

## Teaching Technology – finding the way in a new learning area

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This paper is a brief summary of the conference presentation by the two authors, describing what each has learned about sharing their knowledge with each other and developing their understanding of the new learning area of technology.

The context is the *Technology for all* pilot programme in seven primary schools in the Fordsburg / Mayfair area. Technology is a new learning area (or subject) in two senses:

- it is new in South African schools, having been introduced to mainstream schooling only in the past few years and is frequently misunderstood as a handicrafts subject which any teacher can conduct, to keep children occupied. In fact it has great potential for developing the Critical Outcomes and also demands a range of skills from the teacher.
- For Mpho it was a new subject, and she had been given Technology to teach only in the year before she joined the programme.

The *Technology for all* pilot (TFAPP) involves teachers in twice-monthly workshops in which lessons are prepared for the coming two weeks, and then a staff member keeps contact with each teacher in a weekly classroom visit. In these visits Mpho opened her lessons and her thinking about Technology to Thembeke.

The presentation shares some of the issues they faced together and the insights they gained. These insights have been very valuable to the whole programme and in time will be important for the recommendations that the programme will be able to make in regard to

- understanding what the Learning Outcomes mean in practice
- using each assessment standard to create clear expectations for learners, at the start of each lesson, and then expecting the learners to work intelligently and more independently
- adapting classroom methods to suit each different stage of a technology project (investigating, designing, making, evaluating, communicating)
- using the textbook creatively to develop literacy and communication skills
- formative assessment, and aligning summative assessment with the assessment standards.
- the cross-curriculum effects of technology projects in a school
- the roles of the school visitor as a participant in the classroom
- approaches to professional development