

# Principles of Quality Professional Learning

## WHAT IS QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING?

Professional learning is a continuous process of individual and collective examination and improvement of practice. (based on *Principles for Professional Development* American Federation of Teachers 2002)

Hence the providers/facilitators of professional learning events and programs, in order to provide rich learning opportunities for teachers should ensure that these events/programs meet certain principles of quality professional learning.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

### 1 Professional learning is informed by principles of adult learning

Adults learn in a variety of ways. Adults learn best when they are engaged in active and problem-centred learning and when sharing their experiences with their colleagues. Hence quality professional learning activities are those delivered in a variety of ways which reflect adult learning preferences. (Quality professional learning activities extend beyond the realm of 'lecture' and 'workshop' structures.)

### 2 Professional learning is informed by the best available research on effective learning and teaching

Professional learning activities should be based on research on effective teaching and learning, how students best learn particular content, knowledge and skills, classroom management and curriculum. Results of research should be made available to teachers in order to enable them to build on their professional knowledge.

### 3 Professional learning provides a strong foundation in the pedagogy of the commerce and business studies disciplines

Professional learning activities that only provide knowledge of content are not sufficient. Knowing how to teach subject-specific content and skills is the other critical dimension. Quality professional learning activities help teachers with strategies to enhance student engagement and understanding.

### 4 The content of professional learning is aligned with the standards and curriculum teachers use

Quality professional learning aligns curriculum with State and/or national standards/outcomes. This allows teachers to see how professional learning, content or strategies can be used to achieve standards/outcomes.

### 5 Professional learning provides sufficient time, support and resources to enable teachers to master new content and pedagogy and to integrate these into their practice

[Professional learning activities do not take place in an isolated moment in time]. Quality professional learning overtime provides a sequential program of activities, implementation, reflection and feedback.

### 6 Professional learning is collaborative, involving reflection and feedback to develop sustainable learning communities

Professional learning activities should be directed to individual needs but be organised around collaborative problem-solving. Working in teams best reflects this style of learning. Knowledge, expertise and experience is shared and the conditions for collegial reflection and sustainable learning communities created.

### 7 Professional learning is intellectually engaging and address the complexity of learning

Quality professional learning activities extend beyond the prescriptive and engage teachers in thinking about challenging and complex educational decision-making.

## SUMMARY

**Quality professional learning** is informed by principles of adult learning and the best available research on effective learning and teaching; it provides a strong foundation in pedagogy and its content is aligned with standards and the curriculum teachers use; it occurs over time, is collaborative, reflective and enables sustainable learning communities to be developed; it is intellectually challenging.