support session 6

module 6: working with parents to enhance learning

approximate time – 2 hours

Preparation before the meeting

Arrange the desks in groups so that teachers are able to talk easily with each other.

Make sure you have a copy of Module 6 and the Portfolio with you. Make sure you know the date and time when – and the place where – teachers should hand in their completed Portfolios. Write these on the blackboard or flipchart to show to the teachers at the end of this last session.

You need to prepare by:

- setting up the DVD for the section on ‘Working with Parents’;
- writing the aims of the session and the information about handing in their Portfolios on the blackboard or on a flipchart.

Welcome

Welcome all the teachers and ask them to sign the register. Check they all have a copy of Module 6 and their Portfolio with them. Explain that the session will be divided into two parts. The first part is to:

- explore issues around working with parents;
- and the second part is to:
  - reflect on their own professional learning from studying the SBTD programme;
  - share any concerns they have about completing the Portfolio.

The first part will explore the final element of the teaching and learning dimensions of the SBTD Programme – that of working with parents to help raise standards and achievement. The second part will focus on the completion of the programme and submission of the Portfolio to obtain the Certificate of Completion.

Part 1: Working with parents

Ask the teachers to think what, if any, contact they regularly have with parents. In the centre of the board or flipchart write ‘Links with parents’ and then add their
responses. You could put all positive ideas to one side of the chart and the less positive on the other side (see the example at the end of these support session materials). You may not get many ideas to start with, but keep the chart where you can add to it throughout the session. Explain to the teachers that as the session progresses you will add other possible ways of working with parents that arise from their discussions. Depending on the timing of this last support session, some of the teachers in your group may have already carried out some of the activities about involving parents in school, such as inviting a parent ‘expert’ to come in and talk to the students.

![Table of Possible Comments]

Figure 6: Possible comments from teachers with regards to ‘Links with teachers’.

Now show the video through to the end. If any teachers are very keen to speak, ask them for their comments. Otherwise, ask them to discuss in groups what they think are the advantages of having good links with parents. Again, if teachers have carried out some of the Activities in Units 21 and 22 they will be able to provide their own insights from their experiences to add to those in the video. Give groups about 15 minutes to do this before asking them to list their ideas down one side of a piece of flipchart paper. Then ask them to identify any less positive aspects of links with parents on the other side.

Now show the last part of the video again. Using the lists of positive and less positive aspects of working with parents, now help the teachers, in their groups, to think how they as individuals can start to establish or extend links with parents.
Encourage teachers who have already established links with parents to share their experiences and also to give information about any difficulties they faced and how they overcame these. Ask them to be prepared to share their ideas with the whole group.

As each group shares their ideas with the group, add their ideas to the ‘Links with parents’ list that you started at the beginning of the session. Suggest to the whole group that they write the list in their Programme Notebooks as a resource for future use. Give them a few minutes to do this.

**Part 2: Professional development and the Portfolio**

Ask the teachers to open Units 23–24 and also to open their Portfolios. Looking at Activities 53–57 in Units 23–24 one by one, help the teachers to reflect on their professional learning throughout the programme.

Activity 53 asks them to think about what approaches they take to find out more about teaching and learning. Ask the teachers to share, in their groups, about what they already do. Ask each group to share their group’s ideas with other groups.

Activity 54 asks them to think about what each area of professional development (these are listed just before Activity 54) means to them. Encourage the teachers to think about which areas of professional development have made the most impact on them as a result of the SBTD programme. Why do they think this? Ask them to share their ideas in their groups and then to share their thoughts with the whole group to find out if some areas have affected everyone.

With regard to Activity 55, ask the groups to share what they thought were the most significant points of learning for them from the Activity. Ask them to reflect why the six Activities they selected overall had such an impact on them as a teacher. What impact have the six Activities had on their teaching? Ask groups to share their thoughts about the significance of their learning through these six Activities. Encourage everyone to join in the discussion and to think deeply about their role and responsibility as a teacher. You could list key points on the board or flipchart.

Now talk about Activity 56, which asks teachers to talk with their students about some of the different activities and strategies they have used. Ask those who may have already done this Activity to share the outcomes of what they did and what the students said. How useful did they find this exercise? Would they do it again with their students? What advice would they give to those who have not yet done this Activity to help them gain useful feedback from the student?
Ask all the teachers now to focus again on their own learning and Activity 57, where they were asked to summarise their learning and to set themselves goals. Give them time to start or continue completing their Portfolio with respect to this Activity. As they work, go around and support individual teachers by asking and answering questions, helping them focus on three goals and helping them clarify their thinking.

Before the final farewells, remind the teachers that they need to submit their completed Portfolio by the end of June to the Head Teacher/School Principal to be discussed in the final evaluation session. Display the flipchart with these details so that teachers can write down the information. (The details may be different for different schools and areas.)

As this is the final support session, make sure you end it on a really positive note. Thank the teachers for their participation in the support sessions and in the whole of the SBTD programme. Wish them well with finishing the last parts of their Portfolio. Congratulate them for their efforts and encourage them to pursue the goals they have just identified!