Professional Development and Support for New Nations School - Report

Background to the Project

The Trevor Noah Foundation is supporting New Nations School in Johannesburg, Gauteng, focusing on equipping vulnerable youth with the education, life skills, and social capital necessary to pursue further opportunities upon graduating high school. To support these efforts, Microsoft equipped the school with 36 x Windows 10 laptops in October 2018 and O365 email accounts for staff were provided in March of 2019.

To assist teachers and school leaders with leading change at the school, SchoolNet SA was commissioned by Microsoft to run the "Change Leadership for Technology Integration" course for school leaders. This was followed by "Microsoft in Education" workshops which were made available to all staff, as well as coaching and mentoring of staff to encourage them to make use of the computer facilities. These workshops and support are described in this report.

Change Leadership for Technology Integration Course

Technology deployment can be a catalyst for change in a school. However, change needs energy, ideas, commitment and ownership rather than a controlling management. The SchoolNet SA Change Leadership course, which was offered to school leaders at New Nation School, is influenced by literature on the key elements of change management and Michael Fullan's work on Learning to Lead Change.

The Change Leadership course took place between August and October 2018, with the following modules being covered:
- 17 August 2018 – Module 1: Why are we doing this?
- 24 August 2018 – Module 2: Understanding the Change Process
- 7 September 2018 – Module 3: Capacity Building
- 14 September 2018 - Module 4: Facing Challenges
- 20 September 2018 – Module 5: Let's communicate for a change
- 10 October 2018 – Module 6: Culture of Learning in the Workplace
- 11 October 2018 - Module 7: A culture of evaluation

SchoolNet SA's Megan Rademeyer facilitated this course, with the exception of the module on Capacity Building, which was facilitated by SchoolNet SA's Omashani Naidoo.

One of the strengths of the Change Leadership course is that it uses a variety of methods to get school leaders to share their ideas as they work towards managing change effectively. One of these strategies, which New Nations teachers enjoyed, was the "Give One, Get One" activity in which teachers each

convey their idea to a colleague, getting an idea back in return. The "Gallery Walk" strategy, which was also deployed, involved small groups of delegates each examining a document and writing their ideas around it, which were then further commented on and unpacked by the next group to visit the exhibit. Another strategy which worked to good effect at the New Nations workshops involved examining scenarios of how other schools have managed their technology deployments. This proved to be a non-threatening way of discussing the pros and cons of different approaches as it could be done so without criticising any New Nation staff members or the school's approaches.

Evaluation of the Change Leadership Course

When asked what they enjoyed about the course, delegates responded that they enjoyed using laptops, the team-work and practical components of the workshops.

> "I enjoyed the interaction between (us) the teachers and the management the exchanging of ideas and how we all view the school as the whole."

> "the course changed my mindset, and I think it is very important for this change that will happen in our school. Most of the time, changes happen but we are not prepared for the transitions they bring. So these workshops really prepared us."

> "I learnt how leadership works and how it differ from managing. These made me realise that leadership is better since it give one chance to work collaboratively with others."

When asked how the workshops could be improved, delegates made a call for extending the workshop, having them in the morning, and having workshops more often. One delegate said an improvement would be:

> "If we can write assessments and also receive feedback."

Two participants noted that they would have liked to have made more extensive use of the laptops.

> "it would have been great if we used the computers as well throughout, especially for responding to questions, doing activities and homework. Others will do the workshop but not even come and use the computers"

When asked "In what ways has this course prepared you to successfully make use of the technology that is being introduced to you school?" delegates responded that the course has increased their confidence and skills to use the technology:

> *"it has extended my skills and methods to teach using technology and ways to prevent misuse and damage to technological tools used."*

> *"I will use the computer with confidence such that I I will also help my learners boldly."*

> *"Ownership, policy, and the discussions we had about planning. We can also appreciate this technology, knowing that we are one of the luckiest schools to get it."*

Delegates also felt better prepared for the next steps:

> *"It has convinced me to make teaching and learning to be fun"*

> *"Start practicing what we were taught, and cascade it to my colleagues"*

> *"It makes me to be alert and prepared to use technology in classroom situation"*

Microsoft in the Classroom Workshops

SchoolNet SA was commissioned to run a series of five afternoon workshops for New Nation staff members covering a range of topics to assist with ICT integration and the development of basic digital skills.

During the first workshop, teachers learnt about the hour of Code and worked their way through the Minecraft themed tutorials themselves. They also discussed the importance of exposing youth to basic coding and some of the skills that this can develop. Teachers seemed to really enjoy this activity and many said that they planned to make use of the Hour of Code activity with their learners after exams were complete.

In the second workshop, delegates could not practice using Microsoft Forms as teachers still did not have O365 logins. Instead, teachers completed a Socrative online quiz and were shown how to set up their own online quizzes to use when they take learners to the computer room. In addition to enjoying experiencing their own Space Race as participants, it was pleasing to hear that after this workshop a number of teachers used the tool in the lab. A second component to this workshop was introducing teachers to the Computer Olympiad Talent Search computational thinking skills materials. Teachers had great fun working through some of the online puzzles aimed at primary school learners, but also learnt more about computational thinking and how important it is to develop these skills. We hope that New Nation teachers may go on to use the high school materials with their learners, and to enter some of the most promising candidates into the Computer Olympiad Talent Search.

By the third workshop, the O365 accounts to teachers had been created and teachers were shown how to access their accounts, and were introduced to some of the key features of working in the cloud. Teachers practiced accessing their email and sent emails from their new accounts. Teachers were also briefly shown Microsoft Forms and the similarities and differences between this tool and Socrative were discussed.

In the fourth workshop, teachers were introduced to Sway and were given some time to create Sways introducing themselves. Whilst teachers did not have ready access to their own photos on the shared devices, the lesson provided a good opportunity to talk about saving one's own documents to the cloud. Teachers also discovered that they could use the cameras built into the laptops to take pictures of themselves.
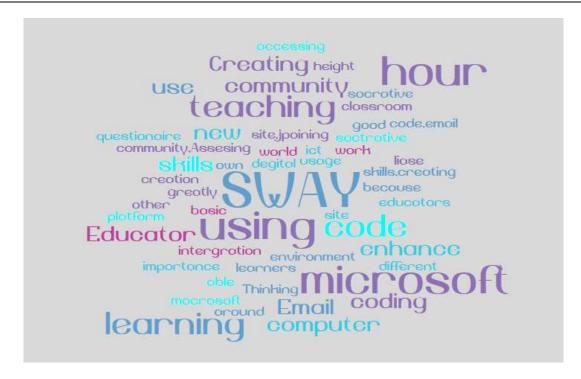
In the final workshop teachers joined the Microsoft Educator Community and were given a tour of some of the resources available in this portal. After completing their online profiles, teachers were given a code to earn a badge indicating that they had had introductory O365 training. We discussed how Skype in the Classroom could be a valuable tool for bringing guest speakers into the classroom and allowing learners to collaborate with classes from around the world. The final activity involved completing a course evaluation form – which provided a further opportunity to talk about forms and how the results can be accessed by the person who devised the form and downloaded into Excel.

On 14 March 2019, prior to school closing for the end of the first term, certificates were presented to New Nation Teachers.

Evaluation of the Microsoft in the Classroom Workshop

Based on the feedback from the course evaluation completed in the final session, most of the teachers enjoyed the tools that were presented, and many believe that they are likely to access and use the tools again. The word cloud below summarises what New Nation teachers listed as their top three takeaways from the Microsoft in the Classroom workshops. This indicated that in addition to learning some new tools (Sway, Socrative, Email) they also learnt some valuable skills (creating, joining, accessing) which will stand them in good stead for using the tools in their lessons and continuing to access additional online professional development opportunities through the Microsoft Educator Community:

When asked what they had enjoyed most about the workshops, two teachers said "everything", five said the "hour of code", two said "Sway" and two said the "Microsoft Educator Community".

> *"the workshop has been so much informative and helping regarding digital skills and facilitator shows so much interest and fun in what she was doing"*

Mentoring and Coaching visits

This project allowed for five morning of mentoring and coaching visits at New Nation School. On the five days of the Microsoft in the Classroom workshops, as well as on a few other days, Megan Rademeyer made herself available to assist teachers with their individual queries related to Office 365, the technology in general and ideas for integrating technology into subject lessons. Megan was also on hand to provide an extra set of hands to teachers who bought their classes to the computer room as part of their subject timetable.

During the Mentoring visits, a number of teachers bought their classes to the computer room to conduct research for subject-based assignments. This included a class of grade 11 Geography learners (pictured below) who were in the process of researching an aspect of the suburb in which they live as part of a portfolio project as well as a Life Orientation class who were completing research on careers that they are interested in. Whilst it was pleasing to see the computers and internet access being used to locate up to date information, the fact that learners were using pen and paper to copy down the relevant information they found highlighted the need for New Nation learners to also be equipped with O365 accounts. Given their own accounts "in the cloud" learners could easily make use of tools such as OneNote and OneDrive to store the source material that they locate and could then use tools such as Word or PowerPoint to type up and present their findings.

At the end of term, the Grade 12 English First Additional Language teacher bought his learners to the computer room to try the Hour of Code. Whilst the Hour of Code is not an "English" lesson the activities demand skill and practice in reading instructions, comprehending the puzzles and implementing directions. After an initial brief introduction, learners made use of the offline Hour of Code materials to see how far they could get in the Minecraft themed Hour of Code tutorial. Despite most learners having had no prior exposure to coding, learners quickly grasped the objective of the puzzles and got further than most teachers had done when the same activity had been completed with staff members. Two learners easily finished the full tutorial in under an hour and went on to then assist classmates. The excitement and interest that this activity generated indicated that a number of learners would be interested in additional opportunities to try out coding as an after school enrichment activity.

In some coaching and mentorship periods, learners did not come to the computer room, but teachers made use of the facilities for their own research or class administration. Teachers who asked for assistance were given some pointers on how to format their documents as well as where they could

look for additional teaching resources. For example, the teacher pictured below was looking for past maths papers and was shown the Department of Basic Education Second Chance Matric portal which provides access to a range of past papers, memorandums and study guides.

Coverage of this project on the SchoolNet SA blog

Three blogposts related to this project were written and shared on the SchoolNet SA blog. Below are the URLs and screenshots of the opening paragraphs of each post:

https://schoolnetsa.blogspot.com/2018/10/change-leadership-for-new-nation-school.html

FRIDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2018

Change Leadership for New Nation School Leaders

The Trevor Noah Foundation is supporting New Nations School in Vrededorp, Gauteng, with the aim of providing vulnerable youth with the education, life skills, and social capital necessary to pursue further opportunities upon graduating high school. To support these efforts, Microsoft equipped the school with a lab of Windows 10 laptops and Office 365 email accounts, and commissioned SchoolNet SA to run some professional development workshops for staff to assist them to use the resources to enhance teaching and learning opportunities at the school.

https://schoolnetsa.blogspot.com/2019/03/new-nation-teachers-master-some-digital.html

WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2019

New Nation Teachers master some digital tools

In the first term of 2018, teachers from New Nation School in Vrededorp, Gauteng, enjoyed five afternoon workshop sessions on using a range of digital tools in the classroom. These workshops were sponsored by Microsoft Philanthropies in order to help staff to use technology as a catalyst for change at a school that largely provides education to orphans and vulnerable children.

Below is a summary of what was covered at the workshops with links to some of the resources that other teachers may wish to use in their classrooms:

https://schoolnetsa.blogspot.com/2019/03/a-new-computer-lab-lessons-from-new.html

MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2019

A new computer lab - Lessons from New Nation School

In October 2018, the old Gauteng Online computer room at New Nation School in Vrededorp, Gauteng was equipped with Windows 10 laptops by Microsoft Philanthropies as part of a larger programme of support provided to the school by the Trevor Noah Foundation. SchoolNet SA has conducted the 'Change Leadership for Technology Integration' course for school leaders and the 'Microsoft in the Education' course for educators at the school and has also provided some onsite coaching and support.

Whilst the school has only had a well-equipped computer room for two terms, we've been pleased to see the progress that has been made to date. This blogpost highlights some of the key successes and learnings of the New Nation journey so far.

Conclusion

Whilst we are excited by the progress made by teachers at New Nation School to integrate some digital tools into their lessons, we'd like to see learners having more access to the computers and more opportunities to build their digital skills. In a future project we hope to see learners getting O365 accounts which will enable them to save their work in their own space on the cloud and we also hope to encourage learners to complete the Digital Literacy Curriculum to further boost their skills.

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26 March 2019
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