

Partners in Learning Peer Coach Programme

Focus: The Key to Success

In their enthusiasm after the first session peer coaches sometimes set out to tackle large and unmanageable challenges. The key to success is focus, focus, focus.

On a school level the peer coach can be expected to support and contribute towards achieving a school or provincial focus such as the development of writing skills or literacy. The peer coach could also be asked to support teachers in specific learning areas / subjects, grades or phases.

At a peer level the peer coach will identify specific needs and interests of the teacher(s) with whom he/she is working. In all cases the emphasis is on focus. They choose one thing on which to focus at a time and persist until they are able to reflect positively on the experience in the classroom. It is all about more effective teaching and learning with ICT.

A peer coach's focus is outward, for the benefit of the peer. It is not focused on personal goals for better teaching and learning, although this is a likely secondary outcome for the peer coach as s/he shares ideas with peers and other coaches.

Peer coaches that hope to tackle the whole school and change the attitude of all the teachers in the school in the first year are heading for disappointment and frustration. It may happen that, on occasion, the peer coach will have the opportunity to coordinate or even offer a workshop for a large number of colleagues, but this is not the primary responsibility of the peer coach.

The peer coach will not train other peer coaches in the school, nor teach peer coach skills to teachers generally. The peer coach will focus on the one, two or three teachers that have agreed to work with him/her. Together they will identify and focus on just a few aspects of ICT integration as they work with lesson improvement guidelines and checklists.

Gerald Roos (Programme Coordinator)