

# Active teaching and learning for Africa (3): Assessment for learning

## Facilitator guide

You will need to read this information in conjunction with the *Active teaching and learning for Africa (3): Assessment for learning* resources.

## Introduction

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

In the previous two courses you have looked in detail at classroom management for learner centred teaching and inclusive teaching, using and improving your skills in developing pair and groupwork activities, storytelling and songs, and using appropriate questioning.

In this course you will be looking in more detail at how to decide what you want to teach and how you will know that your learners have learnt it – the use of formative assessment in your classrooms. This will involve how you monitor learning in your class and offer effective feedback to your learners, how you find out what they already know and how to assess their learning both during and following your lessons.

## Your role as facilitator

Refer to the guidance on using the audio-visual resources included in the material for the previous course to support SBCPD. It is important that you watch and prepare these before engaging teachers in using them.

You and your teacher colleagues should now be in the habit of recording your thoughts and ideas in the Teacher Notebook. If you and the teachers in your schools haven't yet started using your Teacher Notebook on a regular basis, you are strongly encouraged to start doing so now as this will help you to **plan** activities or lessons, **record** your response to the different activities in these resources and important aspects to note from your lessons, and **reflect** on how your teaching has gone and how to improve it next time. As indicated in the course 1 resource, aspects that you can write about in the Teacher Notebook include:

- ideas that may come to you when you are either studying or in the workplace, or at any other time
- your responses to activities
- notes about the audio you listen to, or the videos you watch as you go along
- notes about discussions you have had with others
- questions that occur to you while you are studying and planning your lessons
- reflections on what you think or feel about your learning.

It is not intended that the Teacher Notebooks should be assessed, as they are personal to each teacher, but for SBCPD to be successful, you all need some way of remembering the ideas that you have when you talk to each other about teaching and learning, so that you are able to build on them.

In the TGMs, and between TGMs, teachers should also find opportunities to discuss with other teachers the different approaches and how to use them effectively in classrooms. A key element of the whole SPRINT approach is collaboration, so you all develop your skills as a teacher. Classroom observation is helpful in supporting collaboration, but can sometime be difficult to organise. Read the example below and then do Activity 3.1 for Facilitators.

### School Example

A school in Mumbwa found that doing ‘demonstration lessons’ disrupted the school. Some children were not taught during that time, and the demonstration lesson was not authentic because the teacher did not always know the class, and the content of the lesson did not necessarily relate to what they studied last lesson or would be covering next lesson. This meant it was not useful for the learners.

Instead, the teachers worked in pairs to observe sections of each other’s lessons. One class could be left for a short time with an activity to complete, and the observation did not disrupt normal teaching. In this way, teachers were able to support each other as they practised new approaches.

### Facilitator notes: Activity 3.1 Collaborating with others

Before asking teachers to do so, make sure you watch and listen to the head teacher from Kabwe and the Assistant DRCC from Chisamba talking about the teacher collaboration that they have observed and how it has helped teachers and learners.

Make notes yourself about what you found most interesting from both speakers and do the activity yourself to use in the TGM to prompt teachers’ contributions.

Think about how you might pair teachers for classroom observations.

- Will you put teachers of the same grade, or the same subject together?
- Will you ask them to select their own partner, who might be a friend?

**Resolutions for this term:** make sure you also have written three resolutions for this term, either in your role as a TGM facilitator or as a teacher and be prepared to share them with teachers as a model of what they can write themselves.

### Activity 3.1: Collaborating with others

Watch the head teacher from Kabwe talking about the impact of teacher collaboration in her school in the video.

As you listen, make notes in your Teacher Notebook about the activities this head teacher has seen in relation to:

- TGMS
- teacher – teacher observations
- learners' outcomes.

Now watch the video with the Assistant DRCC from Chisamba talking on a similar topic and make further notes. Have you had similar experiences in your TGMs with colleagues? Make a note in your teacher notebook of ways in which you could use collaboration with other teachers to help your practice and your personal CPD.

In your Teacher Notebook, write down three resolutions to improve your teaching and your collaboration with other teachers for this term. For example, I will have tea break with... every Friday and we will discuss...

## What is assessment for learning?

As a facilitator it is important you understand the difference between assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning. Remember however that you don't need to have all the answers to teachers' questions, so you might need to think of who you can draw from if you need help to answer any queries. You might want to speak with others in your school, or the district office before facilitating the TGM to ensure you understand different forms of assessment.

Assessment *of* learning scores are often used to rate teachers' or schools' ability to move student achievement based on the results of single, point-in-time tests. In the Zambian primary education context, the end of year exams, and the national exams at Grade 7 are Assessment *of* Learning.

Assessment *of* learning scores can also be used formatively. When teachers return a test to children, they can design follow-up activities for children to work on either independently or together, to explore when went well and why, but also what went wrong and why, and how they might improve their answers.

Assessment *for* learning (AFL) takes place constantly in every classroom. It helps you to track learning and support learners as you go along. Learners will become more involved in the learning process and be aware of what they are expected to learn and to what standard. In this course the focus is assessment for learning.

Assessment for Learning helps learners to:

1. understand what they are expected to learn
2. be aware of where they are now with that learning
3. understand how they can make progress (that is, what to study and how to study).

### Activity 3.2

Take a look at this video of a Grade 7 science class. Would you describe this as Assessment *of* or *for* Learning?

In your Teacher Notebook make individual notes about your reasons for identifying it as Assessment *of* or *for* learning.

Now share your thinking with one or two colleagues. Did you arrive to the same conclusion?

### Facilitator notes: Activity 3.2

The video demonstrates learners working in pairs or small groups to answer questions set by the teacher on the chalkboard. Before this the learners were involved in a practical activity on separating an insoluble solid from water. The teacher does not set a test but rather asks questions to understand what learners have learned from the practical activity they have been involved in.

**Assessment for learning** can be seen in a number of the teacher's actions, including:

- he walks around the class watching what learners are doing
- he supports individual pairs by asking open questions
- he brings learners to the front to share their answers to the questions on the chalkboard.

To support the consolidation of the learning and assessment for learning, the teacher could have asked other groups whether they had more information to explain the answers to the questions, or he could have added more explanations to the answers provided by the learners at the front. Remember – if learners are being asked to explain answers or make a presentation at the front, get each group to explain a different question or present on something different. Learners will lose attention if they have to listen to the same explanation or the same presentation, over and over again.

## Eliciting prior knowledge

Understanding what learners already know about a specific topic is important when teaching. The same applies to your role as a facilitator in terms of teachers' experience in teaching and understanding of pedagogical concepts such as involving all, assessment for learning.

The material identifies three ways that can be used to elicit prior knowledge:

- brainstorming
- using visuals
- local resources.

### Facilitator notes: Activities 3.4 and 3.5

These activities are based on an audio (or reading) and a video. Before discussing them with teachers, ensure you have had time to familiarise yourself with the audio/reading and the video.

### Activity 3.4: Stages in learning process

Nellie has begun teaching her Grade 4 class about forces (Topic 4.5 in the science curriculum) and wants to get them to think about the concepts of 'pull', 'push' and 'twist or turn'.

Listen to the audio or read classroom example 3.2 as she explains how she helps her students do this. As you do so, in your Teacher Notebook write down the various steps or stages in the process

### Facilitator notes: Activity 3.4 Stages in learning process

Some of the steps that could be identified include:

- collecting local resources to support her teaching
- demonstrate to elicit key 'force action' verbs
- brainstorm to elicit learners' knowledge
- word spiders to represent categories of force
- assess learners' understanding by asking them to label picture/objects.

After learning from others through audio/reading and video, in **Activity 3.6** teachers are asked to focus on how to elicit prior knowledge when planning their own teaching. The material provides some 'Top tips for successful eliciting' and you will find it useful to look at these and add any others you might have based on your own experience. If your school physical setting permits, you could also consider keeping these top tips in sight of all teachers in the staff room or the room you use for TGMs.

It is important to remember that, if as a result of these activities, you find out that some learners already know quite a bit about a topic, it does not mean that it does not need to be taught. Rather, it means that you will need to find ways to challenge and extend their understanding.

## Monitoring and giving feedback

Effective monitoring involves **noticing**. This can be achieved in a number of ways, as explained in the resources.

### Facilitator notes

Spend some time in the next TGM with teachers exploring how they can monitor learning effectively within their own classrooms.

When you give learners feedback, you tell them how they have performed in relation to a stated goal or expected outcome. Good feedback from their teacher has a positive tone and tells the learner:

- what they can do
- what they cannot do yet
- how they can improve.

### **Activity 3.8: Using positive language to provide feedback**

In your Teacher Notebook set up a list of sentences you can use to give positive feedback to learners when praising or correcting their work.

Draw a table with two columns:

1. Praising
2. Correcting and prompting.

In the 'praising' column, copy the sentences provided above and add a few others you use regularly.

In the 'correcting and prompting' column, copy the sentences above and add others you regularly use.

Share your examples with colleagues and add their ideas to increase your own lists. When you give feedback to learners, in their written work or in other activities make sure you use different sentences to praise and correct their work.

### **Facilitator notes: Activity 3.8 Using positive language to provide feedback**

Before the TGM, you can prepare a large table for teachers to add their own suggestions of 'praising' or 'correcting and prompting' phrases they can use. This table can be regularly reviewed and added to in order to ensure the feedback teachers give to learners is positive and builds their self-esteem and confidence as they improve their learning.

## Assessing Learning

### **Activity 3.11: Formative assessment**

Below are three classroom examples, all of which show teachers undertaking formative assessment in different ways. As you listen or read the different examples, in your Teacher Notebook:

1. Make a note of what the grade, subject and topic of the lesson is.
2. Write down all the ways in which the teacher is gathering information about the progress of learners (formative assessment).
3. Note down the ways in which teachers use that information to plan teaching.

Compare your analysis with a colleague, and together compile a list of 'top tips' for formative assessment. Display this on the wall of the staff room.

Think about a topic that you will be teaching soon, or have just taught. How would you adapt one of the classroom examples for your classroom?

### Facilitator notes

As a facilitator, take time to read the classroom examples and do the activities before doing them with the teachers. The different classroom examples include aspects addressed through the resources including:

- peer assessment: Classroom examples 3.3 and 3.4
- teacher marking written work and then devising a starter for the next lesson to address a misconception: Classroom example 3.3
- teacher organising a brain-storming session: Classroom example 3.4
- students work in groups to create a revision poster of a topic – assess each other – teacher uses the posters to select a topic to revise: Classroom example 3.4.

#### Classroom Example 3.3

- Supports English curriculum sections for Grade 4
- Includes Assessment for Learning, peer support, teachers setting up additional activity to address issue identified.

#### Classroom Example 3.4

- Supports Social Science Grade 6: historical events
- Expressive Arts: posters (grades 5–7)

## Summary: Assessment for learning

### Facilitator notes

Before the Reviewing your learning Quiz, there are two reflective activities to review the teachers' progress through the term in relation to teaching and collaborating with others. As a facilitator make sure you reflect on your role too, and you identify how you will support teachers to do these reflections and share their experiences: will they do these during the TGM, will you ask them to do this before coming to the TGM?

### Activity 3.12: Reflecting on your learning

Look back through your Teacher Notebook and make a summary of some of the main things you have learned in this course.

- What has helped you to learn?
- Are there any critical activities that made a big impact on you?

Think back to last term – write down any ways in which your lessons are different now.

Discuss your reflections with a colleague and set yourselves three targets each for next term. Think about the things that you think you need to improve and what you can do to achieve that improvement.

### **Activity 3.13: Reviewing your resolutions**

At the beginning of this course you were asked to write down three resolutions to improve your teaching and your collaboration with other teachers for this term. For example, I will have tea break with... every Friday and we will discuss...

Go back to these resolutions in your Teacher Notebook. How much progress have you made in each of these? Did you find any challenges to fulfil them? Do you need assistance from anyone to fulfil them?

As you plan ahead for next school year, think of them and reflect on what you other resolutions you can make to build on all you achieved this year improving your teaching.

### **Facilitator notes: Activity 3.14 Reviewing your learning Quiz**

Complete the quiz before the teachers do it. A separate answer document is available.