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CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES: REALITIES IN THE LESSON PLANNING STAGES

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Good lesson planning is essential in teaching and learning. All good teachers have some type of plan when they walk into their classrooms to ascertain what students need to learn and how it will be delivered effectively during the class time. Successful planning of the teaching and learning process comprises several stages. The most common planning stages followed by teachers are “yearly planning”, “term planning” and “lesson planning”. The main objective of this study is to observe through a selected sample both how far these stages are practiced by teachers and to identify their advantages and disadvantages.

This is an ethnographic study conducted using 8 schools in the Kandy District which represented different social class backgrounds. The research sample comprised 32 teachers and 250 students in grade 8. The sample of teachers was selected covering four subjects, Science, Mathematics, Sinhala and English. From each school, one teacher was observed for each subject over four lessons. Consequently, a total of 128 lessons were observed in this study. The researcher collected data from analyzing documents and by interviewing students and teachers. This enabled the researcher to triangulate and maintain the reliability and the validity of the data.

The data collected in the research revealed that none of the teachers followed a “yearly plan” while a majority did not resort to “term planning” or “lesson planning”. Consequently, they were prone to feel helpless in new or odd situations, took more time to explain simple topics, lacked flexibility in delivering the lesson and made the teaching process more difficult overall. However, a few teachers who prepared complete lesson plans claimed that proper planning prior to teaching helped them to stay on track while achieving their objectives, saved time, helped them visualize the teaching process in advance and provided a good record of their own performance and built self-confidence.

To minimize the weaknesses and drawbacks of the existing system, the researcher suggests that close monitoring of teacher activities in the planning stage is essential and recommends improving their knowledge on lesson planning through various teacher-education institutions.