel that our endeavour of capacitating principals to be pioneers in transforming our schools into ICT schools is not gaining momentum; they continue delegating their deputies and HOD's to these workshops. It sometimes makes our attempt a joke, particularly in those areas that require the authority of the head of the school". Despite only having a few principals in attendance, the trainer described the group as "wonderful people who were very eager to learn, they participated in group discussions and shared ideas with other trainees".

Pinetown and Umlazi Districts (23 – 25 April 2010)

This round of training proved to be very difficult to organise. After rescheduling the training twice, SchoolNet SA made a decision to have the course despite anticipating low attendance. This was done to accommodate the schools who had shown interest and who had twice been let down when training was cancelled at the last minute. The following schools did not attend for various reasons: Phakathi Primary claimed that they needed a mandate from the department of education to attend training – despite a letter from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education being sent to the school they still failed to send delegates. Swanvale Primary mentioned it was a short term and that they did not have time to attend a course. Kwamgaga High School had had their computers stolen and said that they didn't see the benefits of attending ICT training as they currently do not have computers at their school. Finally the members of the Isipingo Beach Intermediate SMT mentioned that they were computer literate already and therefore did not need computer lessons. They did not seem to understand that the course was not about learning computer skills. In the end only five delegates attended – of these one participant was a deputy principal and the remaining participants were classroom teachers for whom the course is not designed. Interestingly when the ICT skills for teachers training was conducted the trainer found that the teachers' ICT skills were very weak. Fortunately the principal did attend that training and was then at least able to appreciate the value of training for her staff.

Microsoft's Smart Exchange in Durban was used as a venue for this course and this also proved to be problematic. Whilst there were sufficient computers in good working order, as well as a data projector and internet access – there was no one on hand to host the session and the trainer battled to locate toilets and data projector at the venue. There was also no parking for visitors which meant that the delegates had to park some distance from the centre.

Despite these challenges, the few people who did attend the training enjoyed the course and felt that they had benefited from it. In addition to improving their own computer skills they were also made aware of issues around the development of ICT policy and the importance of being information literate. We hope that they will be able to share some of their discussions with the managers at their schools. As one participant noted, "to me it was a real adventure. I found that technology plays an important role in the teaching and learning environment and I would suggest that all educators be exposed to it."

HelpDesk

Two rounds of training have taken place, one in the Port Shepstone District (10 – 14 June 2010) and one in the Umlazi District (22-24 October and 5 and 6 November 2010).



The trainer reported that conducting June workshop was very challenging as it took place during the soccer tournament and "people were feeling the FIFA 2010". As a result of this, some days training ended early to allow people to travel home to watch the games. Despite this, the training was well received and the participants grasped the concept of making their schools technically independent. The trainer remarked that he was impressed by the skills of the participants who were "young and eager to learn".

In both cases, the groups especially enjoyed the section on "Understanding Hardware". Whilst initially the group were scared to disconnect and connect computers they were thrilled when they were able to get the computers to work again. The groups are now equipped with basic trouble shooting skills and will be able to apply what they have learnt to finding technical solution at schools.

ICT Skills for Teachers

Luthuli High (23 – 25 April and 1 – 2 May 2010)

Because the computer room at this school was not well cared for, it was fortunate that the trainer arrived in the morning for this training session, even though the session was only scheduled for the afternoon. The trainer spent the morning trying to get enough computers to work so that each participant would have a working computer, and she cleaned the computer centre which was covered in dust and used as a store-room for sports equipment. During the training session the teachers reported that they are hardly ever



allowed to enter the computer room and they asked if someone from SchoolNet could call their principal to request that they be allowed to use the computer room to practice their computer skills. Whilst many of the ten participants on this course were computer illiterate at the start of training, the training ended on a high note with many of the participants reporting that they had gained a huge amount of confidence and requesting more training.

Ithongasi Primary (28 June – 2 July 2010)

The trainer reported that the donated computers at this school were well maintained with up to date software however there was a variety of machine types, and the computers were not networked or connected to the internet. She noted that the principal was very supportive of the training and this may have contributed to twenty one teachers attending the course. Of the teachers in attendance, some, particularly the younger teachers were eager to learn and readily progressed towards the more advanced scenarios. Others were more apathetic, arriving late and expecting the trainer to provide continued support without reading the notes or consulting the tip sheets.

Siphapheme Primary (21 – 23 April and 4 – 5 June 2010)

Whilst some computers at this venue were not functional, the trainer reported that “the venue is clean. The computers are networked. It has two air conditioners, data projector, smart board, network and printer.” Thirteen teachers attended the training and judging from their evaluation forms they all enjoyed and benefitted from the sessions. Comments included: “The workshop enlightened me on the areas of difficulty and the resources supplied will be useful even in the future” and “The workshop was fruitful to me; I can now work independently using the computer. Really the computer makes work easy and fast”.



Jamengweni Primary (15 – 16 May and 14 – 15 June 2010)

The fourteen participants at this training session were described by the trainer as being “older, well mannered teachers” who were likely to continue to work their way through the scenarios in the trainer’s absence. The trainer reported that the whole school management team including the principal attended the follow-up training session and reported that they had tried to practice their computer skills during the break. Whilst the school’s administration computers (which had been sponsored by Vodacom) were new, the computers in the lab were very old and operating on Windows 98 and Office 97. There was no internet access and the trainer encouraged the school to invest in internet access for teachers so that they could use email and the Internet for research purposes.



Zakhele Primary (14 – 18 June 2010)

One of SchoolNet SA’s most experienced trainers conducted this session and remarked that “this has been the most trying workshop I have ever managed”. He noted that although there



were some donated computers that were only a year or two old they had no software installed. There were also other computers that were so old that they were running Windows 95 and did not have CD ROM drives. Much of the first day of training was spent with the trainer attempting to occupy the group whilst simultaneously getting software and the training materials loaded on to the computers. He remarked "it is clear when computers are donated without knowledge of what is required... a good gesture can be turned into an almost worthless donation". He suggested that the school be guided to acquire applications software, network the workstations and connect a printer and projector so that the computers could be used effectively.

Siyaphambili Secondary (31 July and 6 -8 August 2010)

The trainer reported that "teaching skills through scenarios was a great help as the teachers found it exciting." He noted that many of the participants were reluctant to integrate ICTs into their daily teaching activities, but that by the end of the course all of the participants were able to present a PowerPoint showcasing how they planned to use ICTs in their administration and curriculum delivery. He reported that "I worked with a very good group of people. There was mutual respect and this provided a conducive environment for their learning." The group reported that the times of the course had not been well communicated with them and the trainer had to negotiate with the group to agree on dates and times. The training was also complicated by one day without any electricity that needed to be rescheduled. Despite these challenges one teacher remarked "the workshop was very successful and I have learnt a lot. Our trainer was very patient and helpful. This workshop was excellent."



Swanvale Primary (30 -1 August and 7 and 11 September 2010)

This session got off to a challenging start. Firstly the computers that were described by the trainer as "ancient", were running Windows 98 with only Word and Excel loaded. They also lacked USB ports or CD drives from which to load the training materials. Whilst the trainer had initially been promised that sixteen teachers would attend the session, when she arrived only a handful of teachers were present. When she told the group that she was not prepared to train fewer than ten teachers those that were present went off to persuade their colleagues to join the session until there was a reasonable amount of participants. The participants completed common activities during the training session as the trainer was unable to load the courseware. However many of the participants have computers at home and promised that they would access the courseware using their own computers. The trainer remarked, "I really enjoyed this training and felt that I have made a difference in the lives of these teachers from what they kept on saying to me." This was echoed by a participant who commented: "Sincere thanks to our sponsor Vodacom for an educational experience. An excellent presentation was done – Mrs Hlengiwe proves to be an outstanding teacher. Being a double graduate, it was refreshing to uplift me further. Thanks".



Isipingo Beach Intermediate (15, 23 and 30 October 2010)

This school had ten computers that had been donated by Vodacom that were fully functional (although running Office 2003). Most of the computers had an expired trial version of Office 2007 which the participants could no longer use. About ten more computers had Open Office installed however this was confusing to the participants as some of the functionality is not the same as in Microsoft Office which is the software referenced in the tip sheets. The computer room did not have internet access or a digital projector, however the trainer was able to use her own projector and 3G modem. The principal informed the trainer that only five teachers had shown an interest in attending the course. The trainer asked to meet with the teachers; she showed the whole staff a PowerPoint presentation and was able to motivate a further fifteen teachers to attend the session so that in total twenty teachers attended this training session. Although most participants had only basic computer skills the trainer reported that “they had a very positive attitude towards the course. They were impressed and amazed by the activities that are contained in the CD. They mentioned that they are very relevant to their needs as educators.”

Amagcina Primary (10 -14 October and 17 -18 October 2010)

This training session involved eleven teachers – most of whom could not hold a mouse when the session commenced. In the beginning the group appeared shy and scared but soon the trainer had them laughing and by the second day they were gaining independence. By the final day the group was looking forward to the showcase session when they would be able to present the artefacts they had created. They were also fascinated by the internet which the trainer demonstrated using her 3G modem. In particular, they were in awe of Skype and how it was possible to chat to someone else. Three educators from this school will be attending HelpDesk training and they committed themselves to forming a committee. A district official also attended the showcase session and he motivated the teachers to seek out donations of additional computer equipment.

ICT Training Rollout - Challenges and Solutions

Whilst on the whole the training provided through the Vodacom Foundation project has been well received and has been beneficial to the teachers who have received it, SchoolNet SA has faced a number of challenges in implementing the training programme and attendance at many of the training sessions has been less than ideal. Firstly, whilst the schools that were selected to receive the Vodacom funded training have all received some prior support from Vodacom, the computer facilities differed vastly from school to school. Some schools had fully equipped computer labs however the vast majority of schools had only a limited number of working computers – often consisting only of the three or four computers that Vodacom had donated. In others schools the computers are very old and running outdated software or they were beset with a range of technical issues including viruses, a lack of networking and in most cases no internet access.

Secondly the level of commitment shown by the teachers and indeed by school managers to the training programme has also differed vastly from school to school. Some schools have eagerly embraced the opportunity to receive training – teachers have readily committed to training dates and the full staff complement have arrived for and participated in every training session. In other schools training dates (which the schools suggested in the first place) have been cancelled and rescheduled numerous times. In other cases – despite obtaining commitment from the school

principal that the full staff would be in attendance very few teachers have arrived on the day of training citing numerous excuses as to why they have not attended. The principals themselves have often been very reluctant to attend the ICT Leadership for Education Managers course which helps to set the tone for the whole programme. By them failing to arrive or sending a class teacher as a substitute, principals fail to set a good example to other staff members and they fail to fully grasp the benefits of getting their teachers ICT literate and able to integrate ICT into their teaching and learning.

Thirdly, 2010 had two challenges external to this project that have had a great impact on it. The World Cup Soccer Tournament in June and July brought about a five week long school holiday however teachers were reluctant to commit to training that would keep them away from watching the soccer action. In some cases training took place but it was not as well attended as we had hoped and the trainers had to negotiate the start and end times with the group to enable them to still be home in time to watch the games. After teachers returned to school in July we hoped that we would be able to continue with the training programme however many teachers joined in the industrial action that took place from the end of July until the beginning of September and they would not attend training while they were on strike. At other schools, staff members were keen to proceed with training however intimidation from striking teachers meant that they were not prepared to jeopardise their safety to attend training sessions. In fact at one school in KwaZulu-Natal numerous staff members who did attend training during the strike had their car tyres slashed which led to us cancelling other sessions in this province until the strike was over. Although the industrial action has ended, many schools are now involved in catch up programmes which are keeping teachers occupied over weekends and school holidays – which ordinarily would have been used to offer courses.

To overcome these challenges, we have implemented a number of solutions. In some cases in KwaZulu-Natal, schools that were initially scheduled to be part of the training rollout that consistently failed to commit to training dates were replaced by other, more committed schools. The rationale of this decision was that forcing unwilling teachers to participate in training that they did not want to attend led to poorly attended sessions and wasted funding that could be more prudently spent on training teachers at schools that would fully commit to the training sessions. In making these substitutions we worked with provincial and district officials as well as full-time SchoolNet personnel based in KwaZulu-Natal to source schools that were more likely to commit to the programme and found that this has helped to ensure better commitment to the programme.

It is unfortunate that so few principals attended the ICT Leadership for Education Managers course as on the whole the schools where we have been able to secure the buy-in of the principals have been the schools where we have run the most successful training sessions. To get the buy-in of more principals, in KwaZulu-Natal two SchoolNet SA staff members visited schools and explained the programme to the school principals and in some cases staff members. These personal visits and the opportunity to have a face-to-face discussion with school managers have helped principals to better understand the programme and the benefits of participating fully in the training. These visits were not budgeted for in the original training programme however they have been an invaluable addition to help ensure the long-term success of the programme.

In some cases, to compensate for schools with inadequate computer facilities, we have included well-resourced schools into the training programme. This meant that there would be at least one well-equipped school per cluster that could serve as a host venue for the centralized clustered training. In other cases, we have included some additional schools in HelpDesk training courses to ensure that we have had sufficient participants to run a course.

We are now working with schools that are committed to the programme and we will continue to work with these schools in 2011 to complete their training rollout. In many cases, the initial reluctance to attend training has been overcome once the participants attended some sessions and realised that the training would be beneficial. Next year, when Peer Coaching training begins we hope that having dedicated Peer Coaches based in each school will help to motivate other staff members to ensure that they continue with the courses and to apply what they have learnt.

3.2 Training sponsored by SITA

SchoolNet SA was appointed by SITA to offer Microsoft Partners in Learning and Intel Teach training to two clusters of schools in KwaZulu-Natal – in the Midlands and in Pinetown respectively.

SITA Midlands

The SITA Midlands project was initially conceptualized to equip seven Midland schools with networked, functional computer centres. SITA further wanted to ensure that the functional computer centres were used by the school community in exciting ways. To ensure that the centres were used optimally, SITA included professional development training courses for teachers. It was SchoolNet's role to coordinate and facilitate training of teachers for the duration of the project. This training was seen as a means to build an ICT skills knowledge base so that teachers could strive toward innovative use of ICTs in the classroom. Before the training started, an analysis of the schools computer needs was completed by SITA and this revealed that some schools had minimal hardware whilst others did not. It was decided that some schools would receive new computers and others new peripherals to ensure fully functional computer centres. SchoolNet SA could only initiate professional development training programmes once the hardware had been installed and the labs were fully functional.

Several delays with hardware provision delayed the start of SchoolNet's role in this project. The contract period was from March 2009 to April 2011 although by March 2009 schools had still not received their computers thus resulting in a reduction of time available for SchoolNet's professional development training programmes. In July, SITA felt that installations were imminent and SchoolNet scheduled the ICT Leadership for Education Managers course for principals and the senior management teams. Then due to ill-equipped and non-functioning school computer centres, the training had to be re-scheduled. Eventually the training was organized and facilitated at St Nicholas School (not a project school) in an attempt to maintain principals' enthusiasm for this project.

After this training in July 2009, no further developments on the hardware installations were forthcoming and Ms Amitha Ramlall of SITA advised that the service provider responsible for server installations had been liquidated and this resulted in some issues around new RFQ's needing to be issued. SchoolNet SA could only continue once working venues were available and the hardware

installations were necessary to ensure that teachers were able to practice skills learnt through any training. Experience has shown that teachers who are trained at other venues without the opportunity to practice, soon forget what they have learnt.

By January 2010, still only some of the schools had been sufficiently equipped with computers and this too without networking in place. After consultation with SITA, SchoolNet decided to start with the project by appointing a Training and Support Specialist, Ms Hlengiwe Mfeka, so that the Midlands teachers would have hands-on support when needed. More importantly, this would allow the support specialist to assess the situation on the ground and advise SITA accordingly. It is interesting to note that Hlengiwe is a former winner of the Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum – so she was well equipped to both impart computer skills to the teachers in the group as well as to act as an inspiration to them. The Training and Support specialist visited all project schools to explain to them the different training programmes that would be offered through the SITA project as well as complete an audit of computer equipment that was in place at the schools.

The Partners in Learning HelpDesk course was held in March 2010. Three learners and one teacher from each of the project schools attended the training which focused on teaching participants first-line maintenance techniques to help keep computers functioning. From the middle of March schools were conducting controlled tests and therefore training became more constrained. The support specialist was able to setup clustered training to allowed teachers who were available to attend training at this time. This proved somewhat successful.

By April 2010, ICT Skills for Teachers training was completed at the seven project schools, namely:

- Asibemunye High School
- Asithutuke High
- Injoloba Secondary
- Mconjwana High
- Mpophomeni High School
- Sbondombomvu Combined
- Umthombo Secondary

The support specialist then arranged meetings with the District and ward managers in the Midlands in an attempt to try and resolve some of the issues facing the project schools. In between training sessions, the Training and Support specialist was able to secure individual coaching times with teachers to provide support with specific ICT related issues that were proving challenging.

Training in the “One Step Further” course was scheduled from May 2010 but many workshops had to be rescheduled. Some of the reasons for these included:

- Principal not informing staff about dates; deputy forgot about the dates
- HIV/AIDS school campaigns in the midlands area
- SITA had not resolved the Mpophomeni High School payment issue
- Infrastructure not conducive to facilitation
- The teacher industrial action
- The World Cup Soccer

Despite these challenges, Hlengiwe was able to identify two exceptional teachers from Injoloba and Umthombo High and they requested sponsorship to attend the E-Schools Network conference in September 2010, in Cape Town. SchoolNet was able to secure funds for each of these teachers which included Flights, accommodation, transport and Conference Registration expenses. We trust that the ideas for using technology in the classroom that these teachers were exposed to will be taken back to the schools in the Midlands.

It should further be noted that when the teacher industrial action led to training sessions being cancelled because teachers were compelled to have catch-up sessions for their learners in preparation for their examinations, Hlengiwe worked at the project schools to provide support to teachers as well as assist learners with subject content which could be accessed via CDs and the Internet as part of the catch up process.

SITA - Pinetown

This project involved working with two schools in the Pinetown area, Albini and Buhlebemfundo. They have received the following courses:

ICT Leadership for Education Managers

Six educators from Albini and nine educators from Buhlebemfundo attended the Leadership for Education Managers' training. All participants were members of the senior management team in their schools. This course provided participants with insight into the policies and techniques for ensuring that computer centres are used most effectively and that the ICT resources are well managed.



ICT Skills for Teachers

During the training at Buhlebemfundo six brand new computers were installed. During the first day the trainer was able to work through modeling the methodology of the materials and working through the mark book scenario. As training progressed, teachers were very eager and approached the tasks and activities at hand with zeal. Catering was done by the school Home Economics team and was reportedly superb.



At Albini, the first day of training was difficult for first time computer users. Although they struggled, they were eager to learn. Some teachers were readily available to help those who were struggling. They enjoyed doing the coursework scenarios particularly Excel ones (create a simple mark sheet). On the second teachers started to relax and from the 3rd to 5th day they grew in confidence. They really loved what they were doing and teachers committed themselves to setting their test papers using a computer rather than using the paper based method they have been used to.

Deploying Student Help Desk Solutions (Help Desk)

Training took place at the Albini High Computer Room and a partially equipped computer lab was reserved for this training. Apart from this lab, a separate classroom was also provided for demonstrations, dismantling and theoretical exercises. One teacher and 8 learners per school were present however due to other commitments not everybody was able complete the whole 5 days of training. The trainer explained the HelpDesk logistics and explained the difference between an industry HelpDesk and a school-based one. To ensure



effective training, the trainer suggested to trainees that they should start thinking of ways to develop a solid technical support system for their school with all the hardware and software they have available at school.



Learners were advised to learn to take initiative on developing and participating in their school helpdesk activities. Everybody was excited to work on the understanding hardware chapter as it involved opening a computer and touching the parts inside and girls were encouraged to use 'screw drivers' for the first time. The participants enjoyed all aspects of the training and thought that they would be able to incorporate much of what they learnt.

Peer Coaching

This programme was facilitated from February until October 2009 with teachers from both Albini and Buhlebemfundo attending at St Marys or Chelsea Preparatory (the trainer's school). This cluster was attended by eight schools that sent between two and three teachers per school. Durwest and Buhlebemfundo sent participants who did not complete the required nomination forms to be part of the programme.

The diverse group of schools, with their widely differing infrastructure and access to resources was an eye-opener to all participants who were able to learn from one another about how they handled similar issues in their different contexts. The trainer noted that it was good to see how well the large group worked with the material and that discussions were robust with a wide perspective being achieved. The way teachers solved problems at schools, and in particular how they regarded the role of the principal and the management team at the different schools was quite a revelation to everyone.

At the end of training the following the coaches acknowledged the following affirmations:

- Changed mindsets
- Improved lesson planning
- Coaching is a process and not a product
- Practice what you preach
- Collaborate and share

The group noted that coaching certainly has a huge role to play in schools, notwithstanding the obvious roadblocks. At the final session the peer coaching video that the group produced proved to be an eye opener to the senior management team who attended the session. Working through the matrix was a sobering exercise, which allowed the school managers to become aware of the journey the coaches have travelled and their genuine understanding of what it takes to effect real school based professional development.

3.3 Multichoice Corporate Social Investment – Training in three KwaZulu Natal Schools

In 2008 Multichoice equipped schools and offered Partners in Learning training to six schools in NorthWest, Limpopo and Gauteng. In March and April of 2009, three KwaZulu-Natal schools were equipped with computer centres by Multichoice, and SchoolNet SA was again contracted to offer ICT Skills for Teachers training followed by the One Step Further course in May of 2010.

Below are the schools that were trained as part of this project along with a brief description of each training session:

Uphindo Secondary School

ICT Skills for Teachers: 27-31 March 2010

Twelve educators attended this training and none of them missed any sessions. The facilitator who delivered this training reported that it was a success as educators were enthusiastic and willing to learn. The majority of the trainees had never used a computer before but by the end of the sessions they were able to do basic scenarios on their own which was a step forward. The facilitator also reported that educators were excited about the training and they told him that they will make use of the lab by practicing and applying what they had learned, others even said they will buy their own computers.



One Step Further: 7-9 May 2010

The facilitator described teachers from this school as ideal candidates to do One Step Further course because of the skills they acquired from ICT Skills for Teachers course. On the first day of the training the facilitator reported that she introduced the teachers to Microsoft OneNote and most of them enjoyed it and as a result they didn't find the activities difficult. Simple research was introduced on the second day and the facilitator described this section as challenging to some educators but after their discussion they successfully mastered this section. On the third day teachers focused on designing the final products. It took the participants a long time to develop their own resources but they eventually succeeded with the help of the facilitator and other teachers.

Ekucabangeni High School

ICT Skills for Educators: 27 -31 March 2010

Out of 25 teachers who attended ICT Skills training, only three didn't attend all the sessions. The trainer reported that the majority of the



teachers were first time computer users but very eager to learn, cooperative and willing to practice. Although for some educators it was not easy to do some of the scenarios on their own, with the help of the trainer and other teachers they later became independent.

One Step Further: 7-9 May 2010

Twenty two teachers were expected to attend this session but only 12 teachers attended due to personal commitments. This training was well received in this school because the teacher's level of skills was described as "fantastic". The facilitator reported that the teachers were interested in the course, they enjoyed learning how to use OneNote and Encarta, and they were surprised by the amount of information they could retrieve from Encarta.

Malusi High School

ICT Skills for Teachers: 6-10 April 2010

In total, 20 teachers received training however of these five teachers missed the first session. The facilitator reported that the trainees in this school were hard working and dedicated. This was a successful training session where trainees found the scenarios relevant and the examples useful. The response of the teachers was very good.



One Step Further: 30 April -1 & 2 May 2010

16 teachers attended training and only two teachers missed sessions. The facilitator started by loading One Note software in the computers, then she introduced teachers to both Encarta and One Note. After trainees had been familiarized with the software she then introduced the uses of these applications which they find it very interesting. On the second day trainees started learning simple ways of gathering information from the Internet and Encarta. The facilitator was very impressed with the way trainees had done the activities; the only problem was that they needed to improve on the time they took to finish. On the third day they looked at the resources available for Maths and Science educators. The facilitator commented that the teachers were very happy about the resources and they were looking forward to using them during their lesson preparation.

Participant Feedback

The following comments were taken from the course evaluations of the schools involved:

"I hope such training will prevail, that is it should be continuous, I found interaction very useful and beneficial"

"It was challenging but it equips us, I ended up understanding what is required from me"

"The training was fruitful, a trainer was friendly and eager to help when need be"

"This training is vital to the success of the educator"

"I have gained a lot of experience, especially in the calculation of marks which makes the work easier and faster"

“The course is very empowering to us as educators, I wish we can have more of these courses”

Multichoice is doing a commendable work by not only providing computers to schools but by also equipping teachers with the skills to start using ICTs effectively in their roles as educators. We hope that Multichoice SA will continue making this meaningful contribution to professional development of teachers in other schools in all nine provinces.



4 Partners in Learning Training Sponsored by Microsoft

4.1 Peer Coaching: Durban Cluster

The aim of the Peer Coaching Programme is to train teachers to be able to mentor their colleagues towards adopting educationally relevant ICT methodology thereby contributing to the transformation of teaching and learning in the schools. During the past three years, Kwa-Zulu Natal has had a cluster of Peer Coaches every year who have developed Peer Coaching skills over the course of the nine month long programme. Our experience is that this programme is the key to providing the ongoing support necessary to sustain teachers' motivation and confidence in their use of ICTs through developing multiple "ICT champions" who know how to integrate ICT to enhance teaching and learning. The programme introduces teachers to a structured method of sharing ideas about new ways of teaching with ICT integration. The materials focus on good communication skills and resources to support the dialogue between peers.

In 2010, Microsoft sponsored the Durban Peer Coaching cluster which included 27 participants from the following 11 schools as well as a DoE representative:

Bantuvukani Primary School
Fundakahle Junior Primary School
Emthethwini Primary School
Albini High School
Sandakahle Primary School
Durwest Primary School

Tholamandla Primary School
Embonini Junior Primary School
Vukuzakhe High School
Thornwood Secondary School
Buhlembemfundo Secondary School

It was disappointing that although 27 teachers started the course only 11 completed the course. A factor that may have played a role in this high attrition rate was that principal support was not forthcoming despite various efforts to communicate the importance of support from Senior Management. The trainer further reported that he believed that major challenge is that teachers do not document their learning or experiences and thus find it even more difficult to shares these experiences with other peers.

For the teachers who did complete the course and who actively participated in the sessions there is no doubt that they have been empowered to help to develop a professional development model at their schools. As the trainer remarked: "I realized that change is happening, albeit slow, but

definitely one peer coach at a time. I became conscious that every one of the new peer coaches will think differently when engaging with a colleague regarding the value of teaching anywhere on the corridor.”

4.2 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum and Innovation Workshops

The Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum is an annual event that recognizes teachers who are using technology in creative and engaging ways in the classroom. KwaZulu-Natal has outperformed all other provinces in this competition as it is the only province that has had a winning teacher for four consecutive years. In 2010, KwaZulu-Natal also excelled in the number of finalists it produced – with a quarter of the twenty projects that were selected as finalists coming from residents of this province.

Peter de Lisle from Hilton College was selected to represent South Africa at the Pan African Innovative Education Forum which was held in Mombasa, Kenya. From this event, Peter was selected to attend the Worldwide Innovative Education Forum, which was held in Cape Town in October 2010. At the gala dinner of this event, Peter was announced as the second runner up in the Innovation in Content category. To be judged as one of twelve winners from an impressive field of teachers from around the world is a great achievement and we are very proud of Peter and his “Biodiversity: Creatures and Contexts” project.



What makes Peter de Lisle’s achievement even more gratifying is that for the past three years Peter has been sharing his skills with other teachers in KwaZulu-Natal by running Microsoft Innovation Workshops. The intention of the Innovation Workshops is to help teachers to spark off ideas for innovative projects and to get some guidance from a skilled facilitator about how best to implement an innovative project. Through this training and support, many other teachers in the province have been encouraged to develop and implement projects using technology in their classrooms.

4.3 Microsoft Xbox Kinect Project

Microsoft is involved in a project at Lakeside Primary School in Vryheid KwaZulu-Natal that is testing a premise that the use of gaming technology, specifically Kinect for Xbox 360, will help improve literacy in the first three grades.

This project has involved purchasing seven Kinect / Xbox packages and installing them in two classrooms for each of the first three grades. Teachers were then trained by a SchoolNet facilitator to use the games to create learning opportunities, for example: using the creation of an Avatar to teach life-skills around physical characteristics and using the bowling game for numeracy where learners were asked to complete sums related to the number of pins knocked down.



The course facilitator noted that “the atmosphere during the course was relaxed and fun, and teachers were encouraged to voice opinions and take ownership of the new technology. They seemed excited at the possibilities, and most seemed to overcome the fears and doubts they might have had... As this project moves forward, it will be exciting to see whether these teachers can rise to the challenge of developing their creativity and so enhancing the learning of their charges by innovatively making use of this exciting technology.”

During the course of 2011 the impact of this programme will be evaluated to determine both the quantitative and qualitative effects that gaming may have on literacy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

SchoolNet SA is proud of the training that we have offered to teachers in KwaZulu-Natal and believe that we have helped to empower teachers to begin to use ICT effectively in education. We are grateful to Microsoft for their continued commitment to enhancing the training materials and developing capacity in the province. It is this investment that enables the DoE and other sponsors to be able to offer quality training more affordably to a larger number of schools. Our hope is that we will be able to continue to offer training to more teachers at more schools in this province and that we will be able to go back to schools where we have already offered some training to continue to develop skills further. We look forward to working with the Department of Education, Microsoft and other stakeholders to continue to offer professional development opportunities in KwaZulu-Natal.

Megan Rademeyer

Programmes Manager

SchoolNet SA – February 2011