

Hi Sir,

How lovely it was to receive the latest newsletter from Oakhill - I always read these with great interest. I'm sitting in the Stellenbosch University library on a Saturday morning - taking a study break, a rather extended one! I'm into my 5th year of studying here - reading Honours in Educational Psychology. Next year I am moving to Cape Town to work (still looking for a job, rather scary!), where I intend to work for a year or two in the counselling and psychometric areas of schools. I want to work for a few years in and around schools so as to gain practical experience before I start Masters, which I'll hopefully do either through UNISA or back at Stellenbosch, either 2012 or 2013, depending on how the work goes.

I often think of Oakhill and all of the teachers there. Is it still the same? I know the structure has changed somewhat, both physically and in management, but has the vibe stayed the same? Working in various schools now over the years for my practicals, it only makes me think how lucky I was to go to a school like Oakhill. I have yet to find one (excepting Bridge House - awesome experience) where the learners are more than just mark machines, numbers in a system. At Oakhill, I always felt like the teachers gave a damn what happened to us, at school and beyond. You and the others helped us to actually use our brains and think for ourselves. I find myself returning over and over again to the idea of 'learner autonomy,' whereby learners take responsibility for their own learning, as topics for my research assignments. As I only ever went to Oakhill, I just assumed that all schools were like this, and that every kid left school knowing how to think for themselves! What a shock I had when I started doing teaching practicals that kids don't know how to express themselves or give an opinion! And when you offer them the chance to speak their minds, they become uncomfortable and withdrawn. I'm considering doing my Master's thesis somewhere along the lines of how teachers facilitate in their learners this sense of learning autonomy, and the impact it has on their thinking. Perhaps I can return to Oakhill 'for research purposes' and speak to some of you - pick your brains, so to speak.

Haha, I thought of you in my 3rd year when I had to do Statistics for Psychology - the first time since school since I have had to think about Maths! I started to get lost halfway through, but put my head down and managed to get 85% - my top mark for the Psychology modules. Thought you might be interested to hear :) I still can't see geometry angles though! I au pair for a family in Stellenbosch, and the son is starting with it now, and I warned him about my lack of talent with this!!! I know Emma is doing extremely well in her Engineering - she received the top mark in the class for some of her subjects! I see her every now and then, and we had a giggle last time about our Maths classes with you - good old 'Bucket'!

Alright then, study break over, time to hit the books again. If you get a chance to reply, I would love to hear all your news, and the goings-on at Oakhill!

Regards,

Casey Anley