Report on the SAESC National Workshop—Main Meeting
12 & 13 May 2014, LEAP 1&2, Cape Town

Welcome, introductions and check-in

As is part of the SAESC community methodology and culture, John welcomed members back to the circle, and led them through a check-in process whereby he asked members to share their names and which school or organisation they are from. John explained to the group that engagement and connection is key to the success of the Coalition, and this platform provides a space for sharing. Informal and formal conversations are equally important and members are encouraged to continuously learn from each other for the duration of the two day meeting.

IT integration in the classroom

The IT session was run by Glenn Bunger of LEAP Central. Glenn provided the opportunity for teachers to present on how IT is used in their classes, which online resources are most useful, as well as the impact that integrating IT into the class has had on their students’ learning. The presentations included information on TuvaLabs, using Google documents, Pinterest and ReThink Education.

Before the presentations began, it was announced that the edTech Summit will take place in South Africa on 2nd - 23rd August 2014. Click here for the details. Furthermore, the EdTech Summit will be integrated into the next SAESC national meeting at Ladysmith on 6th August 2014.
TuvaLabs:

Glenn Bunger briefly shared information pertaining to TuvaLabs, which is an organisation that is promoting data literacy and analysis. The TuvaLabs team creates data sets around contextually and culturally relevant examples. The Online platform allows students to think critically about data, ask meaningful questions, and communicate their conclusions. TuvaLabs is freely available to teachers and students. For more information and to register, click on the following link: https://tuvalabs.com/.

Google Docs:

A LEAP 1 teacher shared the effectiveness of using Google Docs as a means for collaboration between teachers of all six LEAP schools for the setting and moderation of exam and test papers. A generic template is used per subject and each teacher is assigned a particular section of the paper to draft using Google Docs. As each teacher makes edits and changes to the paper, all of the teachers are able to view the changes instantly as they appear live, thereby allowing the teachers to moderate the paper in an interactive and efficient manner. The live chats are saved to the document which is appropriate for version control. Google Docs are free if you have an email account and each person gets 20 gigs.

At this point, Raphael Mukachi, the Operational Leader of LEAP 5, described his experience of using Google Docs. He said that Google Docs works well when students work on investigative projects and require continuous feedback from the teacher. It is particularly helpful as learners and teachers can open Google Docs on their cell phones which allows for live interactions. If one has chrome as a browser, one only needs internet access once a day for the document to sync, and then the individual can continue working on the document offline.

Pinterest:

Pinterest can be used to acquire information for teaching material and resources. Pinterest is an information sharing site, whereby resources and links can be shared and linked to a personal board.

Rethink Education:

Douglas Hoernle of Rethink Education presented on the interactive online learning platform that he has developed. Rethink Education allows learners to access and engage with content using a social platform, while giving teachers the ability to observe user progress. Doug explained that students engage with technology by way of YouTube and social platforms and as a result Rethink created a platform on Mxit whereby students can access information that is
relevant to them. The Rethink team re-wrote the maths and science curriculum which is CAPS aligned and then broke the curriculum down into easily understood chunks using videos and focusing on the process that students should be engaging with content. Both teachers and learners can engage with the content online using their cell phone or computer.

The platform includes two options in terms of costs; the first is free accessibility whereby students can access the content through Mxit. The second option is the blended product which allows the teacher to engage and monitor the student’s progress which costs R300.00 per student per year.

For more information: www.rethinkeducation.co.za

Contact Doug: doug@rethinkeducation.co.za or @doughoernle

**Edunova - use of ICT in the classroom:**

John Thole of Edunova presented on the sustainability and continuity of the use of ICT in the classroom. He briefly discussed the following points:

1. Being clear about the purpose of using ICT in lessons;
2. Having the appropriate technology environment in place to ensure your lessons can be effectively shared and that support is in place;
3. The criteria for, and selection of, educational resources being used for lessons; and
4. Organisational leadership and structures to support ICT development at LEAP.

Click here to watch a short clip of John speaking about using appropriate ICT methods in lessons and the importance of organisational leadership and structures to support ICT development:
**Nigel Richards: Student Teacher Internship Programme**

Nigel Richards of the Global Teachers Institute provided the group with feedback on the recent Global Teacher Institute / Teach with Africa USA Trip and discussed the planned growth and opportunities for Coalition schools.

*To view the presentation slides click here:*

Click here to watch a short clip of Nigel describing the Global Teachers Institute and the Teach with Africa USA trip:

Coalition schools and teachers are invited to partake in the programme. The Institute is hoping to gain 4 to 8 partner schools.

**Shout outs:**

- This work is inspiring and necessary. We need to be taking risks to expose USA and SA teachers to different learning experiences.
- The reciprocal spirit of the programme is appreciated as African teachers are not only going to the USA to absorb, but to also share.
- The goal of the Coalition is captured in the Global programme, which is to ensure the success of the SA education system nationally.
- The intent is to build on existing successes as we have connectedness and are committed, which is key.

**Judy Tate: Leadership Development Exchange Programme:**

Judy Tate of Inanda Seminary shared some ideas in relation to a leadership development exchange programme. Judy raised the following points:

- As a Coalition, we need a clear vision for the leadership development of our staff.
- What goals on leadership development do we need to be aware of and why?
- Are there common skills to be acquired? Or a variety of skills?
- What preparation work is required before the can take place exchange?
- What support is offered after the programme? Perhaps we can look at the different strengths the 23 Coalition schools have to offer.

Some other considerations to be made are as follows:

1. How do we Identify schools that could aid in the development of other schools?
2. How would we fund this? If we looking to do internally, what funding would each school be prepared to put towards the process, for example hosting costs, flights and accommodation.
3. What will the regularity and length of the interactions be?
4. What time of year will the programme take place?
5. How do we identify who goes on the exchange? We need to assist each other on how to identify future leaders and how do we deal with mistakes made?

The discussion was then opened to the floor. Input was as follows:

- Babele Emedi of LEAP 2 shared his experience of going to the USA for the leadership programme. He indicated that it is important to share the skills gained as widely as possible on return from the programme. It is therefore necessary to establish co-leadership training. He went further to say that both the theory and institutional learning was valuable. The theory is valuable as it was run in an interactive manner whereby leaders are able to interact and learn from each other. Babele also said that he valued the time spent in residencies in the schools as you have the opportunity to learn from the culture of the school and interact with other teachers and learners.

- Yusuf Salie of LEAP Central said that leadership development when actively and consciously investing in young leaders is experiential and has to allow for reflection time. It is important for the leader to engage honestly with his/ her self in relation to others.

- A comment was made that in terms of leadership development, when young leaders are put into experiential positions, it should not be assumed that experience is crucial for effective leadership.

- Oscar Dlodlo of LEAP 1 shared his experience from the point of a young leader. He said that theory is a valuable component and particularly the support of other networks at first is very helpful. Experiential learning is important as a beginning phase to explore how a school is run.

The agreed next steps:

- Dave Rossouw will lead the process and invites members to draft a programme during the September holidays.

- Volunteers: Lebone II, Dominican Convent, Cape Academy, COSAT & OWLAG.

The session was closed with a shout-out thanking Judy for her passion, hard work and time spent contributing to Coalition activities, especially with everything else on her plate.

**Instructional Practice:**

**Techniques to improve writing skills**

Leigh Morris, an English teacher of LEAP 2 describes the technique she uses to improve the writing skills of student
1. Encourage the students to submit a number of draft essays and allow them to correct their own mistakes. This may be done by circling the mistakes made in the students’ essays using code words (eg. ‘sp’ for spelling mistake) to indicate what the mistakes are so that the students can correct their own mistake and learn from them. Students are encouraged to submit draft essays up to three times before the essay is finalised.

2. It is helpful for the teacher to co-create a marking rubric with the student in order for the student to be aware of what he/she is aiming to achieve.

3. The integration of terminology across subjects is valuable as it allows for consistency and continued practice.

4. Lebone uses Edmodo which is an online tool to support the improvement of writing skills: https://www.edmodo.com/.

5. Google Docs is another useful tool for a teacher to edit and track changes to a students’ essay or the like.

6. A reference was made to Teach Like a Champion whereby it is helpful to use the cliché – “give me an answer like a scholar”, which promotes the use of correct language throughout a lesson.

7. Learners should be continuously reminded of the meaning of words, to be taken back to the foundational meaning.

**Jean- Marie Sabwa - “Increasing student participation in a teacher-led lesson”**

Jean Marie spoke about the importance of ensuring that learners are engaged in lessons and said that differentiated teaching and learning is a means of promoting engagement in the classroom. He suggested setting up stations whereby learners are located according to their level of understanding. The teacher can thus spend more time on the struggling learners and also encourage the higher level students to conduct peer teaching and learning with lower level students.

Click here to find Jean-Marie’s presentation.
Phadiela Cooper of COSAT provided input at this stage and said that the promotion of a culture of collaboration is key. Teachers within schools and between schools should collaborate and support each other. This is particularly beneficial to new teachers as the support will assist them to develop quickly.

**Zainoenisa Allie - "Learners' self-assessment tool"**

One way of addressing student’s misconceptions of tests is to teach students how to effectively learn for and from tests. This can be done using a ‘cheat sheet’, which is a blank piece of paper given to each student prior to a test, onto which they write down the facts that they think will be asked in the test. The teacher then evaluates each of the students’ cheat sheets to get a sense of what they consider important for studying. Thereafter, the cheat sheet is given back to the student to take into the test. Following the test, the student completes a self-assessment whereby they reflect on how they think they did in the test. Once the tests are marked the students are given the opportunity to assess the content that they are under valuing and over valuing. This also allows for the teacher to review whether the student understands the content.

This method can also be used for teacher reflections, whereby teachers submit their projections for student test results to HoDs.

A comment was made that Lebone II have 30 minute reflection sessions between teachers and learners following tests.

**Check-out:**

Members were given the opportunity to reflect on what they will be taking out from the day. Responses included:

- Doug Hoernle said that the idea of the cheat sheet is a great technique for student goal setting and will be shared more widely following the meeting. He also said that the energy remaining after a full day is inspiring and shows the effectiveness of the day’s proceedings.
- Dumisa Sizani of COSAT reflected the learnings of the day and said that he has gained 18 ideas that he will be taking back to his school and classroom.
- Di Roberts of Lebone II said that “teachers are reservoirs of hope” and that this is true to the Coalition’s space.
- Raphael Mukachi thanked everyone for their input and engagement and said that he has also captured approximately 18 ideas.
- A comment was made that we have the best practice present within the Coalition and thus don’t need expert knowledge are able to reflect and share what we already know.
Members were then entertained by LEAP’s choir and dancing whilst enjoying dinner in the school hall.

DAY 2- 13 May 2014

John Gilmour welcomed members to the second day of the meeting. He said that we have these meetings at schools for members to enjoy the culture, diversity and to understand the school in its context. We need to observe the school openly and without judgement. This is an opportunity to get a feel for the complexity of the school.

The members then partook in classroom visits of LEAP 1 and 2.

Shout outs on lessons observed:

- Teachers are able to maintain the attention and concentration of learners.
- When observing students conducting prepared speeches, each student was politically aware.
- A teacher observed, provided a clear guideline of the lesson and was in control of the classroom.
- In an LO class observed, there is a strong emphasis on the process of the class.
- In a Grade 11 Life Science class, the teacher engaged with learners well and prompted learners with the right
questions, thereby showing a good understanding of the students.

- Teachers appear to create a comfortable environment for students.
- Vibrant student centred lessons were observed.
- Great to see core values demonstrated throughout the school.

**LEAP 1 & 2 – Lessons learnt as a result of involvement in the SAESC & School Peer Review**

**Oscar Dlodo of LEAP 1- impact of the School Peer Review (SPR)**

Oscar Dlodo, the Operational Leader of LEAP 1, had a School Peer Review conducted on LEAP 1 in 2012. Oscar reflected on the benefits of the School Peer Review and said that as a result of the review there has been an improvement in the understanding and direction of LEAP’s leadership model, professionalism and teaching practice as well as a re-structuring of the timetable to ensure the day is managed effectively. Furthermore, staff retention was a struggle prior to the review, however since then; the school has not had any teachers resigning.

**Raeesa Mohamed –Reflections on LO at LEAP**

Life Orientation lessons are held daily at the LEAP schools. The LO sessions are facilitated in a circle, as is with the Coalition meetings, whereby equality and positive peer voice is encouraged. The goal of the LO circles is for students to be the champions in their own communities.

The opportunity was then given to LEAP students to share their experiences of LO circles. Reflections included:

- “The LO class has taught me to think before talking and to see not only myself as a person, but others in my community. The LO room is a home within the school”
- “LEAP has provided a realistic way to look at the world. The space for talking teaches us to be young adults and prepares us for life after school. The school allows for self-reflection”
• “LO circles allow for learners to grow and bring confidence. It is a space of comfort”.
• “The LO circle provides a space to openly share and be vulnerable. I have managed to overcome difficult circumstances in the township and managed to see the important values in life. LO is a home and the facilitator is a parent.

Reflections from Babele Emedi

Babele shared what it has meant to him to work and lead at a LEAP school. LEAP values engagement and reflection and this year particularly, there has been the development of a strong academic culture, including clear routines, expectations and roles. LEAP aims to model the Coalition’s values of high expectations and involves teachers in decisions to ensure the peer voice is heard. The teams built in LEAP are based on honesty and openness. LEAP encourages its leaders, teachers and students to lead in a respectful and collaborative way and teachers are encouraged to ensure a consistent culture throughout the school.

At this point, the LEAP 2 relationship leader said that she values the open and honest nature of the team. The leaders have the courage to admit their mistakes and to adapt their leadership style where necessary. Leaders feel that there is constant help and support provided and therefore thrive in their positions.

The session was closed with Judy Tate thanking Babele and Oscar for modelling what LEAP is about. The input from the students showed that LEAP values the achievements in terms of the individual rather than only focusing on academic results only.

Fundraising for the SAESC

Kirstin O’Sullivan of LEAP Central facilitated a session on the brainstorming of fundraising options available, practical suggestions and actions, success stories and next steps for the Coalition.

Click here to view the presentation slides:

Click here to watch a short clip of the head of LEAP’s external relations, Sabrina Lee, describing the importance of connections and creating shared value between oneself and the donor:

Click here to watch a short clip of Kirstin O’Sullivan providing an overview of the SAESC as a funding opportunity:
The floor was then opened for comments, which included:

- John Gilmour said that there has been a global shift whereby creating shared values is how money is unlocked. The CEO’s of corporate companies need to be the present and engaging with the work on the ground.
- Taryn Casey said that is important to have open and honest relationships and assessments.

Kirstin highlighted that the Coalition has the ability to show impact and measure results. She requested Coalition members to make suggestions for prospective funders, as a great way to start fundraising is with existing relationships. BRIDGE and Kirstin are available to draft the proposal.

Kirstin then posed the question: ‘What can we do to add value to what we already do as a Coalition in a way that costs less?’ And, ‘What are some fundraising ideas?’ Responses were as follows:

- The Coalition needs to look at the costs per meeting and the individual costs involved per school.
- The Coalition could look into accreditation and perhaps link to certified teaching intern programmes.
- In terms of regional expansion, the Coalition could run regional connections and expand the opportunities. An option is to set up a regional planning team in 2015.
- Suggestions were made in terms of membership fees, however it was noted that this could limit the participation of some schools.
- Another option is to limit the number of national meetings per year to 2 or 3.
- It was noted that there may be opportunities abroad whereby institutions may consider a formal partnership with the Coalition as more beneficial than a relationship with single schools.
- An idea for fundraising is for the Coalition to host a crafting event whereby the event is held in a particular Coalition school and potential funders are invited.
- A way of saving costs is to increase home hosting and to reduce transport costs by having a School Peer Review and Coalition meeting in one week.
- There could also be management of a supply chain linking schools (e.g. Bulk buying of stationary). This could be organised using a google form to find out quantities needed by each school. The amounts saved could then be donated to the Coalition.

It was agreed that these points would be considered by BRIDGE and the SAESC Steering Committee.

The session was closed with thanks conveyed to Kirstin and Sabrina for making fundraising sound easy and for the hard work and research put into the presentations.

**Presentation: Teach South Africa’s new strategic direction**

The presentation began with Samantha Williams describing the purpose of Teach for All. Teach for All is a global network based on the Teach for America model which believes that if you recruit young bright leaders and enable them to have a life long career in education, this has the potential
to improve the education system more widely. The leaders are recruited into two year teacher programmes.

Richard Masemola then spoke about TEACH South Africa. The TEACH SA programme puts applicants through a rigorous selection process. Successful applicants then go through four weeks of intensive training before being placed in a local school for a period of two years. The objective is to mobile teachers into the teaching profession with a focus on maths, science and English. Teach SA has enjoyed the opportunity to work with LEAP and the Coalition and look forward to developing the relationship further.

**Strengthening the organisation and deepening the impact:**

In order for Teach SA to move to the next stage, the following priorities have been identified:

1. Grow organisational capacity
2. Strengthen ongoing support to ambassadors to increase student achievement levels
3. Strengthen the ambassador experience and Alumni movement
4. Recruit, select and place more graduates from the top 15% of their graduating class
5. Ensure the institutional sustainability of Teach SA

For the detailed slides, click here: 📝

**Questions:**

Why did Teach SA and Teach for All decide to take this route rather than training teachers? We have a history of working in silos and this is not working, thus this model is to jog the system and make an impact. They decided to develop future leaders who are able to impact the education system in more ways than one. This is in the belief that investing money in young leaders has long term potential.

John said that the Coalition has taught us to let go of competition, however the challenge of gaining new teachers and keeping them in the system persists. It is therefore necessary to create our own pathways and create teachers with intent; this is the gift of TEACH SA. It is our responsibility to create a different view of education and assist Teach SA to expand and grow more widely.

**School Improvement plan update:**

The session was facilitated by Judy Tate who discussed the way forward for the development of a School Improvement Plan tool. The update on the tool is as follows:

The SAESC held a School Improvement Planning (SIP) workshop on 14-16 June 2014, which was a space in which its SPR process was reviewed and refined as part of a large scale whole school improvement plan. The meeting established a strategy for the creation, implementation and evaluation of a school improvement plan following a SPR. The CoP has created a SIP tool that is
aligned with the domains used in the SPR, allowing the review to inform the improvement plan. This ensures that the SPR is translated into quantifiable actions to address the areas of development identified through the review process.

**Reflections: Practitioners share the impact of the Coalition on their teaching/work**

*Click here to watch a short clip of Kholu describing her experience of the School Peer Review:*

*Click here to watch a short clip of Devan Govender of Inanda Seminary discussing the impact of the Coalition on Inanda Seminary:*

**Check out:**

The meeting then closed with shout outs from members thanking all involved for their commitment and ongoing support of the Coalition. Special thanks were given to Oscar and Babele and the LEAP community for showing us that the power of personal transformation can truly improve the education landscape.

General expressions of gratitude were then extended:

- The leadership development at LEAP is inspirational; and
- Thanks to Babele and Oscar for leading the transition in the schools ethos whereby LEAP teachers and students are confident as a result of the leader’s cultivation.

The meeting closed with John encouraging members to attend the next meeting and to continuously give feedback to their schools and to convey the importance of developing the Coalition’s work. The next meeting will take place at Harvest High in Ladysmith on 5th & 6th August 2014.