19 Oct 2017

**Reflections on the Basic Concepts Programme by Lara Biggs, Springbok (Northern Cape)**

Good morning ladies and gentleman. Thank you for the opportunity to represent the teachers of this area this morning. Just a little about me, I am Lara and I am a Grade R teacher at Springbok Primary. I studied for a B.Ed Foundation Phase degree in Wellington and started my career in Strand in the Western Cape as a Grade 1 teacher for 3 years. My husband was transferred to Springbok and that is how we ended up here. We absolutely love Namaqualand and are thankful that the Lord brought it upon our lives. I received a 6 month contract to teach Grade R at Springbok Primary and then into a Grade 1 class, but I fell in love with Grade R and begged to stay.

Today I want to tell you about my BCP journey which I’m sure is similar to many of my colleagues. After 2 years of teaching Grade R, we were introduced to the Basic Concepts Programme. During our first training I was very sceptical, as were my fellow colleagues, and even Dr. Louis Benjamin was aware of this scepticism.

I had many, many questions:-

* *How are we supposed to follow CAPS, which is already a very full curriculum and the BCP?*
* *Which one of the two should take priority?*
* *How was I going to fit both in to the little time I had?*
* *How can a Grade R class be left to do group work alone while I teach one group at a time?*
* *Have our authorities gone a bit bonkers? Do they even realise what they are asking of us?*

As I said I had loads of questions.

We were expected to give a demonstration lesson the day after our first training session. I was so unsure, felt very uncomfortable, and far out of my comfort zone. I’m sure my fellow colleagues felt the same way, but being outside your comfort zone creates an opportunity for great things. Also, as teachers are a species on their own, we are fighters and we will make sure the things we do, we do successfully, no matter what. We prepared ourselves and gave the best demonstration sessions and even though we could see that there was much room to improve, we could see that it was in fact possible to do.

***Wow our kids can answer in full sentences!***

***Yes they can answer open ended questions!***

***Oh my word, we can expect so much more from them!***

And that is where our love story with the BCP began.

Even though the process was not easy and because we had so much to learn and so much extra work to do, we decided to take on this challenge and not give up on something that works. Those of you who had an opportunity to visit our classes and observe our children as they engage with the content of the BCP, will agree that they are way ahead of other children their age. Just an example to prove BCP works: I presented a position lesson on the day of my IQMS evaluation. The Grade 1 teacher evaluating me pulled me aside after the session, she wanted to know more about the programme, because her Grade 1 learners would not be able to answer the questions asked and they would also not be able to answer in such lovely full sentences.

I pledge to continue trying my best at presenting this program in my class and to keep enriching little lives in this wonderful way.

I want to say a big thank you to each person who made this possible for us. Thank you for enriching our lives and making us even better teachers!