



Reports

Edu-peg



Education Through Action

Gauteng 1st Quarter 2011



**let's make
learning
fun!**

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Gauteng

Adu-peg



Education Through Action

Dowling Primary

STATISTICS

Number of schools	1
Number of pupils	1 215
Numbers of teachers and principals	30

We have just one school in the Gauteng region, being Dowling Primary, which is situated in Westbury. Our resident Gauteng trainer, Jen Ryder, has struggled to access the school this year, as teachers have been challenged by the ANA (Annual National Assessments), the marking and the compiling of the required schedules, sporting events, and school functions (Valentine's Day) etc. Many educators unfortunately are unable to recognize the correlation between resources and see each project/programme as a completely separate entity. This obviously results in the reticence of the teachers to engage, as their inaccurate perception is that they need to do multiple implementations in an already congested and demanding teaching day.

We were able to secure interaction time with the educators in mid-March, and I travelled to Johannesburg to work with Jen into the various phases. It was agreed that we would do demonstration lessons for the educators, with all of the educators for the grade being present. The well organized Mrs Kaye ensured that all classes were well supervised during these lessons.

We received a very warm welcome from Mr Sandows, Mrs Kaye and the entire staff with whom we were involved. The lessons were extremely well received by the educators and learners and I was struck by the number of obviously very dedicated teachers who are keen and enthusiastic to learn more themselves, and in so doing to enhance their teaching skills and strategies for the good of their pupils. What was also very affecting is that the majority of these teachers had no idea at all of



what to do to improve numeracy and literacy levels, and how to implement any improvement processes.

Without exception, all teachers were impressed with the quiet and dedicated manner that the children utilized as they went about the set, differentiated tasks. They were amazed at what the children were able to produce and how the learners thrived in the quiet, accepting atmosphere that was created, where the children felt empowered, motivated and assured that they had the skills and ability for the set tasks. Teachers were easily able to see how, when the task set is appropriate and which correlates with the curriculum and the ability levels of the pupils, that assessing the written tasks becomes easily achievable.

In all classrooms, we reorganized the children into ability groups and this strategy, along with the diverse and appropriate set tasks, contributed to the productive, quiet and accepting learning environment that was very evident. A number of classrooms were extremely noisy on our initial entrance to the classroom, with ill discipline and poorly established routines very evident. Unfortunately, some teachers do largely contribute to this situation due to a very loud teaching style, cluttered and messy classrooms, poorly established classroom routines and potentially poor planning.

It must also be mentioned, however, that some classrooms visited were “model classrooms” with very attractive posters and informative charts displayed on the walls, that were appropriate for the level of the learners. Monitors, demarcated areas for written workbooks, reading areas, spotless mat-work areas, neat and well set out chalk-board work, well ventilated rooms, etc. were in evidence.

Following each demonstration lesson, we were able to interact with the educators who had observed what was taught. This was done in the classroom while the children were completing their set written tasks. All teachers indicated their willingness to work together and welcomed the idea of weekly visits by Jen. This information was conveyed to the principal and deputy principal, who were keen to endorse this.

Some ideas were shared about general school discipline, ideas to promote and increase the levels of literacy and also thoughts to combat the litter in the playground.

The storage and borrowing system in this school needs urgent attention and Jen and I re-organized and tidied this area during the period when we were unable to access the Grade 6 class, due to an internal assessment paper being written. We will need co-operation from the school to ensure that this area remains accessible and functional.

It is my intention to give Jen some additional support each term in this school and I feel sure that we will soon make some pleasing progress.

We still have much to achieve at this school and will need to continue our support.

Jen Ryder was able to visit Dowling Primary after my visit and was warmly welcomed by the educators. Assessment tests in the Intermediate/Senior Phase precluded her from visiting these classes. In the Foundation Phase, the teachers visited were all utilising our Edupeg resources along with the newly delivered governmental workbooks. She observed happy children who were enjoying their set activities, and teachers who appeared to be more relaxed, and enjoying their teaching. It is our intention to visit this school weekly.

**“Obstacles are those
frightful things you see
when you take your eyes
off the goal.”**

Henry Ford

