

Integrated Learning and Mentoring Methodology (ILAMM) is a proprietary learning method specifically for learning involving information technology. It defines four aspects of the learning process: how learners learn, the way they learn, what they learn and the environment in which they learn. **ANNE TAYLOR** investigates.

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CREATED IN 1994 BY JIL HRDLICZKA, ILAMM promotes active learning and was developed for a project-based, goal-oriented active learning environment, where learners are inspired, motivated, guided, directed and focused and where the role of the educator is more like that of a mentor or facilitator in the learning process than that of a traditional teacher.

In a stimulating learning environment, this method enables accelerated learning and the simultaneous development of IT skills, creativity, lateral thinking, logic, problem-solving ability, life skills, listening, concentration, memory skills, research, planning and time management. Incidental learning, cross-application learning and cross-pollination of skills form part of the learning process. This ensures that learners are able to move between software applications quickly and easily.

The information technology learning project was introduced to the schools by Knowledge Network through the curriculum implementers from the Mpumalanga Department of Education. This project introduced Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Notepad and Paint to both learners and educators.

Emphasis is placed on the development of self-esteem and confidence, providing learners with the coping skills they need for each session and application. This is the learning environment in which most learners succeed and excel.

The training programme for educators covers applying the method to learning involving information technology, using the Knowledge Network IT learning system and supporting material.

It's easy to learn and educators develop IT skills in the process.

An IT pilot achieved outstanding results in rural and city schools. In April 2004 the Mpumalanga Department of Education, in partnership with Knowledge Network, implemented a pilot programme to equip educators and learners with the skills needed to use a computer as a tool.

The outcomes-based, project- and goal-oriented, active learning environment required learners to achieve certain outcomes at the end of each lesson and complete an assessment. Educators, some with no prior exposure to computers, were required to mark the assessments and submit results in electronic form.

The learners applied what they had learned to the projects and were ready to work in teams, interpret the assessment, complete it and pass with a minimum of 70%, some within eight weeks. The pass rate achieved for the pilot in 2004 was 86% (2 313 learners).

Dikotelo Combined School achieved a 100% pass rate for the participating classes. Mr BS Lekalakala, educator at Dikotelo, says the educators responded positively and embraced the project. 'It's a milestone for the school to produce such excellent results under difficult conditions.'

Sibonelo Primary School's grade 6 and 7 classes achieved a 90% pass rate. Principal ME Mahlangu says all class teachers took their own classes for computer literacy. 'The educators liked the programme – it was easy to change from one method to another and easy to present to the learners. The programme could also be

linked to other learning areas.'

Mr Vuma, a maths educator at Sibonelo, says it has reduced the workload. 'The teacher now enjoys the luxury of strong information in computers. I never thought I would see the day to fiddle with computer gadgets; now I can use it (a computer) in classes.'

A grade 9 learner at Dikotelo, Otumiseng Kgarume says: 'It's inspiring and I feel good when I'm working on a computer. I will be glad if we can have internet because then we will be able to do research work.'

'For many of the schools involved in the pilot programme no time is being wasted on waiting for more modern technology to be installed. They are using the opportunity to equip their learners with the computer skills they need for life; they work creatively with available resources and achieve outstanding results,' says Jil.

Computer literacy for rural schools is possible. What seemed unthinkable has turned into reality for hundreds of educators and learners in Mpumalanga schools. If this is what they can achieve in only six sessions, imagine what they will be achieving a few years from now.

The lessons on the programs were designed to encourage creativity, says Mahlangu. One educator even said the learners enjoyed the lessons because they were more practical and this is indicated by the assessments results. **K**

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SIBONELO PRIMARY SCHOOL

SIBONELO PRIMARY SCHOOL (GRADE 6 AND 7) ACHIEVED A 90% PASS RATE.

These are some of the assessments submitted by learners after completing six sessions (six hours of training). They were required to create a design for drawing software using basic drawing shapes and tools. Learners worked in teams to interpret the Knowledge Network assessment, create their design, draw, print and submit it on disk. Learners worked in teams of three to five.



DIKOTELO COMBINED SCHOOL

ASSESSMENTS SUBMITTED BY DIKOTELO COMBINED SCHOOL (GRADE 9)

The Knowledge Network assessment (after six sessions) involved the design of a logo using shapes and a maximum number of colours. Learners worked in teams to interpret the assessment, create their design, draw, print and submit it on disk. To achieve a pass of 70% for the one-hour assessment, learners were required to meet all the parameters of the assessment within the assessment time. Learners worked in teams of three to five. 'I feel very happy when using a computer because it improves my creativity,' says Paul Lesola, a grade 9 learner at Dikotelo Combined School.

