

Active Teaching and Learning for Africa

Getting Started: Facilitators

You will need to read this information in conjunction with the *Active teaching and learning for Africa – Getting Started* training resources.

Welcome to this enhanced SPRINT school-based continuing professional development (SBCPD) programme designed to support active teaching and learning in line with the *Zambian Revised School Curriculum*. The programme will take six terms (two school years) and will be the focus of your Teacher Group Meetings (TGMs).

The topics for each course will be:

Year 1

Course 1: Classroom management for learner-centred teaching

Course 2: Inclusive teaching

Course 3: Assessment for learning

Year 2

Course 4: Managing and supporting learner-centred classrooms

Course 5: Literacy across the curriculum

Course 6: Being a reflective practitioner

This SBCPD programme has been developed in Zambia by the Ministry of General Education, and 600 teachers and Officials from Chisamba, Kabwe and Mumbwa Districts in Central Province. The Open University (UK) and World Vision Zambia are working with Ministry of General Education as part of a programme called ZEST (Zambia Education School-Based Training) to strengthen the existing SPRINT system and to help teachers implement the *Zambian Revised School Curriculum*. The work is funded by the Scottish Government and is taking place between 2017 and 2022. At the end of the project, these materials will be made available across Zambia.

Facilitator notes: Using audio-visual resources and photographs to support SBCPD

These resources include short films of activities in different schools in Zambia, audio recordings about how to use learner-centred teaching approaches, and photographs from schools and classrooms in Africa. These audio-visual materials are integral to the enhanced SPRINT programme and you and the teachers in your school are encouraged to use them, as they will provide information you all need to proceed.

Audio-visual Resources

A transcript of the audio is always provided which someone could read to the group if necessary.

You and the teachers in your school can view the films or listen to the audio either individually or in groups. After viewing or listening to these sections, it is important that you **all** complete the

activity linked to them, reflect on how you can use this in your own teaching and make notes in your Teacher Notebook.

As the facilitator, you should think about how teachers will view the videos or listen to the recordings.

- Will they do this in the TGM?
- Will they need to share phones?
- Will they watch or listen to it on a computer?
- Do you need to set this up?

Make sure you have watched the video or listened to the audio yourself before asking teachers to do so. You will find it useful to prepare questions to help lead the discussion of the video/audio.

Photographs

The photographs included in the programme can be used to encourage discussion among teachers, too. Before using them with teachers, you will find it useful to identify a few open questions you can ask the teachers to think about as they examine and reflect on each image.

We have suggested a few questions for some of the photographs, but as a facilitator you should also use your own experience to think of other interesting points you want to draw the teachers' attention to.

Watch the video from the District Education Standard Officer in Chisamba (Zambia) explaining how teaching practices have changed and how learners have benefitted from this SBCPD programme.

Facilitator notes: Video Intro 1

Ensure you watch the film before the teachers. Think and plan how the teachers will watch the video: will they watch it all together or in pairs, on their phones or on a computer?

You could prepare some questions to identify the most important points in the video.

School-based continuing professional development (SBCPD)



Teachers working together in a 'Teacher Group Meeting' in Zambia

Zambia has a well-established system for SBCPD, based around regular Teacher Group Meetings (TGM) and the appointment of a School in-service coordinator (SIC) in every school.

SBCPD is based on the view that to implement new ideas, teachers need to work together (**collaborate**), try new approaches in their classroom (**practise**) and think about and discuss how it went (**reflect**) (Korthagen, 2017). They need to do this over time. In this way, new approaches gradually become embedded.

This programme will help you and the teachers you work with make the most of your TGMs. Teachers in Central Province reported that this programme led to more collaboration between teachers, more harmonious relationships, and positive changes in learners, including more participation and in some schools, improved attendance.

Watch the video from a teacher in Kabwe (Zambia) sharing her experience of working with this programme.

Making the most of TGMs

The activities in this programme are designed to be done during TGMs or in preparation for a TGM. There is an assumption that there will be a TGM every 2-3 weeks lasting 1-2 hours; but the SIC and head teacher will work together to organise the programme in your school.

The programme is based on three key principles:

- A good lesson is made up of several different activities.
- The activities that make up the lesson should actively engage learners.
- It takes time to learn how to organise active learning in the classroom and to build up confidence.

As the facilitator you will facilitate the TGM, which involves leading discussions (not giving a lecture!) and ensuring that the time is used productively. You and the teachers in your school will need to make notes in the meeting and be prepared to talk about how the plans you made in the previous meeting worked when you tried them in the classroom.

The purpose of this facilitator guide is to help you facilitate the meetings.

Activity: Making the most of teacher group meetings

In pairs think about meetings you have attended or would like to attend. What would a 'good' meeting feel like for you?

As a group, share your main points. One person could write these on a chalkboard. Agree a list of features of an effective meeting and write them onto a chart which can be displayed in the staffroom.

Some of the things you and the other teachers might have thought of could be:

- Everyone felt able to contribute.
- You have learnt something new which will help you teach better.
- The work done in the meeting has saved you time as you have planned some classroom activities for next week.
- You have had the chance to talk about things you were concerned about.
- People listened to each other.
- The facilitator had planned the meeting and the time was used productively.
- The agenda was shared in advance.
- The people attending the meeting had prepared themselves in advance.

Your role in Active teaching and learning for Africa



Teachers working collaboratively

Your role is to act as a teacher facilitator and help teachers to access and use these training resources. There are two aspects to your role:

1. Facilitating Teacher Group Meetings (TGM) – making sure the agenda is followed, everyone takes part and actions are agreed.
2. Taking an active part in the process yourself, acting as a role model – completing the activities in the resources, watching the short films and listening to the audio, writing notes and your reflections in the teacher notebook and planning activities to try in your lessons.

You are not expected to have all the answers or to provide input for the meetings. You are expected to actively engage with the materials provided and lead the activities suggested in *Active teaching and learning for Africa*. This Facilitator guide should help you in your role.

The *Active teaching and learning for Africa* training resources will focus on building teachers' skills and confidence in active and learner-centred teaching.

In each TGM you will lead your group in working through the material provided, discussing the activities and working in small groups of two or three teachers to plan activities to try out in the classroom. You will need to encourage teachers to use the *Zambian Revised School Curriculum* (to highlight what they need to teach) and the activities in these resources. And, of course, do it yourself!

Between the meetings, you and your colleagues will meet informally in smaller groups to discuss the activities you planned, how they went and how they could be improved. It is your job to encourage the teachers in your school to have these discussions, make notes and write reflections on their lessons and activities in their Teacher Notebook.

It takes time for these sorts of approaches to become routine, so it is important that teachers understand that they will need to practise them regularly before they become confident in using them.

If you are not the head teacher or School In-Service coordinator (SIC) you will need to work with your head teacher and SIC to arrange the time and location of the meetings and help organise teachers in the school into a teacher group.

Running a Teacher Group Meeting (TGM)

Throughout the meeting you will be wearing two 'hats': that of teacher and that of TGM facilitator. As the facilitator you are NOT expected to be the expert or hold all the answers. Remember, you are the organiser of the meeting, ensuring that teachers work in pairs or small groups, have space to share their experiences, have access to the *Active Teaching and learning for Africa* resources and the *Zambian Revised School Curriculum*. For this approach to SBCPD to work, it is essential that teachers work collaboratively during the TGM and in between, to plan activities for their classes and try out the different teaching approaches.

Before the meeting:

- Depending on the time available for the TGM, draft a plan or agenda to ensure you can cover all elements of the meeting. The next section has some possible agendas.
- Think about one successful activity and one activity that did not work so well for you in the classroom to share at the beginning of the meeting. This will reinforce your dual role as facilitator AND a fellow teacher.

- Prepare sections of the training resources that you will discuss at the TGM, including the example of a classroom activity.
- Watch the videos and listen to the audio included in the section you will be working on.

During the meeting:

- Position yourself as a teacher, not as an expert.
- Ensure that all teachers in the group have time to speak. Don't let one or two individuals dominate.
- Share your own experiences including successes, problems and issues.
- Listen to and support colleagues – ask them questions about their experiences.
- Assign teachers to pairs or groups of three based on: a) common class level, b) common curriculum area, or c) friendship, to plan some classroom activities. Draw their attention to the examples of classroom activities provided.
- Keep a note of the pairs/groups in each meeting and encourage them to meet before the next meeting and share their experiences. You can change the groups each meeting or keep them the same.
- Encourage teachers to write reflections on the past week's lessons, notes on the activities they have completed with other teachers in the TGM, and their plans for the coming week in their Teacher Notebook.

After the meeting:

- Reflect on how the meeting went using the questions in the section 'Reflecting on your role as a facilitator'.
- Be aware of what the members of your group are doing and encourage them to meet and to discuss plans and classroom practice between meetings.
- Teach an activity you have planned in line with the TGM and one of the teaching approaches; make notes on your success and challenges to share at the next meeting.

Planning the agenda for the TGM



Teacher Group Meeting

The activities in this programme are designed to be done during TGMs. There is an assumption that there will be a TGM every 2-3 weeks lasting 1-2 hours; but the SIC and head teacher will work together to organise the programme in your school. The aim is that by the end of term, all the teachers in the school have introduced and practised all three of the teaching approaches in the resources provided for each term.

The *Active teaching and learning for Africa* SBCPD programme is about empowering teachers and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own professional development. The TGM should provide opportunities to reflect, share experiences, learn from and plan lesson activities with each other. Encourage teachers to use the Teacher Notebook to write their thoughts while they complete the TGM activities during the TGM, as well as their plans for classroom activities and their reflections on the activities they have taught between TGMs.

Teacher Group Meetings will vary in length and format between schools. Each meeting should contain three parts:

1. Sharing and reflecting on recent teaching experiences.
2. TGM activities.
3. Collaborative planning.

The details are given in the box:

Teacher Group Meeting recommended format

- 1. Sharing and reflecting on teaching that has taken place since the last meeting.**
This is an opportunity for all to share their successes or difficulties, and to hear from others. Try to keep this short, as these sorts of discussions can take place outside of the meeting as well. You will need time to focus on a classroom approach.
- 2. Lead the TGM activities set out in the resources, including the short films and the recordings:** As facilitator, you might need to choose which one/s to discuss in the meeting, depending on how much time you have.
- 3. Working collaboratively in the pairs/groups you organised, teachers should all plan their own classroom activities based on the teaching approach:**
Using the approach discussed at the TGM, and the *Zambian Revised School Curriculum*, teachers should plan a suitable activity to help them try the teaching approach in their lessons as soon as possible.
Depending on the time available, you and your colleagues should aim to plan at least one (hopefully two) activities for your lessons.

Remember: Ideally there will be at least three TGMs in the term, which last 1–2 hours each. This will enable you to discuss the activities in the training resources and work together to plan some classroom activities.

If the meetings are shorter, you will need a few more meetings, and you will need to decide how to divide up the activities. Below are some suggestions of how you can organise TGMs of different length. An important part of your role will be to manage the time effectively.

Agenda examples are shown below:

TGM Agenda Examples

Ideas for planning if the meeting is 30 minutes...

If the meeting is only for 30 minutes, then it is likely that you will be able to fit in more than three meetings in the term. For example:

- 5 mins – Sharing and reflecting on activities completed in the classroom since the last meeting
- 10 mins – Group discussion on one of the activities in the *Active teaching and learning for Africa* training resources
- 10 mins – Collaborative planning – each teacher plans an activity to try in class
- 5 mins – Share ideas

If the meeting is 1 hour...

- 5 mins – Introduction
- 10 mins – Sharing and reflecting on activities completed in the classroom since last meeting
- 20 mins – Group discussion on two of the activities in the *Active teaching and learning for Africa* training resources. You can use this time in different ways, for example:
 - Discuss one activity, share, discuss the other activity and share
 - Watch a short film or listen to a recording together and discuss, followed by an activity
- 15 mins – Collaborative planning – each teacher plans one or two classroom activities to try in class
- 10 mins – Share ideas

If the meeting is 1 hour 30 minutes...

- 5 minutes – Introduction
- 15 mins – Sharing and reflecting on activities completed in the classroom since last meeting
- 25 mins – Group discussion on two or three of the activities in the *Active teaching and learning for Africa* training resources. You can use this time in different ways, for example:
 - Discuss one activity, share
 - Watch a short film or listen to a recording together and discuss
 - Discuss another activity and share
- 20 mins – Collaborative planning – each teacher plans one or two classroom activities to try in class
- 15 mins – Share ideas
- 10 mins – Plan for next TGM

If the meeting is 2 hours long...

- 5 mins – Introduction
- 25 mins – Sharing and reflecting on activities completed in the classroom since last meeting
- 30 mins - Group discussion on two or three of the activities in the *Active teaching and learning for Africa* training resources. You can use this time in different ways, for example:
 - Discuss one activity, share
 - Watch a short film or listen to a recording together and discuss
 - Discuss another activity and share

30 mins – Collaborative planning – each teacher plans two or three classroom activities to try in class

20 mins – Share ideas

10 mins – Plan for next TGM

Encourage your group to prepare for the next meeting by reading the information in the *Active teaching and learning for Africa* resources in advance of the meeting, and to think about the curriculum topics they will be teaching in the next two weeks.

Reflecting on your role as a facilitator

Part of your role as a TGM facilitator is to reflect on how the meeting went and whether you can do anything to improve the next TGM. You can use similar questions to those set out for teachers in the *Active teaching and learning for Africa* resources, adapting them to your role as a facilitator of a TGM. Being reflective is important as it will help you develop your skills as a facilitator. It is important to think about what went well, as well as what could be improved.

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. How did the TGM I planned work in practice?
2. Which sections of the agenda worked well in the TGM? Why?
3. Which sections of the agenda did not work as well as I planned? Why? What can I do to improve this next time?
4. Did I have all the materials I needed? What else would have been useful?
5. Which teachers worked/participated well in the TGM? Why?
6. Which teachers found the activities difficult? What can I do to help them?
7. What do I need to remember next time when I am planning the next TGM?

You will find it helpful to write these questions in your teacher notebook to refer back to as you plan the TGM, as you take notes during the TGM and as you reflect on it after the meeting.

Teacher education in sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA)

TESSA is a network of teachers and teacher educators, working towards improving teaching and learning in sub-Saharan Africa. At the heart of the network is a bank of free, adaptable resources, linked to the primary syllabus and secondary science curricula, which provide activities and case studies for teachers to try in the classroom. Some of the classroom examples in the resources have been taken from the TESSA materials. TESSA resources are available on the website (www.tessafrica.net) and can be downloaded and stored on computers, local servers, or mobile phones.

In year 2 of this programme you will be encouraged to use the TESSA open education resources (OER), which will give ideas for classroom activities that will encourage active teaching and learning.