

Classroom Observation- Jill
10 MAY 2006

8H10	<p>I enter the classroom. Some learners are lined up near the doorway and are receiving steaming hot mealie-meal porridge from Jill. They have their porridge while they are seated at the desks. The other learners are counting aloud. I greet the learners and Jill introduces me to them. Jill tells me to sit at her table.</p> <p>I quietly scan the classroom. The classroom is very neat and well organized. There are beautiful charts on the wall. They are relevant, bright and colourful. There are thirty –seven learners in the classroom. Almost all the learners are neatly attired in their school uniforms. Most are wearing green jerseys with a gold trim. It s a bright morning but it is a cold day. I notice that there are twenty-two Black learners and fourteen Indian learners. Learners continue to count aloud. They are very focused on this activity. They are reading out the numbers from their flip files.</p> <p>I notice that the numbers are written in words. The learners read the words and repeat them thrice.</p>	<p>Addressing the learner’s nutritional needs.</p> <p>A well resourced classroom.</p>	<p>I am pleasantly surprised as a have never witnessed this before.</p>
8H20	<p>Jill tells them to check their lines. Suddenly there is some disruption as the learners start moving their chairs so that they are lined up behind each other. Jill tells them that she will check her homework later. Some learners tell Jill the reasons for not doing their homework.</p> <p>Jill instructs learners to close their files and sound the letters of the alphabet while Jill flashes the letter of the alphabet to them. She stands with these flashcards at the front of the class.</p>	<p>Diversity of learners.</p> <p>Learners reading aloud-chorus</p> <p>Evident that traditional methods are being used</p>	<p>Very impressed with the classroom organisation.</p>
8H25	<p>Jill then flashes words to them. They read the words aloud, sound each letter of the alphabet that makes up the word before repeating the word once more. All learners are attentive</p>	<p>Evident that homework is given.</p> <p>Working with phonics.</p> <p>Drill work-traditional method.</p>	<p>In terms of policy homework should be given to learners in this grade.</p>

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8H28	Learners are called to the front of the class. Jill sounds the word. E.g. Gah for gun. The learners write the letter of the alphabet on the board. when the learner gets it wrong another learner is sent to the board to help.	Learners respond well.	I begin to realise that learners could still be totally involved in the lesson even when traditional methods are used.
8H29	Learners are now called to the board to write the words. They learners are attentive. Jill asks one learner to put on his glasses. He responds appropriately.		I 'm impressed by the way Jill holds the learners attention.
8H30	Learners read numbers and sound the letters of the alphabet that make up the number words.		I feel that learners are not really being affected by my presence.
8H32	Some learners leave the classroom. Those that remain each receive a blue or pink A3 sheet of paper. Jill attaches one sheet to the chalkboard. While she is busy the learners recite a series of Rhymes e.g. Ten Little Gentlemen. Jill uses finger movements while she says the rhyme. The learners repeat the rhyme after her.	learners are constantly kept busy by Jill.	All the learners seem to know exactly what to do. Class routines are clear to the learners. I'm also impressed by the number of rhymes that learners know. They are not the same rhymes that I learnt at school. I notice that every learner is attentive.
8H35	The first row of learners return to the class and the second row exits. I ask a learner to tell me why learners are leaving the class. He tells me that they are sharpening their pencils.	Use of drill and rote learning- a traditional method.	This seems to be a move to a OBE methods.
8h37	Those remaining in the class and instructed to call		

<p>8H38</p>	<p>out the months of the year. While they are reciting the months of the year, Jill hands out worksheets. On the worksheets numbers are represented in symbols and words. There are pictures of insects, operational signs and a happy, sad and angry faces which I assume will be have been given for the purpose of assessment. Learners recite each word thrice.</p> <p>Learners asks learners to read aloud. She tells them to read just like they read everyday. Learners are ask to identify the operational symbols. They respond positively. They are then instructed to spell the words aloud.</p> <p>Jill discusses the assessment criteria with the learners. She asks learners to tell her what she expects from them. After listening to them , she explains that they must cut out the words and numbers and match them. She demonstrates by sticking the cut-outs on the sheet pinned to the chalkboard.</p> <p>She tells them that the operations signs must be learnt at home. She also tells them to study the facial images . Jill also reminds learners that she is going to give stars to the learners that cut on the lines. Jill wants to know from them how long have they been at school. They all shout out, “three months”. Jill paste the remaining numbers on the chart. She then tells the learners to commence with the task and not to rush.</p> <p>Jill wants to know from them if they all have a pair of scissors. Not all the learners have scissors. She asks some learners to loan scissors from other classes. She also encourages sharing.</p>	<p>All learners are concentrating on the task at hand.</p> <p>This is more of an OBE method of teaching.</p> <p>Combining OBE methods with the traditional method.</p> <p>A Principle of OBE</p> <p>Motivating learners to achieve.</p>	<p>This gives me the impression that the grade educators work as a team.</p>
<p>8h48</p>	<p>I get up and look at he learners progress. Most have followed the instructions and are responding well to the task. Jill also moves around the class to check on the learners.</p>		

8H58	<p>Jill chats to m about the activity. She tells me that the purpose of this activity is to reinforce hand –eye co-ordination and fine motor skills. She also tells me that she acknowledges the benefits of OBE activities. She tells me that through these activities she is able to monitor the learners hand –eye co-ordination and their fine motor skills. She also tells me that some learners have difficulty in cutting with a pair of scissors. This is also evident from my observations. Learners work at their own pace. Jill refers to her learners as her “little darlings”.</p>	<p>Evidence of developing attitudes and values.</p> <p>Supporting learners on a one –to-one basis</p>	
9H00	<p>I check learner’s work. All learners have responded well. Their work is neatly set out. Learners begin to match the numbers to the word. Most learners have cut out their numbers.</p>	<p>Conscious of the purpose of learning activities.</p> <p>Learning tasks are carefully designed.</p>	
9H10	<p>Learners who have completed their work begin reciting rhymes. Some learners pick up papers on the floor. To regain their attention Jill counts aloud. Learners move quickly to their desks and continue to recite the rhymes.</p> <p>I notice a sheet laying on Jill’s table. It has to do with parent assessment. On the sheet their a two columns of words . One labeled set 1 and the other set 2. This is followed by a letter to parents with instructions from all the grade one educators. According to the instructions parents have to the child on the words listed. They have to make flashcards and ensure that their children build three simple sentences using the listed words.. provision is made for learners to write three sentences on the assessment sheet. This is followed by a set of questions to parents. E.g. How many of the words does your child recognize.</p>	<p>Developing hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills.</p> <p>Allowing learners to work at their own pace.</p> <p>Affection towards learners.</p> <p>Learners respond well to Jill.</p> <p>Learners are constantly kept busy.</p>	<p>I remember our first conversation where Jill told me that parents don’t participate actively in school activities and depend solely on the teacher to fulfill educational responsibilities. Here it becomes clear that parents do participatAn indication that parents are involved after school hours.</p>
9h20	<p>A second worksheet is given to each learner. Jill shows learners how to form letters of the alphabet using the chalkboard. Learners read out the instructions aloud. Jill’s instructions are simple and made clear to the learners. Slow learners bring up the</p>	<p>Parents involved in assessment.</p>	

<p>9h25</p>	<p>chart paper that was used in the previous activity and stack them in the pile with the rest of the learner's work.</p> <p>Learners sound the letters of the alphabet that make up the number words. Jill again explains the instructions to the learners. They must the circle that corresponds with the number of a group of insects that appear. They must then write the number in words and colour the pictures of the insects using as many colours as possible.</p> <p>Jill approaches me and without me asking explains that she moves from literacy to Numeracy, from Numeracy to life skills and so forth to prevent the learners from becoming bored. She tells me that she uses the umbrella system that deviates from OBE policy and that you may have flexi- time but not all of the time. Jill adds that this is from the old system. We begin to talk about formal and informal assessment. Jill tells me that with informal assessment there is no recording and reporting. She tells me the earlier activity where learners were cutting out the numbers and matching them was assessed informally. She tells me that she will use formal assessment to assess the activity that learners are currently busy with. This activity will be followed by recording and reporting. She tells me that she starts the mornings with learners doing an independent activity, this is followed by a group activity and a writing activity. Jill tells me that she designs her own learning activities that is suited to her class and it deviates from the activities planned by the other grade one teachers.</p> <p>I ask her whether her studies have improved her teaching practice. She tells me that studying did improve her teaching skills and allowed her to take a different view of OBE. It has developed a more positive attitude towards OBE.</p>	<p>Parents support their learners at home</p> <p>Jill's instructions to learners are clear and simple.</p> <p>Learners are allowed to work at their own pace.</p> <p>Activiies are carefull designed and appealing to the learners.</p> <p>Learners move back and forth in dealing with the different learning areas. Prevents boredom.</p>	<p>Evidence that provision is made to allow learners to work at their own pace.</p> <p>I am impressed by the way instructions are made so clear to the learners.</p> <p>I'm a little confused by what she is telling me.</p> <p>Without arguing with Jill I believed that the earlier activity would have told us a lot more about the learners performance than the current activity that she indicates will be used to assess learners formally.</p> <p>I interpret this as the grade teachers planning as a team but not necessarily implementing what they have planned together in practice.</p> <p>A contradictory statement because she told me in our first conversation that OBA will not work. Now I wonder</p>
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	<p>By now most learners have completed filling in the worksheets and are now colouring in the pictures. All learners are busy there is no talking amongst the learners.</p>	<p>Deviation from policy. Still complying with old system.</p> <p>Learners are being assessed informally.</p> <p>There is no recording and reporting with informal assessment.</p> <p>Learners are also assessed formally Recording and reporting formal assessments.</p>	<p>about what she told me. Did she say OBE will not work or did she say OBA will not work? I realize that their might be a difference</p> <p>it is evident that most learners have followed instructions. Learners respond well to child who speaks softly and gently to them. There is a sweet tone in her voice. I am impressed that the learners are so involved and focused on their tasks. They also seem to be used to the classroom routine.</p>
9H35	<p>I chat to Jill about the learners language barriers. She tells me that there are four learners in her class that do not speak English. They struggle with Literacy and Life Skills but seem to cope with Numeracy. We then talk about the seating arrangements. Jill tells me that they move their seating positions when they work as social groups. Learners know the routine and there is not much disruption. She adds that at the moment they are seated in pairs and this is known as peer groupings. We talk about how seating arrangements effect classroom discipline. Jill tells me that learners form their letters much better when they face the chalkboard.</p>	<p>Studies improved teaching practice.</p>	
9H40	<p>Jill talks to the learners about the letters that she sent to their parents. They are told to show their parents how to use the flashcards. She tells the learners that the best present they could give their mothers on mother's day is to be able to read the words on all the flashcards.</p> <p>Jill moves around the class as the learners write in their note books. The learners are able to work</p>	<p>Good learner dscipline.</p>	

	<p>independently. I leave the table to observe the learners work. Most learners are able to write the date as Jill instructed. They also write the number as a figure and in words and they draw geometric shapes to represent the words.</p> <p>Jill shows me some samples of her learners work. Some are good and some are of poor quality. She then shows me the work of the learner with a language barrier and indicates that this particular learner is coping with the work and has followed Jill's instructions.</p> <p>We then talk about the porridge the learners received when I entered the class that morning. She tells me that she has taken it upon herself to provide thirty-six learners with porridge each morning. She says that she has received flack from some colleagues because they felt that this was interfering with the other learners contact time. I comment that children will not be able to learn if they are hungry.</p>		<p>It is evident that learners are coping with the learning tasks.</p>
10h00	<p>Jill asks learners to take out the lunch. Learners have their sandwiches in the classroom. She talks to children about their lunches and its contents. She encourages them to share their lunches with some children that don't have. She tells me that in her first meeting with parents she makes it clear that her learners are only allowed to drink water or fruit juices and that learners should receive no spending money</p>		<p>Evident that Jill is caring and loves her learners. It also suggest that Jill is not afraid to make independent decisions.</p>
10h05	<p>Learners leave the classroom.</p> <p>I complement Jill on her attractive classroom. Jill tells me that her class is so well organized because she always prepares in advance. Worksheets are always available on the shelves and even if she is absent from school, learners will be working.</p> <p>I ask to examine her assessment records. She tells me</p>		<p>There is a strong emphasis on nutrition in the class.</p> <p>Sharing and caring is encouraged.</p>

<p>10h10</p>	<p>that she does not have them at school because she is busy story learner assessment data on her personal computer. She offers to show me the previous years records. I agree and she hands them to me. I look at the records/ She has recorded baseline assessments on class lists. There is a readiness programme where she uses ticks to record visual, auditory, fine motor skills abilities. Provision is also made for the assessment of body image which she feels is important for learners with language barriers. She acknowledges the support she gets from learners to help these students in the first two months of their schooling. There is a record on reading assessments that include flashcards and phonics. The GDE support form contains a lot of information but seems to have been completed at one sitting and not continuously throughout the year.</p>		<p>She had been writing with the same pen. But I hesitate to question her about this and decide not to.</p> <p>I get the impression that the entire form was completed at one sitting.</p>
<p>10H20</p>	<p>The report cards consist of a list of learning outcomes and assessment standards that are ticked off with provision made for a general comment at the end.</p>		
<p>10H22</p>	<p>Her day to day assessment record for a particular theme seems to have been completed with a single pen. It consists of a list of learners names, the learning outcomes and assessment standards for each learning area, level descriptors and comments. I thank Jill for allowing me into her classroom and arrange to meet her the next week for the follow up interview. I leave the classroom and move to the office to thank the principal. I leave the school premises.</p>		



