



ICT in the Classroom Conference 2011

The annual ICT Conference was held this year at St John's College in Johannesburg from July 5th to July 7th. SchoolNet was responsible for the organisation, administration and the programme and Intel was the main funder. The conference has been a premier event for ICT in education for the past fourteen years and is hosted in different provinces on a bi-annual basis to allow equal access to as many educators as possible. The conference serves as a showcase of modern educational technology and the partnership between government and the private sector to overcome barriers to learning and teaching and also ensures that collectively teaching is enhanced by the use of ICT.

The conference programme was focused on how ICT is being used in the classroom and included the following themes:

- working and learning smarter with social media
- the power of collaboration in and beyond the school
- pedagogical approaches that maximise the potential of ICT
- Ideas for ICT use in the classroom

With the conference focus on social media, a backchannel chat on Twitter was run throughout the conference and projected onto a screen in the Rene England Auditorium of St John's College. Delegates were encouraged through email communication to connect to the conference Twitter and Facebook page prior to the start of the conference.

There were over 500 delegates - including educators, provincial and national educational department officials, sponsors, and representatives from other development and training organizations. The three key note speakers secured by SchoolNet were Jane Hart from the UK (Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies), Naomi Harm from the USA (Innovative Educator 2.0 consulting corporation) and John Davitt also from the UK (advisor to the EU Flexible Learning Project). There were a number of well-known local presenters as well, including Fiona Beal, Deb Avery, Hlengiwe Mfeka, Saul Pila and Osman Sadeck amongst others, who have in been involved in the Intel training pathway and this lends itself to the success which the Intel training has yielded.



The conference started on Tuesday 5th July, with a welcome by Peter Henning from St John's College who explained the policy which their school has adopted regarding ICT in the classroom. Mr Parthy Chetty, Head of Corporate Affairs, Intel welcomed the teachers who willingly committed time to their personal professional development by attending the conference during the school holiday. He explained that sponsorship of the conference is just one of the many ways that Intel® supports the training and development of educators in South Africa and internationally. Intel assists by providing the curriculum for educator professional development in the form of the Intel Teach Programme, which helps classroom educators effectively integrate technology into teaching in order to enhance student learning. Intel® Teach is being implemented in 35 countries around the world and has trained close to 10 million teachers worldwide.

Mr Chetty also welcomed Mr Edward Mosuwe (Acting DDG DBE) who delivered a speech on behalf of the Deputy Minister, Mr Enver Surty. Mr Mosuwe emphasised the importance of meaningful curriculum delivery through the use of ICT and how committed the DBE is to the training of teachers in integrating technology more effectively. This then gave way for Jane Hart's keynote address which caught the imaginations of teachers in attendance and set the pace for the remainder of the conference. Jane shared her understanding of social media as not something one talks about, it is something one does. She concluded by indicating that teachers should embrace change, thrive on it, have fun with it and never run away from it. And thus the conference went into full swing with sessions across the St John's College campus.

A new addition to the conference programme was the inclusion of the Innovative Teacher's Award ceremony which took place on the first evening of three day ICT in the Classroom Conference. The cocktail style dinner was sponsored by Microsoft and most importantly the teachers who participated in the Innovative Teachers Forum competition were given a platform to showcase the projects that they submitted. This further ignited the excitement of delegates as many indicated that they too would be entering the competition next year. The keynote address delivered by John Davitt also served to "edutain" the teachers by introducing them to the concept of *Learning in a World of Difference*. It provoked thoughts of relooking at the way that education is experienced by educators and learners alike.

Naomi Harm led the keynote address for the second day and proved very popular since she was also part of our last conference in Durban in 2009. Naomi's keynote address entitled: *Transforming Education with 21st Century Skills and ICT Literacy* included a "Today's Meet" online session where conference delegates were able to connect to the given link and comment on remarks that were made during the session as well as answer questions that were posed. In demonstrating how simple the tool could be set up and used in such a large session, delegates were exposed to the possibilities of implementing such tools in the classroom or even as a tool for professional links. One thought that came through very strongly in all of Naomi's sessions was that "you're only as good as the people that you surround yourself with". It was food for thought in that communities of best practice could be set up by delegates and thus enhances the contribution that they are making in their respective schools.

All of the guest speakers ran sessions throughout the conference and gave educators practical examples of how best to include ICT into their existing classroom setups. Jane Hart lead sessions on the following topics:



[Thinking Differently as Learning Professionals: Trends in Social Media \(keynote\)](#)

[How to Use Social Media to Work and Learn Smarter as a Professional](#)

[Jane's Pick of Learning Tools](#)

[Building a Learning Community Online](#)

According to Jane, it is becoming apparent that we are at the beginning of a fundamental shift in the way that both learning and working is happening. This should not be seen as a threat to educators, but as an opportunity to take on the new challenges it offers. The first step will be to understand the changes that are taking place, and then become immersed in the new social media tools that are underpinning this change in order to work smarter as well as help your students learn smarter".

John Davitt explored the nature of learning, the reality of difference and the potential of new tools and approaches to transform the education landscape. Pulling from a wide range of real world examples he noted the benefits we may reap as we learn faster and share more deeply. In the final part of his keynote John detailed his #freelearning method - a simple but powerful five strand model for developing new practice at the point where learning meets innovation.



[Learning in a World of Difference \(keynote\)](#)

[Active Learning with New Tools](#)

Naomi Harm is a 21st century educational technology literacy specialist from Minnesota, USA, who participated in our Durban ICT in the Classroom conference.



[Transforming Education with 21st Century Skills and ICT Literacy \(keynote\)](#)

[Building and Growing Your Professional Learning Network](#)

Naomi's excerpt from the programme reads as follows: In the education sector, there has been a growing movement toward infusing 21st century skills into teaching. Driven by organizations around the world, this trend is more than a passing fad, and has caught the attention of those training and equipping teachers for the digital-age classroom. 21st century skills are what today's students and graduates need to compete, and succeed, in today's global workforce. There are a series of concepts and themes that go beyond the conventional to teach safe and effective technology integration and application skill sets.

Whether you are a professor, an administrator, an instructor, a trainer or a future teacher, you must understand 21st century skills to be effective. So are you wondering exactly what 21st Century Skills

and ICT Literacy's are all about? Are you trying to determine what steps to take to begin bringing 21st Century Skills into your classroom projects infused with Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) literacy? This keynote will address 21st Century Skills concepts, real-world examples, themes and projects, while tapping into global experts to glean information how to transform your teaching and learning environment.”

- [Transforming Your Classroom Practice with Web 2.0 Literacy](#)
- [Google My Way](#)

One of the highlights of the 3 day conference was the Gala Dinner that was hosted at the Birchwood Hotel in Benoni. The even gave delegates an opportunity to let their hair down and enjoy an evening of good food and great entertainment the dance floor was only ever empty whilst eating dinner.



This year's conference also had 3 lucky draws in the closing session where 3 teachers closed their conference journey with a bang.



Khulu Business Solutions donated an E-Beam to the value of R8 200.00. Dale Blerk, the director of the company, awarded the prize to Zaheer Patel from Northern Muslim School in Limpopo.



Louisa Makobe from Polonia in the North-West Province won a Mobi-view and Clickers. This student response system was donated by Sangari and is valued at R 20 000.00. Gerald Roos awarded the prize on behalf of Sangari.



The SMARTboard and data projector, donated by Vastratech was won by Vuyo Koto from Lethulwazi Comprehensive School in Gauteng. The SMARTboard along with the training comes to the value of over R

50 000.00. The prize was awarded by the director of Vastratech, Mr Gary Bekker.

Uniform and Oracle sponsored teacher's attendance at the conference and for this teachers were truly grateful. In total approximately 50 teachers were sponsored to attend the conference and for many teachers, this was the first time that they attended a meeting of minds at this level.

"I can say with confidence that as from now on, I am going to implement ICT in my lessons as a language educator. I am really excited after gaining so much in such a short space of time." Cecilia Thuntsa from St Bernards, Free State.

*"As a person who had his first conference this year with Intel and Schoolnet I would like to say **"Thank You"** for giving me the chance to network with other people around the country and the world."* Lungile Tsewu from the Eastern Cape.

"It was really a worthy conference and we are ready to become change agents in our various setups" Chris Gatsi, General Smuts High School in Gauteng.

In closing, this conference was successful because of the willingness of teachers to learn, of presenters to share their knowledge and the hardworking SchoolNet team that was supported by Intel.