

## VIDEO CONFERENCING

### STAR PERFORMER

Questek installed a complete interactive learning and broadcast studio at Start School's Braamfontein office, that together with the Gauteng Department of Education's GautengOnline - reaches over 2 000 rural schools to bring them maths, English, science and accounting for their grade 10, 11, and 12 learners. Lessons are recorded and then edited for broadcast to GautengOnline's network of interactive rural bases schools.

Questek's distance learning solution for Start Schools allows for an interactive environment for teachers and learners to gain maximum benefit from each lesson. The sophisticated distance learning and broadcast solution includes features such as the industry's most intuitive user control systems based on single-screen touch panels. Through the graphical touchpanel interface, the instructor can control all aspects of the lesson as well as peripherals including sources such as cameras, VCRs, DVD players and document cameras. This user-friendly touch panel design provides an interactive video system that is as easy to use as it is functional, allowing Start School teachers to do what they do best ..... TEACH. In addition, the instructor locator mats which automatically tract the camera to pre-determined positions near, for example, a whiteboard or podium. This enables an instructor to move freely about the room without concern for distracting camera-tracking devices and also allows video sources to be automatically transmitted. Dual monitors with a camera located in the front of the room and a single monitor with camera at the back of the studio/lecture room captures all the classroom action which in turn is distributed to remote classroom to facilitate the learning process.

Over the past three decades the name Star Schools has become synonymous with supplementary education in South Africa. The part-time schools are located in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Springs, the Vaal Triangle, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. The school aims to give quality educational support to previously disadvantaged learners at an affordable cost. Teachers employed at Star Schools teach part-time and are sourced from top schools where they hold permanent positions.

GautengOnline, an initiative by the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Gauteng Department of Education aims to provide every learner and educator, in all public schools within Gauteng, with free internet access, a free email address and electronic curriculum delivery. This forms the foundation for an informed and computer literate society, thereby enhancing job creation and progressing self-empowerment.

The rollout of this programme, which is the first of its kind on the African continent and the largest most extensive rollout of its kind anywhere in the world, was marked by a visit to some of the first connected schools by Gauteng MEC for Education, Ignatius Jacobs. The MEC switched on the computers at schools that have already been connected all over the Gauteng province.

