Observation 3 – 19/08/2004 Grade 5.3 (10:20–11:00).

When I arrived at the class the teacher (T) was handing out exercise books. I walked in and went to sit at the back of the class. Tebogo (L2) said that I could sit next to him at his desk as the space was empty so I did. Haydn F (L1) asked if I had come to watch the class I said yes and then he proceeded to tell me that Karina (L1) had found some snot under her desk and wasn’t that disgusting I quickly agreed that it was. During this interchange the T was involved in an argument with the first group about stationery requirements that they did not have and were supposed to have.

The children were sitting at their desks in groups. There were three groups of six children, two groups of five children, two children sitting by themselves – Motsoakgole (L2) and Sakhile (L2) and two children sitting together by themselves right up against the chalkboard – Ricardo (L1) and Kyla (L1). There were 32 children altogether in the class.

There is a birthday chart on the wall as well as an achievement chart, a water chart, a colour chart and examples of vegetables and their seeds. There is quite a bit of the children’s art work on the wall and there are notices stuck on the windows and the class rules are also stuck on the windows.

The whole class is doing the same work there is no evidence of differentiation of any sort.

The T began the lesson – they were doing Afrikaans – by asking the class who knows what a begripstoets is but before anyone could really answer she answered her question by saying it’s a comprehension. T said the name of the begripstoets is Die blou sambreel. Tebogo (L2) then shouts out that he doesn’t have a worksheet, and then he finds his sheet in his book. T says everyone should be following as she begins to read the comprehension. T stops reading and calls out the names of individual children who are not following and tells each that they should not be talking. T is talking above the noise then she throws Ricardo (L1) out the class and he goes to stand outside the door. Once again Tebogo shouts out but is ignored. T carries on with the lesson saying “For a begripstoets we must read the story and look for answers in the story to answer the questions. Are you ready” – then shouts “stop it” to a group in the front of the class. T begins to read in Afrikaans, she reads a bit then asks Tebogo (L2) to read but he doesn’t have the place. Alexio (L2) and Hayden H (L1) are talking and looking at pictures; Motsoakgole (L2) is sharpening his pencil and doesn’t have a worksheet. T walks around and tells different children to follow. Leah (L2) tells Tebogo (L2) where the place is by reading a sentence. Then Jasper (L1) reads a bit, his pronunciation is very poor. T asks Motsoakgole (L2) where his worksheet is so he takes it out. Dennis (L1) reads a bit his pronunciation is also very poor – there is no correction from the T.
who says thank you and asks Maggie (L2) to read, T corrects her pronunciation a couple of times and ends up reading most of the words herself. T asks Precious (L2) to read - she asks where the place is and starts reading in the incorrect place and can't pronounce the words, T corrects her pronunciation of almost every word.

Ricardo (L1) is now standing at the door of the class and playing with it. Motsoakgole (L2) is still playing with the sharpener. T says OK and summarizes the whole story in English and then says "we are going to run through the whole story and fill in all the funny words you don't understand so take a coloured pencil". Jarryd (L1) is colouring in the pictures. T reads the first sentence, the children shout out, what's this word, what's that word, T translates almost every word. The same thing happens with the second sentence which begins with skielik, T writes suddenly on the board. T sees Ricardo (L1) and says he can come in and start working.

T goes onto the third sentence and translates the whole sentence, then repeats that winkel means shop. T says Goeie More – you know that to the class. One child asks what is a sambreel? T replies it's an umbrella. Another child asks "Mam where are you?" T tells the class that seker means certainly. A child (L2) asks “can’t we rewrite the story with the English on top?” T says no and carries on with u means you, a child (L1) asks what's groot T says big. Another shouts out what's winkelier T says shopkeeper. Two other children shout out what's winkelier and T replies "if you were listening you would know and we put our hands up" Sakhile’s (L2) finger is bleeding, he makes a bit of a fuss and T says "are you bleeding to death?"

T reads the next sentence and asks "any problems?" some one shouts out geld, the other children shout out money. T says hands up if you want to ask and continues translating totsiens groet hy is a greeting. A child (L2) says no not that and asks the same question about the greeting again. T moves on - any other problems maak means make, child (L2) says mace – how do you spell it? (child misheard the word). T continues ruk means pull, sterk means strong. Children ask odd words she translates each of them. T continues but some children are lost, she stops again and asks what the rule says. There are a few children who have not said anything through the whole lesson. (This is an extremely boring lesson no wonder the children hate Afrikaans) Kendall (L2) is sent out (I didn’t see what he did).

T reads another sentence, some ask where are you?, she tells them where she is and starts again winkel means shop, dakke means roofs, verdwyn means disappear, vlieg means fly. In the next sentence, hartseer means heart sore or upset, sonder means without. Next sentence hoog in die lug means high in the sky. (She doesn’t ask the children for any meanings).

T asks Jasper (L1) how he's doing but doesn't wait for an answer. She continues translating skreeu means shout, but a child (L1) insists it means scream, T says shout or scream it’s the
same thing. T continues vlieër is a kite, opgewonde means excited. (This is very boring and she has lost half the class who are just sitting) Some children are doodling; some have closed their books and are not listening. T tells the class to turn over the page – some children say “oh no!” there’s still more. T continues ou means old, werk work, ook also. Alexio (L2) is now throwing bits of paper at Bonolo (L2). Some one asks what’s Yende? T says it’s a man’s name that will stay the same in English and in Afrikaans. There is a low level of noise throughout the lesson and the teacher talks above it. What’s sneaks is asked by two different children. T replies we haven’t got to that sentence yet. She reads the next sentence and translates vrou as wife, sneaks as funny and roep as calls. T says to Jarryd (L1) and a girl sitting at his table “do you want to go out with Kendall (L2)?” Karina (L1) asks is voel a bird T replies yes. She checks on Hayden H (L1) and says “don’t go before we going, go with us.” T continues juffrou is Miss no Mrs, (incorrect!) Khulu is a name, venster is a window, slaap is - some children shout out sleep. She reads the next sentence – oe is eyes, oompaak is open. T - “and we talk again that whole group needs detention.” Bonolo (L2) is slow and not in the right place, verby vlieg is fly past, one child asks what’s iets – T replies something. T says “right start again, oe is eyes, you two talking again Alexio (L2) and Hayden (L1), do you know where we are? (answers own question) No Alexio (L2), not following Alexio (L2). Cyril (L2) (a language barrier child) is just sitting playing with his ruler by throwing it into the air, his book is closed and he is doing nothing, teacher appears to be ignoring him. T repeats verby vlieg is fly past, iets is something, she is then interrupted by a child from another class with a note, she attends to the note, it’s from the next door teacher. T carries on and reads the next sentence; skoenlapper is a butterfly and has to repeat this three times to various children. T continues and reads the next sentence, and then she translates the whole phrase as “A beautiful blue butterfly”. A child asks what a word is and she replies we are not there yet. T “can we carry on with the next sentence?” and reads it. Translates uiteindelijk as at last, gaan die wind le by saying this is a special saying in Afrikaans which means the wind lies down which means the wind stops. T asks Karina (L1) what is a blou sambreel, she gives the right answer a blue umbrella. T then translates saggies as gently and aarde as earth. A child shouts out “what’s toe?” T gives the translation to and reads the next sentence and translates land as lands, boom as tree, voor as in front of, Mevrou Sena as Mrs Sena, huis as house, x by saying that’s easy. T reads next sentence; tuin is garden, hekkie gate, glo believe,. Tebogo (L2) shouts out “Mam I’m tired Mam, T repeats tuin is garden and says we are nearly finished, one more sentence. Three different children ask what glo is and she repeats three times it’s believe. She reads the last sentence – “Dit kan nie wees nie means it can’t be and roep is calls out.” Then T says “Right put your books down stand up behind your chairs, stretch up, run on the spot, sit down.” The whole class goes “ahhhhh isn’t it break now?” Tebogo (L2) asks “can we lie down, can we put our hands on our heads, I mean our heads on our hands?” T replies “we will
carry on with this tomorrow, wait slid the worksheet into the flap of your book, then we need to
turn to ....(*she didn’t finish the sentence*) for the cycle test on Friday – are you two listening its
Afrikaans.

*(I left the class as the bell had rung for the end of the period.)*

Footnote: I asked the teacher later in the staff room whether she ever changed the seating
arrangements for different lessons or changed the grouping and whether she had considered
rows for content lessons. *She was on the defensive and said that the group seating
arrangements worked better as she could get to all the children more easily, that the noise level
was less and she could see what they were doing. I didn’t think she could but she was not open
to further discussion at this time.*