Report on Case Study Schools Project

Sponsored by Microsoft:

2007

The aim of this project was to offer the following ten schools the full bouquet of Partners in Learning training:

Gauteng	Limpopo	Free State
Gatang Comprehensive Landulwazi Comprehensive Letsibogo High Minerva High	Ramatau High Rotterdam Secondary Taxila Secondary	Pele-ya-Pele The Beacon Trompsburg Senior Secondary

It was proposed that following on from ICT Skills for Teachers, staff members would work through the following courses in a manner appropriate to each school:
- o ICT Leadership for Education Managers
- o Deploying Student Technical Support Solutions – HelpDesk
- o ICT integration - WebQuests
- o Peer Coaching

In addition to receiving training, the schools would participate in an evaluation project focusing on the implementation of Partners in Learning training over an appropriate period of time. This project started in 2006. This report focuses on training that took place in 2007.

ICT Skills for Teachers
Whilst most of the Case Study Schools had already participated in the ICT Skills for Teachers course in 2006, the following two schools received their training in 2007:

Province	Schools	Training Dates
Gauteng	Minerva High School	24 – 25 February
Gauteng	Lundulwazi Comprehensive School	24 – 25 February and 21 – 22 April

According to the trainer, the Minerva High School training "went well despite the fact that the venue was so dirty and some computers were not working, educators were sharing computers,… CD Roms were not working in most computers and also the lab was not networked…". In addition to conducting training the trainer also tried to motivate teachers to take better care of their computer facilities and ensure that they are used more effectively. She reported "we spoke about forming the computer lab committee that will ensure the lab is clean and also to know how many computers were working and so on".

Like the training at Minerva High School, the training at Lundulwazi Comprehensive School also was beset with technical issues. Despite assurances that the lab was in good working order, during initial training the trainer reported that "the internet was not working, the computers were not networked and only two CD drives could open". The trainer nonetheless managed to overcome these problems, load the CD and begin training. The trainee reports were very positive, including the comments:

> *"I enjoyed the training. It has equipped my computer skills and I feel more independent to use ICT"*

> *"Please continue supporting us with such useful ICT programmes in the future".*

ICT Leadership for Education Managers

Three ICT Leadership for Education Managers courses were held for Case Study Schools in 2007.

Province	Schools Included	Training Dates	No of Educators
Gauteng	Gatang High School Mirneva High School Pele ya Pele High School Letsibogo Girls School	9 - 11 March	12
Free State	Beacon High School Trompsburg High	9 - 11 March	8
Limpopo	Rotterdam High School Taxilla Combined school Ramatau Hgh School	9 - 11 March	7

At the Gauteng training, the trainer reported that participants "were aware of the challenges they face in their particular schools but are ready to use all the possibilities/attributes of the leadership descriptors… in search of solutions and approaches to get their schools ICT ready and integrating ICT." The cluster approach also proved successful, with participants arranging to visit one another's schools to observe one another's practices as a result of the interaction on this course.

The Free State trainer, who was presenting the course for the first time, commented that "the content of the course is excellent and the principals were able to relate to it and learn from it." He did however mention that more time could have been allocated to the course.

The Limpopo training included representatives from all three case study schools, however disappointingly two school principals did not attend the training from schools where other staff members reported the most problems with the ICT infrastructure. The third school, however, Rotterdam High School, had three members of their management team present which meant that they could immediately make decisions and plan for new implementation strategies that can be use at their school.

Below is a sample of responses from participants which indicate that this course is well received by members of school management:

> *"This course has been very helpful to me and hope we should continue having such courses to enhance our computer literacy. The district coordinator should always visit schools which did the training to check with them the application part of it"*

"A course is as good as the facilitator. If the facilitator knows his/ her staff, then everything will just flow. This was the case with our course!"

"I feel more confident and motivated and I can't wait to put what I learned here into practice right away!"

"The course was very interesting, I'll try by all means to implement it despite the fact that time is just so much against us as managers in schools."

WebQuest Training

The following case study schools received WebQuest training in 2007 as part of the Case Study Schools project:

Province	Schools	Training Dates	No of Educators
Gauteng	Pele ya Pele High School	29 – 30 March	14
Gauteng	Letsibogo Girls School	14 – 15 April	17
Free State	Beacon High School	17 – 18 February	
Limpopo	Rotterdam High School	17 – 18 February and 7 March	11

These courses had varying degrees of success related to the ICT skills of the participants, access to the internet and the amount of time devoted to training.

At Rotterdam, where as mentioned previously there is a well developed culture of ICT use in the school, the trainer reported:

"this workshop was successful. We found at this school that a lot of teachers wanted to use the projects they found on the web, save it in word documents and adopt it for class use without computers".

And participants reported:

"I found the experience of participating in a WebQuest engaging"
"the guidelines taught me about fine tuning the task and process of a WebQuest"

and even

"No doubt WebQuests are one of the most advanced and innovative ways of teaching. They are progressive and contemporary because they are outcome based. They enhance collaborative group work. They can be used to manage large classes effectively. They encourage creative and high order thinking."

In contrast however the Letsibogo WebQuest training did not go as well. The trainer reported:

(the teachers') "skills, particularly surfing the web for further information and further navigation, were an obstacle to progress within the workshops… (and that) reading information on the screen was the next challenge …because they are not used to that."

Despite these obstacles some of the teachers present were able to adapt or develop WebQuests and the trainer encouraged them to use the WebQuests with their learners to see how they respond.

The training at Beacon High School did not go at all as planned. Upon arrival, the trainer discovered "that only one computer had internet and that computer was in the office and not in the lab." Instead of postponing training, the trainer realised that most of the teachers were beginner users of ICTs and she decided that she may as well use the time set aside to conduct training to run ICT Skills for Teachers training. This course highlighted the need to develop an off line version of the WebQuest course, so that in cases such as this where there was no internet access, training could still proceed using examples on a CD.

This course also emphasised the need to impress upon the principal of the school that WebQuest training was only for teachers with well developed ICT skills and to double check the school's access to the internet in the venue that will be used for training instead of relying the facilities to be as reported telephonically.

At Pele-ya-Pele High School, the trainer reported that "these teachers were motivated to learn in general" but that "the computer skills inefficiencies on the part of the delegates always delayed progression during workshops' activities." The trainer also realised that "the dynamics of a school on accessing the internet for learners is a sensitive issue and we had a discussion on how to deal with resources". The overall response of participants was very positive and this is well summed up in this quote from one of the participants:

> *"The course to me was very fruitful. I learned so many things that I did not expect. I wish to have more information about the Webquest. This was very interesting and motivating. We are blessed Mr Facilitator, let God bless you."*

The Case Study Schools that have not yet had their WebQuest Training will receive it as soon as they have a sufficient number of teachers with the appropriate ICT skills to warrant running the course and a stable internet connection for the whole computer room.

Deploying Student Technical Support Solutions - HelpDesk
In addition to including the case study schools, the HelpDesk training that took place as part of this project also included participants from some other schools – indicated in italics in the table below. Training in 2007 took place as follows:

Province	Schools	Training Dates
Gauteng	Letsibogo Girls School Landulwazi High School Gatanang High School Minerva High School Pele-ya-Pele (this school is situated in Free State, however it was closer to the Gauteng training venue)	25 – 29 June
Free State	Trompsburg High School *Litshovhu High School*	25 – 29 June
Free State	Beacon High School	8 – 12 August

Limpopo	Rotterdam Secondary School	8 -12 August
	Nyubani High School	
	Nwamavimbi High School	
	Matsambu High School	
Limpopo	Taxilla Combined School	20-25 March 2007
	Joel Sibasa	
	Madikweng	
	Mack Semeka	
	Marumafase	
	Mostse Maria	
Limpopo	Ramatau High (this school was scheduled to attend this training but the group did not arrive)	8 – 12 August 2007
	Matome Malatji High School	
	Lepato M. High School	

The biggest challenge with organising these training sessions was that training was scheduled to take place during the month when many South African teachers were participating in industrial action. Themba Mabaso, SchoolNet's Technical Training Manager, managed to change the training venues to universities so that learners and teachers could participate without any fears of intimidation.

Free State Help Desk Training
For the first Free State training, the University of the North provided an excellent lab, a training room and old hardware available for demonstrations. All the trainees were computer literate and very willing to learn which meant that the training went exceptionally well. For many of the learners, a highlight of the course was getting to dismantle and reassemble computers. It was also inspirational for them to hear about the trainer's previous job, which involved some of the skills which they were learning.

During this training, Issac Mokhotolo – a teacher from Makabelane Technical and Commercial High School was identified as a potential HelpDesk trainer and he was appointed to train teachers and learners from Beacon High School who had not attended this training.

At the Beacon High School HelpDesk training the learners grasped the content quickly and although they had some theoretical knowledge prior to the course, the trainer reported that they really enjoyed the practical components of the course:

> *"I demonstrated how to safely disassemble and assemble a system unit and after that let them do the same and this was an eye opener that they really enjoyed."*

> *"Learners or trainees only had the knowledge of working with Window XP and were not knowledgeable about installing but after this chapter they understood how to install Windows from the scratch and Upgrading from the previous version (they upgraded from Windows 2000 to XP), the practicality of the course seemed fascinating to them."*

The reports from trainees indicate that both courses were enjoyable and also made learners think about IT as a career choice:

"I would like to thank SchoolNet (South Africa) for their greatness for helping me to understand more and more about the computer. Thank you SchoolNet and I wish you all the best in future"

"At least I've an acknowledgement on computer during the best things during this holiday which will be part of my "FUTURE Being""

"Uncle Themba taught skills that made me realize how important computer is in our daily lives. And made feel strongly about studying IT (information Technology)."

The one component of the Beacon High training that did not go as planned was that after the trainer installed the database he was unable to connect to it without getting an error message. It is a pity that this problem was not solved prior to the end of the course, as the database is the basis for managing the HelpDesk effectively. It is hoped that the school will either be able to find a way to open the database or that the course equipped them with the skills to create their own way of tracking the HelpDesk work.

Limpopo HelpDesk Training

In addition to Rotterdam High School (a Limpopo Case Study School), four learners and one teacher from three other Limpopo schools received Help Desk training using Rotterdam as a venue.

As with other HelpDesk courses, the parts that learners seemed to enjoy most were the practical components, as this comment from the trainer indicated:

> *"The most interesting part to all it was when we do chapter 2, 3, 8 and 9 (Understanding Hardware, installing win XP, supporting needs and performing maintenance) where every body was interested to know what is inside the computer how to build a computer, load software (operating system and other software), scanning of anti virus and cleaning of computers and computer lab all the students participated, it was the most interesting part of the training."*
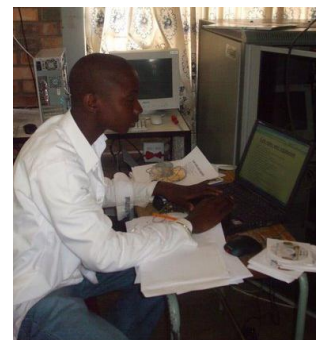
At this session the student database was installed and trainees practiced on how to work on it using the computers that were available in the training room.

The comments from learners below suggest that more than just enjoying the course, the exposure to Help Desk is seen as the beginning of a new opportunity:

> *"I'm feel good because now I'm technsian''*

> *"The training was very nice, because I have more knowledge about the computer. I need more Training so that I can help some people from different school. I think to train in Computer is right because I can make a more from myself.*

The Limpopo Help Desk training that included Taxilla was held at the Mastec centre. This venue had both a seminar hall for group and practical work and a functioning computer room. The centre had also acquired 20 old 486 computers which each team were allowed to dismantle and reassemble.

The trainer reported that "staff and learners proved to be diligent and enthusiastic learners." Whilst less than a third of the class had ever been on the Internet and most schools had only recently received computer labs, by the end of the course approximately six said that that after this course they were considering a career in IT, while the rest said they hoped that IT would support them in different career avenues. The trainer described highlights of the training as follows:

> *"The chapter on hardware was especially well received as most things were novel and exciting yet well within their reach. The chapters on Operating Systems and especially Networking however proved more difficult to get across because the issues are more abstract. The teachers were very interested and engaged in the process. They worked with their school groups and came to the fore in discussions when the work became more technical e.g. Networking. They were a bit frustrated that the course only covers the workstations and does not comment on server issues and set up."*

Unfortunately teachers and learners from Ramatau High did not attend the training session that was meant to include them, but participants from the other schools thoroughly enjoyed the training and were described as "very intelligent, very active, willing to learn."

Whilst the participants were shy in the beginning by chapter 4 everyone was participating and asking questions and by chapter 8 participants were asking the facilitator to add more content and whether or not there was an advanced course they could attend.

The eagerness to learn is reflected in the following comments:
> *"I recommend that our group should be taken to the second level of training for specialist"*

> *"Our teacher was good and he often help us to focus on our potential and capabilities"*

> *"The Trainer was very helpful and patient when helping with the installation of components as this was my first time seeing the internal parts of the computers".*

Gauteng HelpDesk Training
This training session included the four Gauteng cases study schools (Letsibogo Girls School, Landulwazi High School, Gatanang High School and Minerva High School). In addition representatives from Pele-ya-Pele also attended as although this school is in the Free State it is situated closer to the University of Johannesburg (where this training was held) than to the University of the North (where the Free State training took place).

Training was conducted in a classroom with enough computers for the training and there was also ample space available for demonstration purposes.

The trainer described the participants as follows:

"All Trainees were very participative despite that it was a mix of both learners and educators and none of them had previous experience on fixing a computer except only operating it. Educators looked comfortable being taught something new together with their learners."

There was a request from trainees for follow up training and more training.

Compiled by:
Megan Rademeyer
Programme Manager – SchoolNet SA