

End user computing taught in Gauteng correctional school

The Department of Inclusive Education in collaboration with Chance 2 Advance embarked on a project of preparing learners for life after incarceration by offering a two four day computer skills workshop.

The Chance 2 Advance programme requested Unisa's Professor Peter Mkhize, Samuel Mtsweni, Ephraim Bogopa and Sphamandla Nxumalo, all from the School of Computing, to facilitate the computer skills workshop. The facilitators actively engaged with the learners at Emthonjeni Youth Centre, which is a correctional school in Baviaanspoort.

The learners displayed such an eagerness to learn computer skills which was so enormous, that no learner wanted to miss what the facilitators were teaching. They taught basic computer skills from MS Word, spell check, italics, and inserting pictures. Learners were taught how to insert columns, border lines, dragging in and out in resizing the pictures. Using colour on documents is also a skill that was taught.

Furthermore, learners were taught various forms of computer skills such as how to write messages on flyers, bulleting items, font size and type. Learners selected the different font types. Learners were designing flyers for internet cafés and the facilitators were also instilling career skills in them, so that when they are released from correctional services centre they may be in a better position to start their own businesses.

Mtsweni and Bogopa focused on MS Excel, how to arrange data in cells adding the sums, further reference was made to their marks and how they can add using Excel. Items were also arranged alphabetically and learners were able to apply what they learnt. What excited the learners even more was the calculation of profit and loss.

The learners expressed their appreciation and thanked Unisa. One learner commented that: "Outside people pay a lot of money to learn these skills but we received them free of charge and we will try to use these skills when we go out and we will not disappoint you".

The principal of the Emthonjeni Youth centre, Mr Ramohoebo, was happy to see how Unisa is trying so hard to change the lives of juvenile offenders and preparing them for careers upon release. Thirty-one learners and three computer teachers received certificates from Unisa Chance 2 Advance. "The Department of Inclusive Education appreciates the support regarding career wellness received from Chance 2 Advance" said Project Leader, Professor Meahabo Dinah Magano, of the Department of Inclusive Education.



Samuel Mtsweni (School of Computing) facilitating an Excel course at Emthonjeni Correctional School