



Gerald Plaatjies – passionate about using technology in the classroom



Overview

Country: South Africa

Location: Ekurhuleni, Gauteng

Industry: Education

Software and services:

Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert program

Websites:

www.educatornetwork.com

Partners:

SchoolNet SA

Microsoft Innovative Educator Experts advance the conversation about improving student outcomes through innovative uses of technology in teaching and learning.

It is not every day that you find a teacher who is passionate about using technology in his classroom who is also a published author of a Maths textbook. Mr Gerald Plaatjies, a Grade 5 Maths teacher, has been teaching at Eden Park Primary School for over 21 years. Gerald's passion is getting students excited about Maths, which has led to him creating a range of learning materials for his learners using Microsoft Office. He has shared some of these resources beyond Eden Primary by authoring a book on "Amazing Mental Calculations: Division" and he is in the process of completing his second book in this series entitled "Amazing Mental Calculations: Timetables".

Eden Park Primary School has a total of 47 teachers who share twenty laptops and four monitors donated by Telkom. Gerald says he makes use of these whenever he can as he has been interested in using technology since the year 2000 when he bought his first computer. "I learnt the nitty gritty stuff by myself, starting with word processing", he said. He is motivated to make mathematics as interactive and practical as possible in the classroom and to do this he uses Microsoft tools extensively, especially PowerPoint which is one of his favourite tools for developing lesson materials and assessments.

As a Microsoft School, Eden Park Primary benefits from having access to Microsoft Teacher Ambassador, Bonolo Sedupane. Bonolo provides the teachers with training and mentoring on using Microsoft tools for educational purposes. Plaatjies greatly appreciates the role that Bonolo Sedupane has played at Eden Park Primary School, saying "We are grateful for the opportunity of being connected with a Microsoft Teacher Ambassador to advance e-learning in our school."





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Gerald Plaaitjies

Maths teacher

Eden Rock Primary School

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft in Education, visit:

www.microsoft.com/education/ww/solutions/Pages/index.aspx

To find out about the Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert program, see: <http://www.educatornetwork.com/Sites/Educators/Index>

"We have limited resources at Eden Park – but I try to use what we have to make mathematics more engaging and to bring it to life."

Gerald enjoys using Microsoft Excel to make graphs to depict real life situations to demonstrate making graphs in class. He records all his marks using Microsoft Excel and also uses Excel as an analytical tool. He uses Microsoft Office programs to design certificates for the learners and says that they love receiving these. He also created a cover for the school diary using Microsoft Office programs.

Overcoming Challenges

Teaching at a public school in South Africa is not without its challenges especially when it comes to using technology during lessons. Electricity outages are not uncommon and teachers need to be ready with a back up plan if there is no power when they had planned to present a lesson. As the equipment is shared at Eden Park Primary and resources are often in demand, Gerald has to book the devices when he wants to use them in class to ensure that he will have access to them. Furthermore, Eden Park Primary School does not have reliable internet access to facilitate downloading or searching for resources.

These numerous challenges do not diminish Gerald's enthusiasm and he tries to find ways to still access technology at school. For example, he bought his own data projector to use in class, as he believes it is important for the learners to see what he is presenting. He also

converts PowerPoint presentations to MP4 videos so that they can be viewed via a DVD player by means of a USB.

Encouraging others

Gerald encourages the other teachers at Eden Park Primary to use technology in their lessons. He demonstrates how to prepare lessons digitally and shows them how they can share new information from the Internet with their learners. He believes that the use of PowerPoint can make lessons very interesting, and he shares these ideas with the other teachers.

Gerald Plaaitjies has his future dreams for education. He looks forward to that day in South Africa when schools can do away with paper and become paperless classrooms. He longs for the day when parents are more involved in driving and encouraging the use of technology in education. He advocates that effective communication between parents and teachers will start the conversation in this direction.

Key technology
Microsoft Office 2013