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READ, WRITE, COMMUNICATE and SHARE

Using the resource sharing facility on Thutong

The Internet has become a wonderful repository of educational resources for teachers. All over the world materials are being written, uploaded and thus shared. To access these resources, all a teacher needs to do is search the Internet. As always, the degree of suitability of the results is defined by the search term. A simple search, e.g. "lesson plan", will bring up a great number of resources. However, one can further define the search by putting in topic and grade, e.g. "lesson plan earthquake Grade 4". This will bring up fewer resources, but they will be more relevant. Another way of finding resources is to search for information on education portals. Loosely defined, these are website "libraries" that have catalogued, or tagged, resources relating to education. Examples of these are:

- EDNA (Australia's Free Online Network for Educators) www.edna.edu.au/edna/go;
- ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre) www.eric.ed.gov; and
- TeacherNet www.teachernet.gov.uk.

There are also websites created by education departments and many of these have curriculum materials linked to them. An excellent local example is that of the Western Cape Education Department, www.wced.gov.za, which has a section on Curriculum Development <http://curriculum.pgwc.gov.za>.

Other local sites related to curriculum resources are:

- The Learning Channel, www.learn.co.za;
- Mindset www.mindset.co.za;
- MWEB, learning.mweb.co.za; and
- The Teacher (Mail & Guardian newspaper) www.theteacher.co.za.

The Thutong Education Portal www.thutong.org.za also has many resources created by and for South



African teachers. This is an important platform for teachers to share — not only their news and views, but education resources that they themselves have developed. Locally, content has several added advantages in that it relates directly to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), can reflect the rich cultural issues of our country and can be developed in any of the indigenous languages. An example of materials that have been uploaded are those from Maropeng — wonderful resources from the Cradle of Mankind, most of which are cross-curricular.

To upload a resource to Thutong (see graphic above), register on the portal and select the Learning Space you are interested in. Once there, click the button on the left called "Upload Resource". A window will open that will give you the option of either a Curriculum or a Non-Curriculum Resource — click the relevant one. It then asks you to browse for the file on your computer, which you then send through to the server by clicking the relevant button.

The resource will be approved when the Learning Space Manager has had a chance to review and rate it. What is very important is that you specify whether or not the resource is under full copyright or under a

Ethical use of information

Ethical use of information means that you are acknowledging the work that somebody else has created when you use it in any way. To not do so, is basically stealing and if you then try and pass it off as your own, that is called plagiarism. Fortunately, teachers are generous people on the whole and don't mind sharing their work. It is the right thing to do however: to at least give credit to the source and children also need to be taught to do this. Making a list of resources used in research is called a bibliography and noting a resource is citing it.



Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unauthorised use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work. Plagiarism is not copyright infringement. While both terms may apply to a particular act, they are different transgressions. Copyright infringement is a violation of the rights of a copyright holder, when material protected by copyright is used without consent. On the other hand, plagiarism is concerned with the unearned increment to the plagiarising author's reputation that is achieved through false claims of authorship.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>
[accessed 27 July 2008]

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This is the age of collaboration, made so much easier by technology. Sharing in the intellectual capital of South African educators is now a possibility through the Thutong Education Portal and every teacher is encouraged to do so.