

## Peer Coaching Workshop – Session 2 Western Cape



The Western Cape Peer Coaches from the Learning gains through Play project attended their second session at Temperance Town Primary on the afternoon of July 18th 2016. The session targeted two themes namely; coaching skills and curriculum planning skills. In the coaching skills activity participants practised communication and collaboration skills that are essential for coaching others on using ICT to support learning. Participants became engaged in a process that provides a framework for planning curriculum-based and ICT integrated learning activities – this was the part enjoyed by many.

The session was attended by nine teachers from five schools in the project – all schools were represented. The session started off by summarizing the key roles of a peer coach (*ie. Facilitator, Collaborator, Consultant and Coach*) which was previously dealt with in detail. This proved to be a



valuable exercise as most participants asked clarifying questions which cleared up any prior confusion. Some participants had been of the idea that a peer coach ought to possess high ICT skills and thus had felt uncomfortable participating. They had been scared that they may not have been able to provide the

necessary support for their collaborators. Everyone became much more comfortable once they realised these fears were ill-founded.

Time was given to complete a coaching plan to be used in the next activity. The coaching plan required participants to choose their collaborating teachers at the school, think about when they'll need to meet, the resources required etc. The next activity on Communication Skills helped participants understand the importance to build trusting relationships with collaborating teachers. Communication skills from the works of Costa and Garston (2002) and Lipton and Wellman (2001) were practised in teams, these fell under the titles of Active Listening, Paraphrasing, Pausing, Clarifying and Probing Questions. One of the participants, Mary-Anne shared a story about her daughter to highlight how important are these skills and its relevancy in other walks of life too.

The last activity focused on assessing lesson design. This is one of the key activities of the Peer Coach course because it introduces the Peer Coaches to the process of lesson improvement, models a process and introduces tools that will be used in their peer coach planning sessions with individual teachers - in this activity integration of ICT is introduced.

Participants were introduced to the Learning Activity Checklist and collaboratively practised using it to analyse how a lesson can support assessment standards and how ICT can be used to enhance learning. They also analyse whether the lessons are problem based, and will engage learners.

Participants were paired and given a copy of a traditional lesson – they participated in a peer coaching role play ie. A coach who will assist a collaborating teacher improve a traditional lesson – they switched roles to

experience both. At first as the facilitator moves around, the focus was on including ICT in the lesson but they were directed to use a Learning Activity checklist in order to keep balance of other important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. During the



debrief, participants were asked to share suggested improvements. This was conducted via role play and from the examples provided it was evident that they had understood the process.

In conclusion the facilitator highlighted that the role of ICT integration coaching in assessing lesson design is not to evaluate teachers, but to know how to provide useful support in switching to more effective instructional strategies and/or creation of effective learning activities for learners.

Coaches were given homework to go back to their schools, meet with their collaborating teacher/s then conduct at least one lesson improvement session with them. Participants indicated that they would appreciate more ICT integrated lesson plan exemplars. The activity on lesson plan improvement was challenging for some but enjoyed by all.