

Audio 2.1

James teaches social studies to grade 7. Their examination is fast approaching and he is getting a bit behind with the syllabus. The next topic is the Zambian Family. He is apprehensive about teaching this topic because he is aware that Precious' mother has recently died after a long illness and he's worried that talking about families will make her sad. He talks to the Grade 6 teacher, Namwinga, who taught them last year. She remembers that in that class Changu is looked after by her granny and Joseph's family is headed by his older sister. So there are several types of family in the class. By focusing on this, she suggests James could emphasise that whatever the type of family, the reasons why families are important still apply.

Before the lesson he gets to talk to Changu and Joseph and tells them about Precious. He asks them to sit near her during the lesson. He also asks Precious how she and her brothers and sisters are coping. He tells her they will be talking about families and that Changu and Joseph would like to work with her as they are in a similar situation.

James starts the lesson with a brainstorming session about all the different types of family groups that exist. The class suggests nuclear families, extended families, single-parent families, child-headed families. They do a quick survey of all the different kinds of family in the class and then work in groups to discuss why humans live in families and why it is important to respect differences in family types. In Maths the next day they draw a bar-chart of the results.

Audio 2.5

Martin, a grade 6 teacher, taught his Grade 6 learners about keeping money safe. His lesson lasted 40 minutes and he planned 4 activities.

For the first activity Martin used a full class brainstorm to find out what learners already knew. He followed this with an explanation of different methods of keeping money safe reinforcing those learners had mentioned and adding some additional methods. During this activity he asked a range of different types of questions to elicit some of the advantages of each method. He made a table on the chalkboard with three columns: method, advantages and disadvantages. He filled in the 'method' column.

After this full class activity, Martin put learners in pairs. He asked them to copy the table and to work together to fill it in, based on the whole class discussion. To ensure all the methods were discussed he asked the pairs in the front half of the class to start working from the top of the list, and the pairs in the back to start from the bottom of the list. As the learners were working, he moved around the pairs and talked to them, asked some individual questions, noticed who was doing well or struggling. There was a little bit of noise, but this was good as Martin could see learners were really interested in the topic. To finish this activity, he returned to the list on the chalkboard and asked some pairs the advantages and disadvantages they had identified for each method, writing these in the table on-the chalkboard. He asked learners to listen carefully as they could not repeat anything someone had already said.

For the third activity, Martin worked again with the full class and he told a short story about two people who borrow some money to buy something. One uses a bank and one uses a local unofficial person. In the bank the interest rate is fixed, whereas the local person keeps putting up the interest rate. Martin wrote on the board 5 questions related to interest rates. He divided the class in 5 groups and asked each group to discuss the questions for a few minutes.

To finish the lesson, Martin returned to the table on the board showing methods of saving money/keeping it safe followed by the 5 questions on interest rates. He asked the learners to add any advantages or disadvantages they had not thought of, to their own table and to work in pairs to answer the questions.

As the learners were working in pairs, Martin noticed that although learners had been confident identifying advantages and disadvantages of the different methods, they found it more difficult to answer the interest rates questions. After the lesson Martin decided to talk to the numeracy teacher and ask them to revise percentages in the next numeracy lesson, using real examples involving money.

Audio 5.1

In 2008, Egerton Primary school teachers in Kenya were introduced to the TESSA resources. Working together they decided to make some changes in their school. They organised the desks into groups rather than rows, so learners could work together in pairs and groups.

As they started to use more active approaches to learning and teaching, they noticed that some of the children in Grade 4 were struggling with their work in social studies and science because they could not read very well.

Working together, they put a big emphasis on literacy. They created a space in the school for a library. A group of parents came in and helped to build some shelves. The Head Teacher turned to the local Church, national and international charities and with their help managed to build a collection of reading books. They used the African Storybook website to find and print stories in the local languages. Younger children had timetabled sessions in the new library and teachers from all subjects worked together to support literacy. Social studies and science teachers looked at the TESSA Literacy resources and adapted some of the activities to teach their subject.

There was much excitement around the new library and over time, teachers found that children became more confident and enthusiastic readers. One of the teachers set up a scheme where the stronger readers were encouraged to read with those who were less confident during breaks and lunchtimes.

Audio 5.2

Rita teaches Social studies in Grade 6. She was teaching '6.5.1: Elements of weather and climate' and noticed that learners had difficulties with weather words they were not very familiar with. She selected some words they were familiar with and others which were causing problems for learners.

She wrote the words and their definitions on separate pieces of paper. She asked the learners to form pairs with the person next to them. This meant that they worked with a friend and often high attainers were together and lower attainers were together. She gave each pair 10 words and 10 definitions and asked them to match the words and definitions. When they had done their words and she had checked them, they swapped their words and definitions with another pair.

Some pairs completed it very quickly, but some found it very difficult and needed a great deal of help, so it was difficult to organise. She discussed the experience with her friend who taught grade 4.

She decided to keep the pairs how they were but gave them different sets of words. The high attainers had longer more complex words, including some they had never met before and had to guess the meaning of, and the low attainers had shorter, common words.

She found it worked well. The low-attainers gained confidence and learned some common words which would help them in the future, and the high-attainers were challenged to try and read and understand new words.

Audio 5.3

Teacher Samuel was teaching his Grade 3 class about animals and where they live. He teaches them in Chitonga. Only about 25 are confident readers out of the class of 76. He found pictures of six animals and stuck them on the classroom wall. He then drew pictures of where they live and stuck those up on the other side of the room. He made some cards out of old food packets and wrote the name of an animal on half of them and the name of where they live on the other half (all in Chitonga). He gave half the class the name of an animal, and the other half the places where they live. To begin with each learner had to stand next to the picture corresponding to their animal or place. This was to check that all the children could understand the word they had been given. They then had to walk around the room and find a partner who had the name of where their animal lived. For example, 'gorilla' was matched with 'rainforest'; 'worm' with 'mud' and so on. When everyone was paired up, Samuel collected in the cards and gave them out again so everyone had a different word. He did this a few times until he was confident that all the children could recognise the words, and they knew where each of the animals might live.

At the next TGM, he explained his idea to the other teachers.

Teacher Paxina was doing science with Grade 6. She adapted the activity but wrote the words in English. Also, when the pairs had found each other, they had to discuss how their animal was adapted to where it lived. At the end, they had to write a sentence about each animal and why it lived in a certain place.