

## An AutismPro Case Study: Online Professional Development Program Gets New School Up and Running Quickly

Six children at **Growth Through Knowledge School** all have varying degrees of autism. Like many children in their situation, they faced a wait as long as eight months to attend school in Cape Town, South Africa.

Fortunately for these children, Gerhardt Peters, the Executive Director of Autism Western Cape, learned about AutismPro at an international autism conference. He quickly began work on fulfilling his commitment of ensuring more students with autism gained fundamental literacy skills. Students who were previously stigmatized and shunned soon received support and education at Autism Western Cape's newest special needs school, Growth Through Knowledge School (GTK).

Initially a pilot project of Autism Western Cape, GTK School got off to a successful and rapid start with the help of AutismPro Workshops, a professional development tool. AutismPro Workshops is a series of workshops that are accessed over the internet and feature an easy-to-navigate "slideshow" interface.

Using AutismPro Workshops, the teachers at GTK School could be trained quickly, consistently, on their own schedules, at home or at school, and in accordance with the latest research on autism. The expert-authored content includes ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) and the latest and best practices to help the teachers create individualized educational plans (IEPs).

The software was first introduced mid-2007 and it has already enabled these teachers to better understand and design programs that address the unique needs of the children, helping them make great strides in a variety of curriculum areas. With strong results demonstrating the effectiveness of AutismPro Workshops at the GTK School, Gerhardt Peters has also had an easier time raising money for the school's other needs and expansion.



A class of children at Growth Through Knowledge School:  
(From left) Back: Kendal; Mikayla. Front: Ivan, Benji, Kelly and Luke

*"Lauren [another teacher] and I are really excited about the progress the children are making. We have been working hard these first two terms, using AutismPro to develop IEPs and daily work schedules, which are working very well."*

Lyn Thijsse, Teacher at GTK

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