



ICT NEWSLETTER November 2006



We have once again reached the end of a very busy year! Education is such a demanding profession, with huge responsibilities – no wonder we all fall down by December!

After visiting the ICT centres in your schools, it never fails to impress me as to how dedicated and hard working the ICT educators are! Having taught in an ICT centre for a number of years, I am aware of the amount of energy, patience and hard work that is required to run a centre. It is always great to see how creative and efficient the educators all are. Their efficiency often hides the fact that teaching learners as well as having to maintain an ICT centre is an extremely tiring and demanding job! They are certainly an asset to your schools.

I always leave the ICT centres with a sense of wonder, as I feel that it is a place where you see OBE working at its best, within a technological environment. I marvel at the rate that learners are developing essential skills that will in the near future help them to create a vibrant and strong economy once they enter the working world.

This will be my last newsletter as I am retiring, (wishful thinking! – just changing my portfolio!) moving on to quieter surroundings with very different challenges!

I have had a very stimulating and rewarding 7 years training and supporting ICT educators and would like to thank you all for your warm welcome to your schools and centres over the years.

I wish you all a very pleasant Christmas holiday, and a very productive 2007!

Kind regards
Lorraine

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Centre Visits Feedback

Application of the Computers 4 Kids curriculum continues to be implemented very efficiently in the ICT centres.

I have noticed over the last couple of years that collaboration between class and ICT educators is steadily increasing as class educators start to realize that our curriculum modules are relevant to Learning Areas and themes that they use in the classroom. ICT activities are often an extension of what is being dealt with in the classroom, which further develops existing as well other relevant skills.

As a result of this collaboration, learners are encouraged to use various applications to create projects which are then presented to their peers and educators, who assess ICT skills as well as outcomes in other Learning Areas. The self- and peer assessments that are included in the Computers 4 Kids curriculum are also being implemented and form part of the learner's portfolios.

Feedback from some of our teachers who have used our new on-line assessments is very encouraging! They have found the assessments to be quick, user-friendly and relevant. It is still in its infancy, but will be developed for further use during the course of next year!

Jeffrey Kruger, the ICT educator at Kronendal Primary has made extensive use of the assessments during the last couple of weeks and is very excited about the simplicity of the programme, which makes it very easy for the learners to access and use successfully. One particular area where care needs to be taken however is when the learner's birthdates are captured. Jeffrey found that there is sometimes a discrepancy between the learners and the official records from the administration records. So when you capture their dates, check that they know their birthdates! Thanks Jeffrey for using the assessments so extensively, your input is really appreciated!

With easy, fast access to the internet, ICT centres are becoming a hub of information in schools, adding a vital knowledge base in addition to school libraries. Although the internet can be abused by learners, they should not be discouraged from using it, but rather be taught how to use it wisely and responsibly.

Interest in the 'Smart Board' is also on the increase in schools. It has great potential as a learning tool. It can be used by all educators in all Learning Areas, not only ICT. It is also a marvellous tool for presentations for further education and training, as well as for staff functions.

Some news for High Schools from IT Schools Innovation.

Exciting developments with the introduction of AllyCad

For many schools, the coming semesters will mean the implementation of some kind of CAD software in line with DOE requirements for *Engineering Graphics and Design*. However, many schools are still not yet sure which software to use. The following issues need to be considered:

- Cost
- Ease of use
- Applicability for the DOE curriculum
- Use in tertiary environments
- Applicability in real life working environments
- Market penetration

Recently, *The Knowledge Base*, a South African software developing firm released its *AllyCad* software for free to any school teaching the subject *Engineering Graphics and Design*. *AllyCad* is extremely easy to use and has been endorsed by the DOE and is used by most South African universities and universities of Technology. In addition it has a user base of more than 18 000 users locally and internationally. Clearly, this is not just a training tool but it will add real value to any school leaver, whether he/she aims to study further or start a career which requires technical drawing skills. To ensure proper use of the product, all teachers wishing to implement *AllyCad* in their schools, must first undergo a one week ISETT Seta accredited course from *The Knowledge Base*. This course normally costs R10 500.00, but it is offered to teachers at R2 100.00. As sole curriculum development partner to *The Knowledge Base*, ITSI will subsidise most of the R2100.00 fee for our clients. In addition, we will provide full backup and support on *AllyCad* for all our teachers. A great benefit to our learners is that in addition to meeting DOE requirements, they will have the opportunity to obtain an ISETT Seta certificate with credits towards a recognised National Certificate in Computer Aided Design – *at no cost whatsoever*. All they have to do is to register in time and do the necessary assessments. More information will follow soon

Getting to know us better....

Dr J (Lieb) Liebenberg

Lieb took over as the new CEO of ITSI in March 2006. He is an academic with 18 years at Unisa as a researcher. Lieb has a doctorate from the Humboldt University in Berlin, as well as a Masters in IT from the University of Pretoria. He has been in OBE since 2000 when he and Kathy Kendall, our ITSU Marketing Director founded SkillsHouse, a training company accredited with the ISETT Seta. He is a guest lecturer at the Department of Information Science at UP and is a qualified moderator and assessor.



Computer Applications Technology

A number of High Schools implemented the ITSI Grade 10 CAT curriculum, and their feedback has been very positive. They find the layout of the curriculum user friendly, both for themselves and for their learners. The modules are divided up into 2 categories, worksheets and projects, of which there are 3 different types of projects - normal, design and research, which implement all CAT Learning Outcomes. There is a Sample Assessment Schedule in the educator's manual which can be used to fulfill departmental requirements for promotional assessments during the year. The learners have easy access to reference material in each chapter. The Grade 11 manual has been launched and is available for next year.



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