

KIM'S CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SESSION 3 -05-2006

TIME	FIELD NOTES	MEMO	CODE
8H 25	<p>I enter the classroom. Lovely learning environment. Classroom well organized. Lots of resources. Attractive charts on the walls. Readers and learner's projects are displayed at the back of the classroom. Learners are seated in three rows. The first row comprises of twelve desks arranged next to each other. The middle row consists of fourteen desks and the third row comprises of twelve desks. There are thirty -seven learners in the class. Twenty-three learners are Indian and 14 learners are Black. There is sufficient space to move around.</p> <p>I greet the learners. Kim tells the learners that they have a visitor today and that they should behave well. She offers me a seat at her table and continues with her lesson.</p> <p>A learner is called to the front of the class. She reads out a passage. I gather that this was a project that learners had to do for homework. Kim tells the class that the child's parents had helped her. Most learners are restless. Kim tells them to clap for the learner as well as her mom who helped her with the work.</p> <p>Another learner approaches Kim with her work. I gather that the lesson is about culture and identifying various cultural groups. Kim questions learners about the jewellery worn around the neck and ankles.</p> <p>A boy is called to the front. Kim wants to know from him whether his mom helped with the work. He indicates that his mom helped him. Kim looks at the work and tells learners to ensure that the make sentences on their own and write them down themselves. Moms should only correct the work. A few more learners are called to the front of the class to</p>	<p>I sense that Kim is feeling a little awkward with my presence. This makes me feel a little nervous. I take out my notebook and start to write.</p> <p>Learners are enthusiastic and respond well</p> <p>I get the impression that Kim is concerned about the parents doing homework for their children. However, I will need to confirm this.</p>	<p>Attractive and well-resourced classroom.</p> <p>Furniture well arranged</p> <p>Large learner numbers</p> <p>Diverse learner population.</p> <p>Projects done at home.</p> <p>Parental involvement.</p> <p>The lesson content is suited to OBE.</p> <p>Parents doing the work on behalf of Learners respond well to the teacher.</p> <p>Doubt about whether learners work on their own at home.</p>

<p>8h35</p>	<p>read out their work.</p> <p>There is a discussion on fabric after learner shows Kim his project. I notice that this project is so well done that it is unlikely that the child did it. Kim moves on to a discussion on seasons and clothing that are suitable for different seasons. Many learners are able to identify the seasons. Many learners are not paying attention. Kim calmly reprimands them. She inquires from the learner whether the project was his mom's efforts. The learner tells her that he did most of the work.</p> <p>Kim instructs the learner to put his work on display at the back of the classroom.</p> <p>Kim reminds learners that they are restless and not behaving. She indicates that she will be going on to teaching "Directions"</p> <p>A girl is called to the front to read out a passage on direction. Kim asks her to tell the class where she lives. Kim uses the question and answer method.</p>	<p>I have not noticed any assessment activity up to this point.</p> <p>Learners seem to enjoy the classroom.. Kim was growing in confidence</p> <p>I felt that this was an opportunity to record learner performance</p>	<p>Being allowed to display their work motivates learners.</p>
<p>8H40</p>	<p>Learners are told to put their books away. Lots of learners were standing and were not paying attention. Learners were told to view the projects. One learner was asked to monitor the projects.</p>	<p>For a second time Kim reminds the learners about my presence. I feel that Kim is more affected by my presence than the learners. She requests that they behave well.</p>	<p>Class is rowdy. Learners are restless.</p>
<p>8H45</p>	<p>Learners were asked to stand. Put there hands together and clap their hands according to beats while counting in two's. Learners then counted in ones. Learners were now more responsive. Kim moved around the classroom. One learner was asked to count from 50 to 70. Another learner was asked to count from 80 to 100.</p>	<p>I notice that the learners are given the freedom to move about the classroom whenever they choose to. They seem very relaxed and repeatedly ask questions.</p>	<p>Use of traditional methods of teaching. Repetitive exercises.</p>
<p>8H50</p>	<p>Learners are working with bonds. Kim uses the question and answer method e.g. $11 + 4 = \underline{\quad}$</p> <p>Learners respond well. Kim talks about Fiona of the television programme, " The Weakest Link. Learners talk about Fiona being so rude. Kim tells the class that one group is " fast asleep".</p>		<p>Individual learners are asked to perform. No evidence that their responses are assessed.</p> <p>Using the traditional methods. Learners respond well.</p> <p>Linking learning to learner's everyday experiences.</p>

<p>9H00</p>	<p>Kim tells learners that they will do bonds of 16. She tells them to write down the date in their notebooks. Learners are told to write the date in short form i.e. 3/05/2006.</p> <p>Learners are asked to turn to page 31 of their notebooks. The topic is about double or halves. Learners are chosen randomly to read out instructions. Kim assists them. One child is still colouring some pictures. Kim reprimands the learner.</p> <p>Learners count in two's. Many are not listening. Kim calls a group of learners to her. She asks them to bring their books with them. She wants to know if they need help. She works with the group seated in front of the class.</p> <p>The exercise in their workbooks deals with geometric shapes. Learners are joining numbers to create shapes. Many learners work on their own.</p> <p>I get up and approach the learner's workstations.</p> <p>Kim chats to me about using the workbooks to reinforce bonds.</p> <p>Learner from another class enters and complains about another learner writing on desks.</p> <p>Kim informs me that as the Head of Department deals with all complaints in the JP section of the school. Foundation Phase learners are not sent to the office.</p>	<p>Kim makes no attempt to bring the learners to order.</p> <p>It is evident that she gives support to the weaker learners.</p> <p>Good use of resources. I notice that a lot of work has been done in the learners' workbooks thus far. The resources used are of a high quality. I am surprise that she still refers to the Foundation Phase section as the Junior Primary section. This term was used for this section of the school in the past. To me this is an indication that still has a strong attachment to the past.</p>	<p>Instructions are made clear to learners.</p> <p>Learners respond well to these instructions.</p> <p>Much in the mode of the traditional methods of teaching.</p> <p>Reprimands learner firmly yet gently.</p> <p>Classroom discipline is a problem.</p> <p>Evident that learners work independently.</p> <p>Teacher has responsibilities over and above her classroom duties.</p> <p>Learners are confident and enthusiastic. Classroom routines are well established.</p>
<p>9H15</p>	<p>Most learners continue with the activity. Some learners move to the back of the class and select a few readers. I move to them. I chat to three learners about the readers.</p>		
<p>9H18</p>	<p>The learners are pleasant and read to me. They start</p>		

<p>9H20</p> <p>9H23</p>	<p>packing the books. Kim approaches us and tells me that she uses a paired reading programme. She shows me a record of books that are taken home by the learners. Kim tells me that the teacher librarian also does reading during the library period and that there is a period where the whole school reads at the same time. It is called the Readathon period.</p> <p>Learners are working on their own in their Number Fun workbooks. This book consists of worksheets. Kim informs me that a lot of the basic skills are reinforced through the use of these workbooks that give the learners the opportunity to work on their own. Kim tells me about the emphasis on drill work.</p> <p>Kim shows me the learner's books. She is busy with phonics. She tells me that she uses the old methods. She also tells me that teaching learners is a lot of work and that marking their books takes a lot of time.</p> <p>Kim goes back to Numeracy. She works with Halves and double numbers e.g. Half of ten is _____. And $11+11=$_____</p> <p>A teacher who tells Kim about a learner who is selling toys interrupts the lesson. Kim reprimands the learner. She tells Kim about the learner who had scratched the desks. The teacher is unaware of my presence in the classroom and when she becomes aware of my presence she is embarrassed.</p> <p>She wants to leave by Kim tells her that I am easy going and that she has no need to leave.</p> <p>Kim tells teacher that she ought to find out more about the emotional state of the learner that has scratched the desk. Kim advises the teacher to ask the learner whether she is angry with her parents, her friends or her teacher. The teacher then leaves the class.</p>	<p>From the records I gather that learners read the books with the guidance of the parents. Parents mark off the pages read. What Kim reads to the learner in class is also marked off. It becomes obvious that reading is a collaborative activity between parent and teacher.</p> <p>No provision has been made for a Readathon period or library period in OBE policy. This is an indication of changing OBE policy to meet the needs of this particular policy and not slavishly following the dictates of the OBE policies.</p> <p>Evidence of using traditional methods of teaching.</p>	<p>Huge emphasis placed on improving reading.</p> <p>Teaching innovations outside policy.</p> <p>Expensive and high quality workbooks. Reinforcing basic skills through additional exercises.</p> <p>Learners work on their own and at their own pace. Emphasis on drill work- traditional methods.</p> <p>Traditional methods adopted when teaching reading-phonics.</p> <p>Marking books is time-consuming.</p> <p>Teacher responsibilities outside her own classroom.</p> <p>Evidence of the participant's concern for the learners and their needs.</p>
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9H30	<p>Kim tells learners that they are not behaving. Only some learners seem to be listening to her. Learners are restless. Many learners are doing their own thing. Kim is using the question and answer method and records the learners' responses on the chalkboard. Learners are asked to give the half of four and fourteen added to fourteen etc.</p> <p>One of the learner wants to know whether it is lunchtime. Not many learners are paying attention but the lesson continues. Kim is not distracted from her tasks. She continues with her lesson.</p> <p>Kim tells the learners that she will now show them an easier method to arrive at the answer. She shows them the method. One learner indicates to Kim that his father uses the same method when halving and doubling.</p>	<p>I sense frustration in the teacher. An indication that she is still affected by my presence.</p> <p>Another indication that some parents do play a part in assisting their children with their homework.</p>	<p>Awareness of the learners' ill discipline.</p> <p>Using traditional methods.</p> <p>Teacher makes little attempt to restore order.</p> <p>Participant seems oblivious to learner's inattentiveness.</p> <p>Using alternative methods to find solutions. Evidence that parents assist learners at home.</p>
9h35	<p>Kim asks learners to close their books and take out their colouring books and readers. She calls one group to the front of the classroom. Kim reads out the sums and the learners write down the responses in their books. Kim questions the learners about copying from each other. This group is working with bonds. She asks the learners to check each other's work.</p> <p>Kim approaches me and tells me that all the learners communicate very well and that language is not a learning barrier with this group of learners</p> <p>I move to the back of the classroom and notice that some learners are reading books while others are examining some of the projects.</p>	<p>It appears that this group is the weaker learners. I notice that all the learners in this group are Black.</p> <p>This contradicts what she told me in our earlier conversation about language barriers.</p>	<p>Evidence of group work. Evidence of peer assessment.</p> <p>Language as a barrier is not a problem.</p>
9H40	<p>The siren wails for the first interval. From what I gather from her conversation with her learners they buy their lunches on a Wednesday. They rush out of the class to buy their lunches.</p>		

10H05	<p>Kim tells me that she has a free period. She tells me that the school has hired additional teachers who are paid by the school governing body. This lightens the burden for school management in that they are given more time to fulfill their administrative responsibilities. She tells me that learners go to other teachers for Art and Music.</p>	<p>This gives me the impression that teachers who teach at schools that are well funded are able to have better working conditions.</p>	<p>Affluent schools are able to manage situation much better because of financial resources.</p>
10H20	<p>I ask her whether I could look at some of her assessment records. She agrees and hands them to me. The records are very attractive and well organized.</p> <p>Kim tells me that she does things her own way, she those not follow the departments directives. There are documents that make provision for the day-to-day recording of the learner assessment.</p> <p>There is an educator portfolio where she records all her observations and it seems up to date. She uses level descriptors in her assessment of learners.</p> <p>Kim tells me that informal assessments are recorded in her observation book. There is a fair amount of information about the learners in her observation book. A single GDE 450 form has replaced the GDE 450 A-E form.</p> <p>We are interrupted when a teacher wants to know if she should implement the new assessment protocol. Kim tells her not to do so. Kim tells her that assessment standards will be replaced with comments.</p> <p>I introduce myself to the teacher and explain to her that my visit to the school centres on learner assessment. I ask her about how she feels about writing comments instead of assessment standards in her report. She tells me that it would mean more work. Teachers would have to meet as a group and that there was just no time. She tells me that there will be less work but more writing. She was concerned that she would have no time on her hands and that they had to be selective about the comments that she wrote. She told me she liked the idea of writing comments but because of the large number of learners it would too much of administrative work. The teacher then leaves.</p>	<p>It is evident that she works with themes. There is a sheet for the day-to-day recording of learner performance it has been filled but I am aware that up to now she did not make any written record of the learners' performance.</p> <p>I remind myself to ask her about when she these observations.</p> <p>I am fascinated by this teacher's query. I remember that while I was talking to Jane, a teacher walked into the class and also queried about assessment standards and was told to include assessment standards that they had not planned for to be used in the learner's reports. I see this as an opportunity to find out a little more from the teacher.</p>	<p>Assessment records are well managed.</p> <p>Participant doing things the way she feels it should be done.</p> <p>Does not follow policy stipulations but assessment records are being kept.</p> <p>Observing learners and recording these observations.</p> <p>Informal observations are recorded.</p> <p>GDE 450 support forms have been reduced to one single form.</p> <p>Confusion relating to whether new changes must be implemented immediately.</p> <p>Evident that information being filtered down to teachers is still unclear.</p> <p>Recent changes meant more paperwork for teachers.</p> <p>Teachers don't have enough time.</p> <p>Changes seemed logical but time is a factor.</p>

<p>10H30</p> <p>10H35</p>	<p>I ask Kim about how she feels about changing the learners' reports. She indicates to me that she feels that it is a good thing. She felt that the current reports did not give parents enough information on their children.</p> <p>I tell Kim that I did not notice her making any written record of the learners' performance. She tells me that she did in fact record learner assessment during the earlier activity when learners were called to the front of the class to display their projects.</p> <p>We talk about changes to the report card. Kim tells me that she is in favour of making these changes because many parents had difficulty with understanding the OBE terminology used in the report card. We talk about parents' involvement with learners. She tells me that there is good communication between the parents and herself</p> <p>Learners enter the classroom and are told to stand. They lift the arms in the air and do breathing exercises. They are asked to sit down and take out their literacy books. The topic is: "Cleaning Up". They talk about cleaning up the school, cleaning up the classroom and cleaning up the township. There is some disruption when learners accuse each other of littering.</p> <p>The reading activity begins. Kim reads aloud learners follow. Learners read aloud. Kim corrects them. Learners comment on the pictures in their books. One learner says the person in the picture looks like a gangster. Kim wants to know whether all people that litter are gangsters. The learners conclude that all people who litter are not necessarily gangsters.</p> <p>Learners take turns to read aloud. Kim helps them along</p>	<p>I was puzzled by this remark.</p> <p>I did not see this happening.</p> <p>I realise that learners have a lot of freedom to move about the classroom. I feel that this gives them a lot of confidence.</p> <p>Learners enjoy these activities and are very enthusiastic.</p> <p>I felt that this was a good opportunity for Kim to assess and record some of the learner's reading ability.</p>	<p>Recent changes are good.</p> <p>Current reporting of learner assessment was inadequate.</p> <p>Learner assessments were recorded earlier when I was not present.</p> <p>Recent changes in reporting are good.</p> <p>Parents have difficulty with understanding OBE terminology.</p> <p>Good communication between parents and teacher.</p> <p>The use of breathing exercises to gain learners composure.</p> <p>Learner activities geared towards everyday experiences.</p> <p>Using traditional methods to teach reading.</p> <p>Encouraging critical thinking- in line with OBE principles.</p> <p>Opportunities to assess learners and record these assessments are not taken.</p>
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10H40	<p>Kim moves to the back of the classroom. Kim uses the question and answer method. She wants to know how many of them dump things in the neighbourhoods. She tells them that she hopes that this topic will make them think. She wants to know from them if they are going to change their habits.</p> <p>Kim goes on to phonics. Learners identify sounds in the words.</p> <p>Learners take turns to read aloud. Kim tells the other learners not to chorus.</p> <p>I take the opportunity to look at the resources. They are using workbooks and readers – The all in one series</p>	<p>I notice that many of the learners are not following. Many are pre-occupied with other activities. Only five or six learners are listening to her. She only focuses on those who are listening</p> <p>These resources are very expensive. I wonder about how this school can afford them. I also notice these books come with assessment guidelines.</p>	<p>Using traditional methods of teaching.</p> <p>Encouraging critical thinking-OBE principle.</p> <p>Teaching reading using traditional approaches.</p> <p>Resources are expensive and of a high quality.</p> <p>The resource materials are designed in the OBE mode.</p>
10h55	<p>Kim tells the class that they are moving to phonics and sentence building. They look at a map in their workbooks and spell the name of the streets. One learner is not behaving. Kim reprimands the child and calls for time out. The learner is told to stand in front of the class.</p> <p>The lesson is interrupted. A member from the Department of Health arrives to conduct a dental programme. Kim tells me that she has to leave the class to organize the other classes.</p>		<p>Uses moderate forms of discipline.</p>
10H57	<p>Learners are fairly well behaved in Kim's absence. Some move about the class others continue to work in pairs and in groups.</p>		<p>Forgetting scheduled visit.</p> <p>Teacher responsibilities outside her class impacts on her responsibilities inside the classroom.</p>
11H00	<p>I leave the table and move to the learners' desks where I examine the learners' workbooks and readers. Learners are very friendly and are eager to show me their work. A lot of written work has been done in their books thus far. I talk to some of their children about parental involvement. Most learners tell me that their parents help them almost every day with their work.</p>		<p>Well-established classroom routines.</p> <p>Learners are friendly and confident. A large amount of written work is covered for the period.</p> <p>Learners indicate that parents help them with their work.</p>

11H04	<p>Kim returns to the classroom and overhears my discussion with the learners. She chats to me about parental involvement. She tells me that parents are involved and that sometimes they tend to interfere too much. She tells me that some parents have indicated that they want to come and teach on certain days. She adds that many of the “Indian” parents are affluent, so they look down upon the teachers. They make huge demands on the teacher and many put a lot of pressure on the teacher. All the Indian parents want their children to do well Kim tells me that Black parents are more appreciative. She tells me that she is saying this in confidence. She adds that the move of Indian learners back to State schools in the area has created some stress and pressure for the teachers. Parents compare this particular school with a Model C school and place huge pressure on the teachers.</p>		<p>Parents tend to overplay their role.</p> <p>Affluent Indian parents look down upon teachers.</p> <p>Indian parents make huge demands on the teacher.</p> <p>Black parents appreciate the teachers. Different attitudes of parents from different race groups.</p> <p>Affluent parents put huge pressure on teachers.</p>
11H15	<p>Kim is working with Phonics. The lesson is interrupted when an adult enters the class. I gather from her discussion with Kim that she is a parent of one of the learners. Kim tells me that she has requested to observe one of the learners. The parent sits next to me so I decide to chat with her. I ask her about the reason for her visit. I tell her the purpose of my visit and ask her if I could tape our conversation. She agrees. She tells me that she does not live with her child but she comes to school from time to time to check on her child’s progress. I ask her whether she is happy with her child’s progress. She tells me that she is very happy with the school and that her child is doing very well. I ask her about the Report Card. I inquire about whether she is able to understand all the information and terminology on the report card. She tells me that she understands the report but that her sisters assist her daughter with all her schooling because she lives with them.</p>	<p>I’m surprised by this practice.</p>	<p>UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG</p> <p>Unscheduled visit from parent.</p> <p>Parents happy with child’s progress.</p> <p>Parent understands terminology on report.</p>
11h25	<p>Learners leave the classroom to attend the Dental Programme. I sit in on the discussion with Kim and the parent. Kim discusses the progress of the learner. She tells the parents that the child is slow and that she needs</p>		

	<p>support. Parent indicates that she does not have the time. Kim tells the parent that her daughter reads well. She shows the parents the learners' books and tells the parent that the child had not completed the homework. Kim tells the mother that the child needs to be guided and that she understands that the child is young but that she must learn to finish her work on time. Kim requests that parents instruct the child's guardians to visit her so that she could provide guidance on home the child could be supported at home.</p>		<p>Parent happy with progress but the teacher is not.</p> <p>An indication that report could be misleading.</p> <p>Additional support needed at home.</p>
11H35	<p>The learners have not returned to the class so I ask Kim if I could look at her assessment records.</p> <p>Kim hands me her educator portfolio, which comprises of her learning programmes, work schedules, daily preparation sheets. I notice that these are not dated. The portfolio also has a section for worksheets and pictures and drawings relating to themes.</p> <p>It also contains an assessment sheet for day-to-day recorded. The day-to-day assessment has a lot of information written on it.</p> <p>In her preparation record sheets, Kim has made provision for remediation and enrichment activities.</p> <p>There is also a year plan and a record of assessments planned for the year.</p> <p>There are also mark sheets where Kim uses raw scores for spelling and mental tests. There are project sheets where the learning outcomes, criteria for assessment and rubrics have been duly completed.</p> <p>Kim shows me evidence of baseline assessment. She has recorded learners' performance in phonics, dictionary work, reading time. She uses ticks and dots in this instance.</p>	<p>Conflicting in terms of what the parent had told me about her child's progress.</p> <p>Conflict in terms of OBE principles that make provision for learners to work at their own pace</p> <p>I have not noticed any recording of assessment during my observation and I become suspicious of the authenticity of these recordings.</p>	<p>Assessment records are duly completed but not dated-not in line with policy requirements.</p> <p>The organization and presentation of these records are good.</p> <p>Evident that daily recording of assessment is made</p> <p>Provision made for remediation and enrichment-traditional approach</p> <p>Traditional method of recording learner assessment.</p> <p>OBA methods of recording learner assessment.</p>
11h40	<p>Learners return to the class but are immediately dismissed for the second interval.</p>		
12H05	<p>Learners enter the classroom. Kim asks the learners to return their pencils. Kim instructs learners to fold their arms and bow their heads. She leaves the classroom stands at the door and waits for some learners who have still not returned. She then instructs the learners to pass their</p>		<p>Well- established classroom routines.</p>

<p>12H07</p>	<p>literacy books to the front.</p> <p>Kim tells them that she is going to read a story to them. Learners have still not settled down. Kim comments about the bad smell in the class. She encourages them to bath daily. She then instructs them to fold their arms. They then perform a stretching exercise. Learners are now attentive. She tells them that when they listen they will learn. She explains the meaning of the word “fable”. She reads the fable about the ant and the dove.</p> <p>Learners listen attentively. Kim now uses the question and answer method to gauge whether the learners are following. Kim reads the story, tries to show them the pictures in her book. They strain their eyes in an attempt to get a view of the pictures. She wants to know if they shoot birds. Learners complain about not being able to see the pictures.</p>	<p>I gather that the learners in Kim’s class are confident and relaxed. They were eager to ask questions. She has a friendly attitude towards her learners.</p>	<p>Teaching Life Skills informally</p> <p>Attempts to gain learners attention and refocus learners.</p> <p>Using a traditional approach.</p>
<p>12H20</p>	<p>The learners want to know about the toothbrushes that they received through the dental programme. Kim tells them that all the brushes would have to remain at school. Kim then talks about the moral of the story- one good turn deserves another. One learner is reprimanded for playing with a balloon.</p>	<p>UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG</p>	<p>Developing good values and attitudes.</p>
<p>12H23</p>	<p>There is a discussion on the moral of the story. Learners are restless. Kim tells me that the learners are boisterous today. I wonder if this is because of my presence. She adds that teaching in the Foundation Phase is tiring and that teachers don’t sit, they work throughout the day.</p>		<p>Suggestions that the researchers presence may be affecting the learners’ behaviour.</p> <p>Teachers are tired at the end of the day. They don’t sit.</p>
<p>12H25</p>	<p>The learners pray. Pick up the litter on the floor. I take the opportunity to thank the learners for allowing me to spend the day with them and praise them for the good work that had done for the day.</p> <p>Kim tells those learners who have not completed their projects to ensure that they complete them.</p> <p>Kim tells me that she will escort learners to the gates, as they don’t allow parents to come to the classrooms to</p>		<p>Learners reminded to complete outstanding work at home.</p>

12h30	collect their children. Kim returns to the classroom. I thank her for her participation. I ask her if I could meet with her the following week to conduct a follow-up interview that will be based on my classroom observation. We greet each other and I go to the office to thank the principal.		
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