



REPORT ON THE TELKOM ICASA SCHOOLS ICT TRAINING AND SUPPORT

October 2021

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1. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a shift in Education globally, and E-learning has become a global and national focus. The Telkom ICASA initiative is earmarked to address these and other challenges in public sector schools and to establish a foundation for uninterrupted learning for Grade 12 learners through the delivery of virtual lessons.

Initially earmarked for 2021, this project in its inception has seen a needs analysis, digital technologies being deployed to schools and both senior management and teacher development in place in preparation for the 2022 Grade 12 development. In preparation for this project implementation all staff with a focus on Grade 12 teachers participated in digital literacy courses, training on using the sponsored teaching and learning equipment and how to use the Lightbulb and 2Enable learning platforms.

We are now in a strong position to offer Learner support in the New Year to guide and support learners in basic digital literacy and on the use of sponsored technologies and digital content to kick start their year with strong foundations for learning.

2. Educator Survey

The SchoolNet team has continued to follow up with teachers who have not completed the teacher baseline survey. Of the total 173 teachers, there are only 36 (20.8%) of the teachers who did not complete the survey and a success rate of 79,2% who have completed.

School principals have been informed and are following up with specific teachers who have not completed the survey.

School Name	Total Number of Teachers	Teachers not completed	Total number of teachers who have completed
Kgola-Thuto	42	7	35
Tiisetsang	51	10	41
Qhubulwazi	45	13	32
Methula	35	6	29

3. Technical

Teachers and learners were provided with their Microsoft Office 365 login details. These email addresses will allow teachers to access Office 365 Education Suite and will be used to access accounts on the Lightbulb and the 2Enable learning Platforms.

The SchoolNet SA, 2Enable and Lightbulb Platforms are zero-rated by Telkom which means that all teachers and learners will have data-free access to content on these platforms.

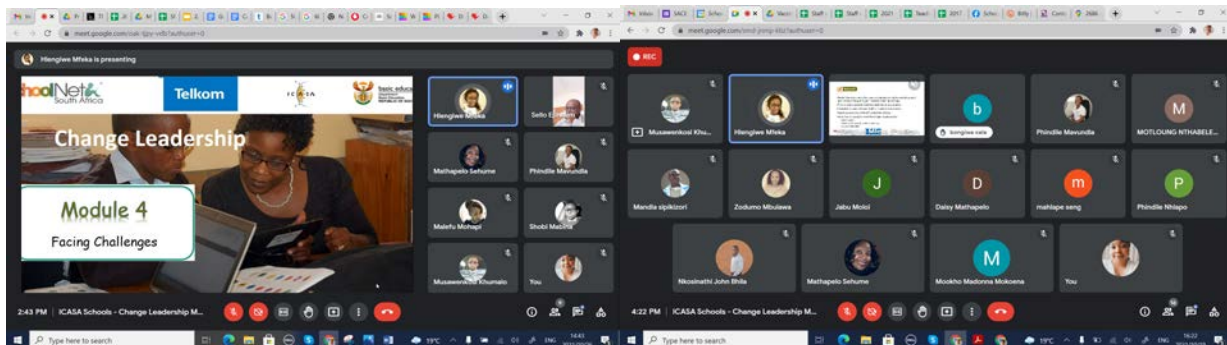
To date all 173 Teacher accounts, 1075 Grade 11 accounts and 1220 Grade 12 accounts in 2021

4. Development for Senior Management

Training for School Management Teams continued in the month of October. These were conducted virtually due to the time available during examinations. The focus of the training was on ensuring that our Management Teams of the four schools understood the commitment required of them to manage, secure and optimize the use of the digital infrastructure to ensure that both teachers and learners benefit from this worthy project.

Education has changed exponentially due to COVID-19 and with the increase in focus on E-Learning there is an urgency required to ensure that Grade 12 learners are exposed to digital technologies to leverage off available content to support their learning, but more importantly also ensure that learners are prepared for Post-Schooling and the needs of Higher Education Institutions as well as the world of work.

4.1 Change Leadership for ICT Integration



Two sessions of Senior Management training took place during September and an additional two sessions were hosted in October with 20 and 17 Senior Management in attendance respectively.

The virtual professional development sessions on Capacity Building and Facing Challenges modules began with reflections, with each school representative reporting on progress made since August and the previous activities in September.

The purpose of Module three was to guide school leaders to understand that capacity building is a collective process which involves all stakeholders developing new skills, understanding and additional competencies to build a strong learning environment. All senior managers are expected to support each other during their capacity building process at their schools, and in this way collectively grow leadership skills. This too provides a sustainable mechanism for the school especially if one manager leaves the school, there will several others continue with the vision of the school.

Module four explored the different types of challenges faced in schools especially where technology is introduced and explored how to overcome challenges using the resources available at the school. It was quite an eye opener for the majority of participants who had not encountered the distinction between adaptive challenges and technical problems. While working through the examples of each and categorizing them, participants were able to engage and reflect in deep discussions about their own adaptive challenges. The distinction between the nature of the problems became clearer and further working through the action plan to deal with the challenge was considered to be a most worthwhile exercise. Resistance is another Adaptive challenge which is often experienced when there is a change. The last activity specifically dealt with how participants may embrace resistance rather than avoid it. One of the emphasis made when embracing resistance was that of building strong working relationships. It was an interesting session and participants' comments showed understanding and appreciation of what was learnt.

Ideally we would like maximum attendance, however due to the timing of the year, this potentially was unavoidable. Record sessions were shared with all participants and made available to all staff at the schools.

Additional sessions are planned as follows:

Let's communicate for a change - 21 January 2022

A culture of learning in the Workplace - 22 January 2022

A culture of evaluation - 29 January 2022

Considering that the project started late in the year the four project schools agreed that the remaining training sessions should take place in January 2022, this would allow the SMT to complete all portfolios for the first four training sessions that have been completed.

4.2. Attendance Statistics

Province	School Name	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	# Recording Views Mod 3	Module 4	# Recording Views Mod 4
Free State	Tiisetsang	18	18	6	4	0	6
Free State	Kgola-Thuto	14	14	4	3	5	2
Mpumalanga	Methula	13	13	6	3	7	3
Mpumalanga	Qhubulwazi	8	8	4	2	5	2
Total		53	53	20	12	17	13

5. Teacher Development

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges requiring teachers to adapt to teaching online and highlighted the importance of improving teachers' capacity to effectively use digital tools and applications for teaching. Therefore, a blended model of training was proposed to the schools where the initial training sessions took place in face to face events and the remaining sessions were hosted virtually to provide an opportunity for teachers to experience firsthand the power of digital learning.

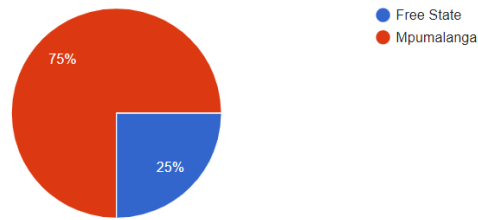
5.1 Introduction to Digital Teaching

Teacher training took place on 28 October 2019 with 40 Teachers in attendance. The Introduction to Digital Teaching Course was designed to provide capacity for teachers who would like to adapt to engaging with their students in an online or virtual set up. This course equips teachers with necessary tools to prepare themselves for Digital Teaching. Majority of the teachers connected in groups at their school computer laboratories. They gained knowledge of the difference between face to face teaching, digital teaching and distance learning. The session included exploration of some of the key features and functionality of MS Teams and a real time demonstration of how to create MS Teams, sharing resources and getting students to collaborate in engaging lessons.

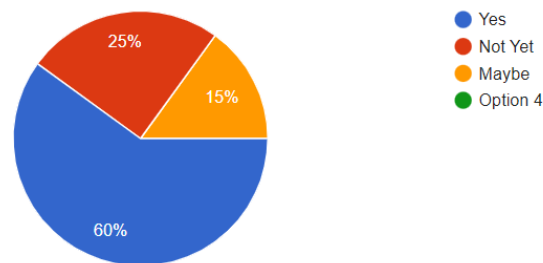
5.2. Attendance Statistics

Province	School Name	# ICT Skills for teachers	# Introduction to Digital Teaching	# Recording Views
Free State	Tiisetsang	40	4	10
Free State	Kgola-Thuto	31	11	6
Mpumalanga	Methula	28	11	5
Mpumalanga	Qhubulwazi	39	14	4
Total		138	40	25

From the group of teachers who attend the virtual training session 75% of those who attended are from Mpumalanga and only 25% were from Free State.



Teachers who did not manage to attend training indicated that they would be catching on the training through the shared video recording. They reported that load shedding was the major reason for not attending as their internet connection were unstable.



After the training session 60% of the participants shared that they were excited and looking forward to implementing their lessons from the training and 25% felt that they needed more practice before attempting to try and 15% were not sure about implementing the newly acquired skills.

The teachers who shared that they were not ready to implement their learnings were keen to understand how learning would unfold in a real teaching environment considering some of the challenges experienced by teachers during training they shared that they were concerned about their large group of learners who would be connecting to their lessons. Some teachers shared that time management was one of the issues that they were grappling with.

The follow up digital teaching training session is scheduled to take place during the week of the 29 November to the 3rd of December. The training session will take form in a virtual session model where recorded sessions will be shared with all the teachers via e-mail and WhatsApp groups in byte sizes. The teachers will be required to complete tasks at the end of each video, and complete a quiz at the end of the training to confirm understanding of the offered training.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

After each of the training sessions a survey was conducted to evaluate the usefulness of the content, the skills of the trainer and to suggest further training needs that may have become apparent. In this way, our training remains relevant and applies a just in time principle to adapting to the needs of all participants. Below are some of the comments from teachers noted after the training sessions:

Senior Management Comments:

“Team building skill on improving a shared goal”

“The way building capacity through delegation was explained”

“Training was perfectly presented and the way people were engaging made it more interesting”

“Discussion on problems and challenges that might be faced at schools implementing technological education”

Teacher Comments:

“It was inspiring especially the difference between synchronized learning and asynchronous learning”

To be able to draw chart as part of teaching and learning

Learning how to set question papers using tables

“I have learnt that you can teach everywhere using digital learning”

“The use of devices to conduct a lesson other than using the chalkboard”

7. Challenges

Load shedding - became a negative factor for the training sessions that were planned in October, while most teachers were able to join the sessions virtually, some were unable to attend because of load shedding in their arrears as it also affected connectivity.

Internet Connectivity - Some teachers joined the training sessions from home and internet connectivity was unstable for some of them, this made it difficult for them to actively participate and follow through the training sessions.

The mitigation plan for both challenges was addressed by sharing the recorded training sessions and teachers were encouraged to contact the facilitator through e-mail or WhatsApp for additional support.

8. Project Plans for November / December

- Collection of teacher training artefacts
- Collecting of change leadership activities from the school managers

9. Conclusion

The training in October saw a lot of success as teachers embraced the virtual training methods as they were experiencing first-hand the joy of digital learning. In this way, they would be better prepared to plan learning experiences for their learners. These sessions were a great experience for both SchoolNet and the schools involved in the project- with all looking forward to the great work that teachers will be showcasing as implementation gets underway in schools.

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