

**Report to Western Cape Department of Education
on Microsoft Partners in Learning Training
conducted from 2010 to June 2011**

Contents

Contents..... 1

1 Training sponsored by Western Cape Department of Education..... 2

 1.1 ICT Skills for Teachers..... 2

2 Partners in Learning Training sponsored by other funders 2

 2.1 University of Cape Town HelpDesk Training..... 2

3 Partners in Learning Training Sponsored by Microsoft 4

 3.1 One Step Further Training – Fish Hoek Cluster..... 4

 3.2 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Schools Programme 4

 3.1 2010 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Teachers Forum..... 5

 3.2 2010 Worldwide Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Education Forum 5

 3.3 2011 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovation Workshops and Innovative Teachers Forum
 6

 Fish Hoek – Western Cape 6

 Philippi – Western Cape..... 7

Conclusion and Recommendations 8

Introduction

Between 2008 and mid 2011 a total of 3 435 teachers in the Western Cape benefitted from Microsoft Partners in Learning training. In addition to funding some of this training, Microsoft continues to fund the development of the Partners in Learning courseware and capacity building which enables other organizations, corporate social investment initiatives and departments of education to offer Partners in Learning training.

This report follows on from a previous report which documented the Microsoft Partners in Learning training conducted in the Western Cape between 2007 and 2009. In this report, the Microsoft Partners in Learning training conducted in Western Cape from 2010 until the present is described.

1 Training sponsored by Western Cape Department of Education

1.1 ICT Skills for Teachers

The Centre for e-Innovation of the Department of the Premier has been offering the Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers course since 2008. The number of teachers trained each year is listed below:

2008: 520 educators

2010: 880 educators

2009: 1080 educators

2011: 660 educators

This training uses the Microsoft Partners in Learning ICT Skills for Teachers courseware. By using trainers appointed by the Centre for e-Innovation, this course can be offered to a large number of teachers cost-effectively as trainers often live close to the schools where they conduct training.

2 Partners in Learning Training sponsored by other funders

2.1 University of Cape Town HelpDesk Training

Between 27 September and 1 October 2010, the University of Cape Town sponsored a round of Deploying Student Technical Support Solutions (Helpdesk) training for one educator and five learners from each of the following schools which are supported by the University:

Spine Road High School

Harry Gwala High School

Rhodes High School

Sophumelela High School

Thandokuhle High School

All the expected participants attended the training and the trainer reported that the grade 10 and 11 learners were all computer literate and committed to making the most of the training sessions.

Training took place at Sophumelela High School in the Samora Mitchell township. Despite the school being located in an overpopulated area, the school itself was very neat and four classes were equipped with Smart Boards. One computer lab and one



classroom had been reserved for the training session and the school also provided scrap computers for dismantling and reassembling.



Over the course of the five days the participants worked through the HelpDesk materials and covered a range of topics related to the repair and maintenance of computers. The participants particularly enjoyed the practical sessions which involved dismantling and reassembling computers. At the end of this exercise, the group was delighted when they realized that five of the computers that had not been working prior to being reassembled now worked.

In addition to learning about operating systems the trainer was able to demonstrate the power of networking by controlling a computer that was in SchoolNet's office in Johannesburg. The trainer also demonstrated some tools that are found in the control panel and their uses.

On the final two days a lot of time was devoted to trouble shooting and installing devices such as printers. Being able to use safe mode, roll back and system restore will help the budding technicians to solve many technical problems themselves. Attention was also paid to security issues and installing and updating antivirus software. The group was also shown how to install the database and to use it to track their work.



The following comments from the participants indicate that the course was well received:

The course was very educational. From the course, I am now confident with the technical part of the computers. I can now fix computers that are not working at my school. I can tech other learners the technical side of computers. The knowledge that I acquired has upgraded me as an educator. There is no more need to call technicians from outside to fix our technical problems.

This has been a great experience for me because I met people with different minds and strategies and also acquired very useful skills and the teachers, trainers, and learners were very supportive before, during and after the course. This has been very helpful to me, and without forgetting, learning is sharing, so definitely I'll share. Thanks for everything, it is always exciting to get new things by you and experiencing a lot while still young and getting to know the world. I could say that this was the best thing in life.



The course was so exciting and I've got an amazing experience that I haven't thought about. The trainer was so responsible and able to train or tech us perfectly, he makes you understand clearly. Now I know every part of the computer, because we even opened it, and I would be glad to share my experience. We as a class, coped very well and everything was fine.

3 Partners in Learning Training Sponsored by Microsoft

3.1 One Step Further Training – Fish Hoek Cluster

On 23 and 30 January 2010 the One Step Further course was conducted at Fish Hoek Primary with 21 teachers from the following schools: Christel House, Springdale, Kommetjie Primary and Fish Hoek Primary School.

On the first day of training, the teachers were very eager to learn about ways to integrate the curriculum with computer skills. The trainer also demonstrated many different methods of interaction; which the participants enjoyed and which gave each teacher a chance to work everyone else. On the second day the group enjoyed learning about all the different group work methods and felt that OneNote was a very useful programme. Whilst many were interested in further improving their skills by participating in an upcoming Intel course, some were shy about presenting their activities in the showcase.

The trainer reported that the group had some very interesting discussions and were excited being shown Web2 applications and using different types of group work. The trainer invited one of her very computer literate Grade 5 to assist her and “he won the teachers’ hearts”. In the last session he created and printed a different certificate for each teacher (from himself as helper) for excellent participation during the course and then showed them the website he used to do this. At the end of the course there was a prize-giving session and the teachers also received a range of free applications which the trainer saved to their flash-drives.

Below is a selection of comments taken from the participant feedback forms:

‘I enjoyed interacting with others, learning from them and contributing’

‘Very interesting – will add value to our lessons.’

‘I enjoyed creating and collecting learning objects’

‘I enjoyed doing the activities and creating my own One Note pages’.

3.2 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Schools Programme

In 2010 St Cyprians School in Cape Town was recognised as a Microsoft Partners in Learning Pathfinder Innovative School. As representatives of this pathfinder school, the St Cyprians principal and ICT coordinator participated in the Pan African Innovative Teachers Forum held in Mombasa Kenya in September 2010 and the Worldwide Innovative Teachers Forum held in November 2010 in Cape Town. These forums both provided opportunities for delegates from St Cyprians to network with delegates from innovative schools in other countries and to attend workshops aimed at enhancing the innovative nature of their own schools.

Other resources and forms of support provided to Pathfinder schools are as follows:

- Thought leadership and consultation with experts in education to guide the process of change.



- Access to assessment tools that help school leaders and their teams determine what aspects of change and innovation they want to focus on during their year in the program.
- Support for teachers' professional development through Partners in Learning
- "Virtual University" sessions led by education leaders on a variety of topics, ranging from learning environments, to developing leadership skills, to best practices for engaging students in their own learning.
- Mentorship teams to coach school leaders throughout the transformation process. Each team will consist of six Pathfinder Schools, two Mentor Schools and a third-party coach. These teams will be grouped together by country and region.
- Access to the free Partners in Learning School Research Tool that will help schools measure innovative teaching practices and the impact of change.
- The opportunity to meet, network, and collaborate with school leaders from around the world in person at the Partners in Learning Global Forum.
- How-to training for educators, and technology expertise and guidance from Microsoft.

In 2011 Rondebosh Boys Preparatory applied to be a Microsoft Pathfinder Innovative School and we eagerly await the outcome of the selection process.

3.1 2010 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Teachers Forum

In 2010 the Western Cape teachers got involved in the Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum through attending the Innovation Workshop held in Fish Hoek or by submitting their projects into the competition. Many of these projects were of a high standard, and five out of the twenty finalists hailed from the Western Cape.

Warren Sparrow from Rondebosh Boys Preparatory won the Innovation in Content category of the Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Teachers Forum with his "Who wants to be a millionaire?" project. This comprehensive project involved Grade 4 learners learning about entrepreneurship by designing board games and creating videos. The learners made use of a variety of ICT resources including Google docs, Intel's visual ranking tool, online surveys, blogs and wikis and the learners' parents were able to follow the project from home.



After winning at the South African Forum, Warren represented South Africa at the Pan African Innovative Education Forum held in Mombasa, Kenya in September 2010 where he once again won the Innovation in Content award. Following this success, Warren represented South Africa at the Worldwide Innovative Education Forum held in his home city of Cape Town. At this event Warren not only showcased his project, he also welcomed teachers from around his the world to his school, Rondebosch Boys Preparatory, as part of the school visit tours.

3.2 2010 Worldwide Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovative Education Forum

During the 2010 Microsoft Worldwide Innovative Education Forum, over 550 teachers and school leaders from more than seventy countries came to Cape Town to share best practices, ideas for

innovative lessons and networking opportunities with colleagues from around the world. As part of this, SchoolNet SA arranged for participants in the Forum to visit schools in Cape Town.



During the tours, each of the seven busses of teachers visited two of the following Cape Town schools:

Inshukumo Secondary School
 Crestway Secondary
 Fish Hoek Primary School
 Oval North High School
 Christel House
 Thandokhulu Secondary School

Rondebosch Boys Preparatory
 Joe Slovo High School
 Hout Bay High School
 Bishops
 St Cyprians School

This experience gave the visiting teachers an opportunity to see what South African classrooms are like and to hear about the challenges and successes of the South African education system. Similarly, teachers from many schools in Cape Town had an opportunity to set up collaborative projects with the visiting teachers and representatives from each school were invited to view the projects on display at the Forum.

3.3 2011 Microsoft Partners in Learning Innovation Workshops and Innovative Teachers Forum



In March 2011 two Microsoft Innovation Workshops were held in the Western Cape. The first took place at Fish Hoek Primary and the second took place at The Learning Centre in Philippi. The facilitator of both of these workshops was Fiona Beal who has been a finalist in three Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forums, as well as a winner at both the South African and Pan African Forums in 2009 and a representative at the 2009 Worldwide Innovative Education Forum in Brazil. Fiona is not only an exceptionally innovative teacher in her own right, but also a passionate mentor who inspires other teachers to also develop and implement their own projects that use ICT in creative and engaging ways. Below is a description of each of the Innovation Workshops held in the Western Cape in 2011.

Fish Hoek – Western Cape

Whilst it was disappointing that only fourteen teachers attended this workshop, the teachers that did attend were very motivated and according to Fiona Beal “a real pleasure to facilitate as they got so excited about everything”. Fiona hoped that many of them will go on to enter projects, although she noted that some of their projects may only be ready to enter in 2012.



The workshop commenced with the facilitator showing the different ways of doing projects that she has either tried or knows of, with examples. The teachers said they found this presentation very inspiring and do-able. Fiona also showed the participants how to use back-channeling (Today's Meet) and a collaborative writing programme (Primary Pad) so that they could respond and record ideas that they liked. Fiona reported that the participants loved the Learning Suite DVD and all that it offers. They also liked discussing projects in pairs, the video clips and mostly getting fresh ideas from likeminded colleagues.



Philippi – Western Cape

This workshop was held in Philippi at the new Learning Centre with the intention of increasing the participation of teachers from the townships around Cape Town in the Innovative Teachers Forum. Edunova, an organization based at the centre helped SchoolNet to identify participants by inviting teachers from the community who they have been working with.



Being a brand new centre, there were some teething problems at the start of the workshop. It was also noticed that whilst an attempt had been made to invite teachers who had good computer skills –a number of unsuitable candidates with weak computer skills arrived. Furthermore a number of teachers who had said that they would be coming failed to arrive and others arrived late or left early. It was also unfortunate that teachers from more affluent

schools were reluctant to travel into Philippi to attend the workshop. This was a pity as in workshops where there is a mix of teachers from different types of schools there is usually an interesting cross-pollination of ideas.

Whilst Fiona Beal is an experienced facilitator, she noted that this course was “an eye opener to what goes on in many Cape Town schools”. She said that the teachers in the group wanted to learn more basic skills such as how to use PowerPoint and the participants reported most of their labs at school don't work or the computers have been stolen. Whilst the teachers said they wanted notes on how to use computers, a number of teachers left the workshop without taking home their Learning Suite DVDs.

Despite the challenges, there were some positive responses to the workshop. The group enjoyed the videos and these gave the facilitator an opportunity to expose the group to some new ideas. They also reported enjoying seeing previous entries and finding out about blogs and wikis with one teacher saying: “I would like to learn more on how to do it”. The main problem with the workshop was that it was not the best offering for the audience, as one participant put it: “I think the course is meant for educators who are already computer literate. I want to a course which is going to teach me how to do these things e.g. blog, how to use PowerPoint, showing my learners how to retrieve information, process and contact other learners via computer.”

It was disappointing that this innovation workshop was not well attended and none of the participants submitted a project into the 2011 Innovative Teacher Forum. Nonetheless, we will continue to work with this centre and community of teachers and have already run an Intel Getting Started course at this centre as we believe that this will provide the introductory training the participants sought.

Of the twenty two finalists selected to attend the 2011 Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum, five come from the Western Cape and of these five finalists, two attended the Fish Hoek Innovation Workshop. This is indeed an achievement to be proud of for the Western Cape and proof that the importance placed on ICTs in this province is paying off in terms of teachers who are eager to use technology in exciting and engaging ways with their learners.

Conclusion and Recommendations

SchoolNet SA is proud of the courses and networking opportunities that we have offered to teachers in the Western Cape 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 the Western Cape.

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SchoolNet SA – June 2011