

Intel® Teach to the Future One-Day Conferences

The Regional Training Agency (RTA) for Intel in South Africa, SchoolNet SA, has worked with Provincial Education Departments to bring one-day conferences to each province. This effort was in lieu of the customary annual national Intel® sponsored educational ICT conference.



they were called one-day conferences.

The event was conceived in an attempt to launch the new Teach to the Future materials. The revised materials were developed in early 2006 as a result of ongoing evaluation. The materials include many new modules, some drawing on Intel Education's new online content. It was felt that launching these materials at a national conference catering for a wide range of interests would not be the best value or most effective way of introducing the new materials to teachers and education decision-makers. While these events were essentially a product launch,

The purpose of the one-day conferences was to:

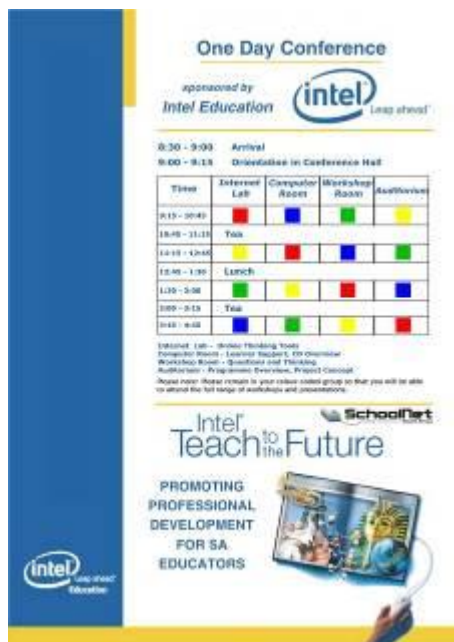
- Give large numbers of teachers the opportunity to attend a conference with little or no costs involved;
- Introduce the new materials to teachers and Provincial Education Managers;
- Encourage the Provincial Education Managers to fund training for poorly resourced schools as part of a well-managed implementation strategy for educational ICT teacher development;
- Reach well-resourced schools that could fund their own training;
- Involve Provincial Education managers in the process of organization, where possible.

Intel Education has been promising a "road show" to teachers in provinces for some time. Many teachers are unable to attend national conferences because of the costs of travel and accommodation associated with attending conference long distances from home. The one-day conferences were completely free of charge. Intel sponsored T-shirts, stationery, venue hire, meals and costs of senior trainers.



Locally trained senior trainers were given an opportunity to present on these materials for the first time. They were supplemented by other senior trainers flown in from neighbouring provinces. They were supported by the Teach to the Future project coordinator and an administrative assistant. With this minimal staffing, but good organization, it was possible to run successful events in most provinces.

The cooperation from many Provincial Departments of Education was remarkable and partnerships were strengthened particularly in Limpopo and the Free State provinces. Two provinces, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape, were unable to provide sufficient support for the event to take place and both events were cancelled in order to recover some costs.



In South Africa each province is autonomous and has very different circumstances; it is a time-consuming and sensitive process to elicit support from the Provincial educational managers, many of whom are still in capacity building processes and have not progressed very far in implementing ICT strategies in schools. Many one-day conferences were attended by significant decision-makers, but in a few cases this goal was not achieved.

It was decided that each participant should be able to attend the same presentations throughout the day.

As a result a roster was devised in which four key presentations were repeated throughout the day to four groups of delegates. The smallest venue size, usually the computer rooms, determined the size of the group. As a result the audience limit varied from 100 to 200. Each group was colour-coded and attended each session according to the roster.

The venues consisted of:

1. An Internet-enabled computer room named the Internet Lab in which the online thinking tools were introduced.
2. A computer room which did not require Internet access, in which the Learner Support module was introduced and learner support documents were created. Time was made available to browse the CD.
3. An auditorium for the main event orientation and programme overview sessions.
4. A workshop room in which the Questions and Thinking module was done practically.

One senior trainer took responsibility for each venue and repeated the workshop four times during the day. It was hard work for the senior trainers presenting for the duration of the day but extremely rewarding for them. Their efforts were very much appreciated;

Excellent presentation by highly informed presenters who were willing to go an extra mile to assist those who were lagging behind.

Maliehe K. Roger (Free State)

Attendance varied across the provinces. The first event was held at the St Mary's School for Girls in Pretoria, Gauteng Province. It was poorly attended by 39 delegates, none of whom were significant provincial decision-makers. This typifies the continuing attempts being made to gain recognition in this province, despite its great need for a coherent teacher training strategy. In retrospect, the low attendance was most probably due to inadequate prior notice being given to the teachers in the province.

The Cape Town event, in the Western Cape Province, was held at the Wynberg Boys' High School and attended by 86 delegates. The event was opened by the deputy director of the curriculum directorate from the Western Cape Education Department, Mike Cameron. It was attended by several other curriculum planners. Intel has also

run parallel overview sessions for each of the 200 curriculum subject advisers in the province.



The Eastern Cape event, held at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, was poorly attended by fewer than 20 delegates, but cancellation was not considered in an attempt to establish a working relationship with a province that has been neglected in terms of educational ICT support in the past.

The Kwa-Zulu event was held at Kearsney College and well-attended by both teachers and education managers. About 96 delegates attended the event that was opened by Parthy Chetty, Intel's Education Manager in South Africa but there was no official representation from the provincial department of Education.

The Northwest Province event, held at St Conrads College in Klerksdorp, was a significant logistical challenge. Although only 16 teachers had registered, we were assured that approximately 100 would definitely attend. This was the capacity of the venue. However, 260 educators arrived before the host school decided to lock the gates; it was a great challenge to register, accommodate and feed them. We succeeded in doing so, but were left reflecting on arrangements for access control at future events. This event was well supported by the provincial department of education and particularly the ICT directorate. The opening and welcome was conducted by the Acting Regional Director for the Southern Region, Mr Hasimbhay Motara.

The Limpopo event, held at the Polokwane Training Centre, was superbly organised and controlled by officials from the Limpopo Education Department. 112 teachers attended this event, including significant decision-makers in the province. The Head of Department attended early in the morning and the event was opened by the Director for e-Learning, Suzanne Erasmus.

The Free State event, held at Grey College in Bloemfontein, was attended by 99 delegates including some from Higher Education institutions in the province. The event was opened by Bertha Kitching, the Director for e-Education in the Free State Education Department. Most members of the e-learning directorate as well as significant managers of the provincial Education Resources Centres were present.

Feedback was elicited via the post-conference evaluation forms. Delegates were overwhelmingly impressed by the materials and their relevance for the South African classroom.

Hallelujah .. I Love that this training helps teachers to actually use ICT in the curriculum.

Maggie Verster (Gauteng)

The conference has really stimulated my thinking - I understand that with focus



questions there will be great changes in the learning process.
Molatoli JJM (Free State)

This aligns with feedback that has been received from subject adviser overview sessions in the Western Cape. Educators and education managers are finding that their understanding of projects in the classroom has been significantly refreshed and that they have learnt new aspects to project design. In the words of one provincial education manager, **"Thanks, I enjoyed all sessions .This course is a dream come true to me."**

Although the budget for one-day conferences slightly exceeded the budget for a national 3-day conference, it was felt that the concept was well-worth the effort, even though some changes would be instituted if we were to repeat the venture. The total of 709 delegates that attended in all sessions combined compares very favourably with a successful national 3-day conference.



Future events would not be focused on launching the product and it would be possible to focus more on teachers showcasing their projects. The venue logistics would be different and it would be possible to accommodate more delegates at each session. We would also plan more in advance and take more time to negotiate the support, both financial and logistical, from Provincial Education Department stakeholders. It may also be possible to elicit the support and cooperation of key stakeholders in the ICT integration teacher training environment

to ensure that the event continues to be focused and relevant to the needs of teachers in the classroom.

In summary, the one-day conferences showed significant elements of best-practice to convince us that repeating this event every second year would be a very successful way of marketing the programme, consolidating relationships with Provincial education managers and increasing the mindshare for Intel, Teach to the Future and SchoolNet SA.