

**JILL'S FOLLOW -UP INTERVIEW**

**DATE: 12 MAY 2006**

TRANSCRIPTION

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<p>Jack: Thank you madam for allowing me to observe you the other day. I just want to conduct a follow –up interview with you based on my observation session...er...firstly...I noticed on that day when I came to observe you...er...there was assessment being done with the children, I think it was informal ...where you used the chart to cut out the letters and so on and then you had a formal assessment done by means of a worksheet. I observed that there was no actual recording of this assessment...er...can you tell me a little bit about this.</p> <p>Jill: By the time you came in I was already complete with the formal assessment. I had already recorded the learners marks and this was just so that I could revise and get a better connection you know so it was more...very observation because at the end of the lesson I would just note down my observation. I would like you to know that everything that we know we don't have to record. Sometimes we assess for personal needs and sometimes we assess because we want to assess the learner and sometimes you also assess because you can have it your entire HOD and all but that is a different thing.</p> <p>Jack: Okay...now in terms of ...</p> <p>Jill: That's one of the forms of assessment as such.</p> <p>Jack: So you know in terms of the assessment policies right...with regard to OBE. I think that certain people...I mean that policy stipulates...like teachers have a little clipboard...they walk around the class and they make records of it and notes of the children...er ...do feel that is like unmanageable or unrealistic for...</p> <p>Jill: Because if you are assessing using observation you can note down the very weak learners and it's just a matter of just jotting it down but you can't do it all the time because that is going to be too much and you can't do it for every learner. So ...and personally what I do is that I tend to make a mental note and at the end of the session just write down.</p>	<p>Formal assessment is being done Learners are observed. Observations are recorded at the of lesson</p> <p>Not everything is recorded</p> <p>Assess using observation</p> <p>Note down performance of weaker learners.</p> <p>Can't assess all the time.</p>	<p>At this stage I do not understand what Jill is trying to say. I assume she means that teachers have different purposes for assessing.</p> <p>Jill is very aware of what she is doing.</p> <p>The practice of assessing learners based on memory accounts is</p>
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<p>Because if you are going to do it the way it supposed to be done, there is no time to do it. Jack: Okay. Jill: You know you are writing all the time. You need your discipline, you need your atten...er...learner's attention and you find that you lose track of everything...so then you have to start the lesson all over again. So like jotting down...making single notes and things like that is fine like when you feel very .....very...</p>	<p>Make mental notes and record later.</p> <p>Learner discipline important and can be compromised.</p>	<p>questionable.</p> <p>Here I think Jill is inferring that classroom discipline will be compromised if teachers too much time on assessment.</p>
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<p>like it is a dire situation but other than that I do it at the end of the lesson.</p> <p>Jack: you are a very experienced teacher, teaching for many, many, years... twenty-three years I believe. Er...so I will ask you like ...hmmm...how well do you know your learners...at this point in time and how long does it take you to get to know the learner.</p> <p>Jill: Well basically in the Foundation Phase by the second week already you know your learners. You'll be able to see which children have language barriers, which have learning barriers, which children have different learning styles. By the first two months you'll know exactly which child has got a problem...and I'd have to check on those learners. But basically like by knowing you know your learners very, very well.</p> <p>Jack: Ja... and so knowing the learner impacts on assessment and the kinds of assessment that you do. So you feel...</p> <p>Jill: It also helps you choose the style of assessment as well.</p> <p>Jack: Okay ...and er...do you...would you say that whatever assessment you're doing with kids ...whatever reports you make to the teacher...er...to the parents etc. that's reflecting the learner's real worth.</p> <p>Jill: Ja...it reflects the actual worth of the learner because the advantage is you are assessing all the time and you are not assessing only in one way. You're doing it orally, you're doing it verbally, and you're doing it auditory wise, visual wise so you can pick it up. So theirs is no problem really...you know.</p> <p>Jack: Okay, I just want to change it slightly, you're a very experienced teacher, now looking at the context of a class right, with a inexperienced teacher coming in, do you think that they will be able to cope with our context as such.</p> <p>Jill: No</p> <p>Jack: The size of the classrooms, the ratios, the diversity, do you think they'd be able to</p>	<p>Teacher knows the learners capabilities very early.</p> <p>Able to identify learner barriers early.</p> <p>Teachers are able to choose appropriate assessment styles when they know their learners.</p> <p>Assessment reflects what the learner is worth.</p> <p>Advantage of assessing continuously and using a variety of assessments.</p>	<p>It seems that the weaker learners are the focus of Jill's attention.</p> <p>Jill feels that OBE methods provide more authentic reflections of learner assessment.</p>
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<p>...to cope as well as...I...I...I...observed you doing.</p> <p>Jill: I don't think so. It takes years ...and also you have to know what the principles of OBE are. I think it helps a lot by the fact that there is lots of experimentation. So obviously a new teacher coming in is going to have to go through a lot of work, but we've been through it already. And also what I've done is, I've married the two, I've married the traditional method and OBE as well so that it would work in the class for both me and the learner. So I believe the new teacher will need lot and lots of practical training.</p> <p>Jack: Okay. I've noticed the high quality of resources that you have in your classroom and that made me think about...er ...funding and socio- economic backgrounds of the school community and so on. I want to know does money affect the kind of work you produce in the classroom.</p> <p>Jill: Most definitely because like some of the resources that I use, I have parents helping me make copies and things like that. I got parents to donate a lot of paper and they do the copies at work and things like that. Obviously our school as it stands now...you know the social background and the economic background. We not on our feet as such. So like the kind of worksheets that you need and the workbooks that you want you can't obtain that. Either I purchase it myself or I get outsiders to purchase it. So I think it is going to impact on the kind of activities that you have and the type of teacher that you are because if a school is economically viable, they have enough money to purchase everything I think you can bring about fantastic things in the classroom.</p> <p>Jack: Ja... it is also evident that parents were involved in the assessment because I noticed one of your assessment sheets where you sent stuff home and parents had to read along and also report back to the different questionnaires that they answer. How effective is this?</p>	<p>Unable to cope with large numbers and learner diversity.</p> <p>Lots of experimentation. New teachers will find it difficult.</p> <p>Resources aid effective implementation.</p> <p>Resources are currently sponsored.</p> <p>If schools have the financial security they are able to supply good resources.</p> <p>Parents are involved in learner assessment.</p>	<p>The recurring theme of combining traditional and OBE methods.</p> <p>This may not be true considering that the new teachers will be well trained in OBA methods and will not be influenced by the success of past methods.</p> <p>I am becoming more aware that my questions are directing the Jill's responses. I believe that I am giving her too much information and my questions seem almost rhetorical. I will have to be more careful.</p> <p>I think that this is an important point in that the poorer schools find it more difficult to implement OBE because of a lack of resources.</p>
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<p>Jill: I find that the parents are informed I do this probably two times a month. When the parents have tutored the child at home, the parents are supposed to get the idea of what we are doing in the classroom. The parent also realizes where...what level the child is at and the parent also knows...it governs the parents as to which way to go. So the parent...there's a very good response because...er...er... the particular one we are talking about, I got every child's response back. Because by now already I've given quite a few ...the parents know you've got to come back and then I find that parents respond by notes or by phone, phoning to the school to find out and then...it helps a lot because the project of the child (unclear).</p> <p>Jack: And you know earlier on in our first conversation we ...er ...we spoke about the stress levels you know...er...I must say when I observed you in action there was no sign of these kinds of things. One would never say that you have been through such a difficult period. At this point in time how are you feeling?</p> <p>Jill: The stress level is still the same but then you've got to realize that when you come into the class you've got to put all that behind you and you've got to deliver. Because at the end of the day if you going to sit back and accept that stress is my problem you never going to be able to get any results. So what I have tried to do is cope with it and carry on but the stress level hasn't changed.</p> <p>Jack: But I hope that the profession is not losing you.</p> <p>Jill: I hope...(laughs)</p> <p>Jack: You were saying you looking for a job and so on.</p> <p>Jill: I'm hoping to leave. Firstly I think...er...monetary wise...I need to get out. Cause if you look at it people that are in the commercial field are earning double what I am earning now. They do half of what I am doing. Already I'm...</p> <p>Jack: I guess it's overwhelming. Ja...and</p>	<p>Parents tutor their children.</p> <p>Parent assessment - give the parent an indication what is being done at school and what level their children are at. Parents respond well.</p> <p>No sign of stress in Jill after observing her.</p> <p>Stress levels are high but I cannot allow it to hamper my work at school.</p> <p>Trying to cope with stress but its intensity has not changed.</p> <p>Planning to leave the profession- for financial reasons.</p>	<p>This is contrary to what Jill told me during our first conversation. She mentioned that parents these days were indifferent and left all educational responsibilities to the teacher.</p> <p>Recurring theme of Teacher stress.</p> <p>I am concerned that</p>
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<p>er...let's just talk about your classroom...you know when talk...er when you come to the classroom I notice there is a diverse population of learners right...has that impacted on you in any way?</p> <p>Jill: It has changed my teaching tremendously because you do realize there are learners who are coming from homes where they do not speak English at all, some learners can speak a little bit of English...and...and their cultural backgrounds are completely different. So I try to bring in a lot of that to help them. I've got a little boy that's here who is Portuguese speaking and I've had lots of problems and I'm trying to sort this problem out because he doesn't understand a word of English. It seems like I'm getting through a little bit.</p> <p>Jack: Okay. I see that in terms of recording also, the GDE 450A's have been replaced by a single form. You showed that to me. Has that brought some kind of relief to you or do you feel it's not...</p> <p>Jill: Well the amount of recording on that form is basically the same because now on the 450 A, B, and C is used for termly and with the 450 composite you record once a month or after every theme or within a theme when you feel that there is a need to record. So you are recording all the time...all the time...</p> <p>Jack: And so you still feel there is...</p> <p>Jill: You are going to work just as much, Ja.</p> <p>Jack: Ja...and it's still too much.</p> <p>Jill: There is definitely too much work...and I don't know if you know that with assessments now ...you are going to be reporting to the parents four times a term and then you have four schedules now as well. So it feels like the workload is becoming more.</p> <p>Jack: It's not improving, it's increasing.</p> <p>Jill: Ja...as much as much as the District and National will come down and say that they shortening the period of your paperwork term and things like that, it's definitely not like that. Definitely.</p> <p>Jack: I've also attended those things...er...how do you feel? With the new</p>	<p>Learner diversity changed teaching practices.</p> <p>Learners speak different languages. Learners come from cultural different backgrounds.</p> <p>This creates problems.</p> <p>Subsequent changes made to the implementation of OBA have not really reduced the amount of paperwork.</p> <p>There's still too much of paperwork.</p> <p>Reporting to parents more often.</p> <p>It seems that the workload is increasing.</p> <p>This is contradictory to what the authorities are saying.</p>	<p>Jill has not found an avenue to release this stress. Although Jill appears to be free of stress in her interactions with her learners she nevertheless finds her job stressful.</p> <p>From my observation it did not appear that Jill had problems with learner diversity. This also contradicts what she now telling me.</p> <p>The recurring theme of huge administrative workloads.</p>
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<p>Assessment Protocol, do you think it's more demanding on the teacher?</p> <p>Jill: For the Foundation Phase the Protocol works well because we would record everything with the learners...you know... twenty-six letters we do so each learner...you will record each learner's progress in those twenty-six letters. Say for instance the learner hasn't done it ...er...doesn't achieve it , so you do it over and over and over again. Whereas now with the new Protocol you don't have to do it that way. You know you don't have to report everything as such. Like with us we go through blends. I'm just taking Literacy, where we do blends, we do the letters, we do the reading words, we do the ...there's a whole lot.</p> <p>Jack: Okay. So it's a give and take.</p> <p>Jill: It's a give and take.</p> <p>Jack: You can say that they've taken some away but adding more to certain aspects. So there's not much of a difference. There's still gonna be pressure...</p> <p>Jill: There's still a lot of...a lot...a lot ...of work that has to be done.</p> <p>Jack: Okay. And I want to tell you now lastly...er...your wish...let's say if I told you what would you wish for in terms of learner assessment for the future. What would you want? Let's say its up to you to decide what I want to do...I must design assessment. How would you want things to change?</p> <p>Jill: Actually I've changed my assessment forms and typed them the way I want and I am enjoying it right now...Now what I've done is that even with the recording, I've adapted it ...I only record what I feel is necessary. So I think what should happen is, like if you take a thing that will work well for everybody and everybody's...their wish as well as mine is to have the recording reduced...the assessment recordings reduced.</p> <p>Jack: Any other thing? Look at your contexts, the classroom contexts.</p> <p>Jill: Maybe the number of learners should change, you have a smaller number. It will be</p>	<p>The most recent assessment protocol will work well for the teachers in the Foundation phase.</p> <p>You don't have to record everything.</p> <p>Compromises have been made.</p> <p>But there will still be pressure and a lot of work.</p> <p>Looking towards the future.</p> <p>Changing the way things are done to suit myself.</p> <p>Adapting assessment records to satisfy needs.</p> <p>Wishes to have the amount of recordings to be reduced.</p>	<p>She seems to be happy with the protocol because it signals less paperwork</p> <p>I get the impression that Jill is well informed and make the effort to keep abreast with the latest developments in education.</p> <p>For the first time Jill has indicated that she enjoys something about her work. From my observation I got the same impression. I wonder whether Jill is not conscious about her love for her profession because something</p>
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<p>easier to assess and it would be easier to bring learners up to standard.</p> <p>Jack: Can you manage on your own in a classroom or do you feel if there was additional...another person in the classroom, you would work better?</p> <p>Jill: I don't know. Firstly I feel it is best if you only have one teacher. If you have an assistant the assistant should ...probably do marking and your reports as such and things...you know more administration, not recording because you need to be on the ball, you have to be there, so that you know your learners. Now two people splitting that...it's not going to do work. It would be divine having an assistant but doing the admin part of it, but doing the assessing... all of that no...that I would like to do.</p> <p>Jack: And a lot of teachers complain about the learner profile. You know they find that it is cumbersome and that it becomes a hassle. Is that how you feel?</p> <p>Jill: Er...the profile has been revised and I'm finding that I'm enjoying the profile now because there is less in it but...er...we need to have a record of learners that tells us about the child's normal development, we need that, social development, we need that...the way we had... remember the old ADLAP form. There was very little in there, there was just marks about the child. Whereas here you have actual comments and then as the child moves on...the next teacher is actually in...within that child's world. You don't just have a mark and the teacher just grades you by that mark. Here the teacher will actually know ...okay ...emotionally this is what the child has gone through for the year...er...physically...er...this is what the child has gone through for the year. So you actually...would be like a follow-up with that...build on that.</p> <p>Jack: Okay. So you see the benefits of the learner profile.</p> <p>Jill: I see There's a ...Ja...the learner profile is a benefit.</p>	<p>Learner numbers in classrooms should also be reduced.</p> <p>Smaller numbers will improve standards.</p> <p>Classroom assistant to assist with administrative work like marking.</p> <p>But assessing learners should be left exclusively to the teacher.</p> <p>Learner profiles are very important. She enjoys compiling the learner profiles because she sees the value of it.</p> <p>Traditional systems of keeping track of learners progress were not very effective.</p> <p>New system looks at other facets like development emotionally and physically that the next teacher may use and build on.</p>	<p>about her practices does not fit in with the negativity she expresses in our interaction.</p> <p>Jill feels that changing contexts may improve the situation.</p> <p>I am impressed that Jill has a clear vision of what she hopes for in the future.</p> <p>This is second time that Jill has expressed enjoying doing things that she sees value in. I believe that she is open to change as long as she perceives it to be effective.</p> <p>I begin to see the value of teachers' perceptions of changes being used as a motivational tool.</p>
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<p>Jack: And my last question to you is do you think currently in your classroom...er ...that OBE...Okay assessment as such...I won't call it OBE assessment...but learner assessment as such is a true reflection of the learners performance.</p> <p>Jill: I would say no because we are still governed by this where everything must be recorded and recorded and recorded and it's an objective thing but you find that sometimes that we do tend to overlook certain things in certain children and you overstate for certain children so its not a true reflection of any of the children. We need to look into different forms of assessment where the teacher can definitely get the true reflection of the learner.</p> <p>Jack: Madam, thank you for your time. I really...really appreciate the time that you've given me.</p> <p>Jill: Pleasure.</p> <p>Jack: And whatever you need...you know, more information you need about the study I will gladly give it to you and I'll keep you informed.</p> <p>Jill: my studies ...I would like to continue.</p> <p>Jack: No. I want you to continue and whatever help I can give you...you know...I'm more than willing to assist you. I must say that you were very, very impressive and I really enjoyed working with you.</p> <p>Jill: It was pleasure having you around. It was good getting back together.</p> <p>Jack: Thank you. Ja.</p>	<p>Jill believes that learner assessment as it is now practiced is not a true reflection of the learner's performance.</p> <p>There are still stipulations that everything must be recorded.</p> <p>The point is that some aspects are overlooked and other things are emphasized and you can't just record everything.</p> <p>Must use different forms of assessment to get a true reflection.</p>	<p>What Jill is now saying is not too clear to me at this stage. On thing is certain that she feels that making too many recordings of learner assessment is unnecessary.</p> <p>She welcomes the idea of using different forms of assessment</p> <p>It was a pleasure to work with Jill. Her warm smile and pleasant personality makes on feel at ease. These fine qualities spill over into her classroom practices.</p>
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