ICT Skills for KwaZulu Natal FET Colleges

Sponsored by Microsoft

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The intention of this project was to provide ICT Skills for Teachers training to college lecturers. The introduction of the ICT Capacity Building for College Professionals, however, meant that some funding intended for this project was diverted to the larger national rollout.

Despite this, a number of FET colleges in KwaZulu Natal still received training, and in the case of Majuba FET college, they even paid for three rounds of the training themselves, to ensure that lecturers at all of their four of thier campuses would recive training.

Scheduling for this project began at the end of 2006 and the following colleges recived four days of training each:

College	Training Dates
Mthashana: Kwa-Gqikazi Campus	6, 7, 20 and 21 October 2006
Mthashana: Vryheid Campus	6 and 7 October and 17 and 18 November 2006
Elangeni FET College (Also on ISETT SETA LIST)	29 and 30 Sep 2006 and 8, 9 and 10 May 2007
Majuba FET College	ITB: 17 and 18 November 2006 Newtech: 17 and 18 Nov 2006 CPD:1 and 2 Dec 2006 ITB: 1 and 2 Dec 2006
Thekwini FET College	Springfield and Asherville Campus training on 29 and 30 November 2006
Umgungundlovu FET College	20 and 21July and 3 and 4 August 2007
Coastal FET College	16-19 July 2007

Whilst on the whole training went well, the following problems were reported:

> *"There was no access to Internet in the centre. Computers were not networked. Most computers did not function properly, they kept on freezing during the session and need to be restarted.*

> *"at first I battled a little bit having to convince the lectures that I am capable of doing the training successfully. I must say that at the beginning it was really tense and very unfriendly atmosphere standing in front of those old experienced mostly Afrikaans speaking educators, but after tea time the tension was gone and everything was running smooth. In fact there was a positive attitude eager to learn and most of the lectures found the training very interesting, some of them even borrowed the CD to practice at home that evening."*

> *"More than half of the lecturers present on the first day were not able to arrive on the subsequent days. …A peer coach model will succeed with one or more of the lectures taking the reigns and doing more consistent training to their colleagues."*

> *"Group performance was weak. Many teachers did not have basic ITC skills."*

> *"For the first time I found it very difficult to work with teachers with different computer experience, I think the gap was wide i.e Beginners who were sitting in front of the computer for the first time, basic skills and very advanced computer skills"*

Despite these setbacks the trainers also reported positive experiences:

> *"The group on average was able to engage with the basic skills, able to login and logout and to do some basic manipulation…This was a small group and easy to manage. They were eager to learn and cooperated fairly well. Given enough access to computers and practice , they will be good teachers in the integration of technology into the curriculum."*

> *"Generally the training went very well; through. The next day they showed me that they have been practicing. Everyone found the showcasing very interesting as they were looking at each other's work."*

On the whole, trainees were very positive about both the materials and the cognitive apprenticeship training method, as is illustrated by the following quotations:

> *"Although I'm a computer Lecturer, I still learned new things that would be able to help me in future. CD is very helpful and thorough and will be kept for future reference. Facilitator was also available for assistance."*

> *"I think that this is potent. Even the facilitator is good, given us space to discover things for ourselves. Inspirational."*

> *"This is a nice and dynamic tool to teach and you learn difficult Microsoft applications in context. It would be better if a tool for students can be developed."*

> *"It was quite meaningful. Valuable, enlightening and enriching. It is a must have! I love it!!"*

Jonguhlanga Secondary School in the Eastern Cape received 10 computers as a donation. However they were never taken out of the boxes as the school lacked a suitable place to put them and the expertise to connect them. SchoolNet South Africa's Technical Manager, Themba Mabaso gave the principal of the school, Mrs Grace Lusu, telephonic advice and the school was able to organise a suitably converted and secure classroom. Once the classroom was set up a technician was sent to connect the computers. To ensure that the computers will be used effectively teachers from the school are undergoing the ICT Skills for Teachers course. So far they have had initial training (December 2007) and will complete the course in January 2008. As there were more than 10 teachers to be trained, some of the Dell laptops that are part of the African Schools Innovation and Technology Centre were couriered to the school. This enabled every teacher to have his or her own computer to work with.

The trainer reported that "the school has staff that struggled at first (first time users)" however "the management was supportive. The teachers availed themselves and were always punctual".

The delight of the teachers is captured in the comments below:

"The workshop was interesting and motivational. I enjoyed working with it. I have gained new skills especially printing. I was very slow in the beginning, but because of this session I am now faster."

"The training was very fruitful indeed. It encouraged me to have more practice and to buy my own computer so as to improve my teaching."

"Thank you very much to SchoolNet especially Themba who made it possible for this training to take place. Our facilitator was very competent, professional and helpful. There was great enthusiasm of all educators. Sharing was extremely good. A lot of after-care was given by the facilitator (Soso) who phoned to assist when doing our homework."

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