

Parameter 7: Job-Embedded Professional Learning in Literacy

Understanding the Parameter

Overview

This parameter addresses the research-based finding of the importance of professional learning that takes place in the school. Job-embedded learning becomes a part of the day-to-day life of the school. It occurs in classrooms with groups of teachers and with staff when they meet as a whole group and is responsive to the school's context-specific needs.

Both district leadership and school staff meetings are key forums for focused discussions that promote professional learning about literacy. When administrative items are communicated in writing by memo or email, teams of administrators, teachers, and support staff can then use meeting time to explore the teaching and learning of literacy. Sessions include a balance of theory and practice and are informed by current research. In job-embedded professional learning focused on literacy, teachers share leadership in planning and designing their professional learning. The adult learners can apply new theory to practice (or vice-versa) while working closely with colleagues doing related work. Job-embedded professional learning in literacy enhances and supports a whole-school focus on student achievement.

What's on the Video?

The video clip features a secondary school staff meeting that shows shared leadership in action. The session is focused on a mid-year examination of student data and effective teacher practice.

Before Viewing

- Ask participants to read the information about the parameter on the Parameter Information sheet **(2–3 minutes)**.
- Encourage participants to underline key points and write notes in the margin.
- Ask participants to turn to an elbow partner and discuss what they understand about the parameter **(3–5 minutes)**.

During Viewing

- Ask participants to use the Key Understandings chart on the Parameter Information sheet to note how the parameter is evident and effectively implemented in the video clip.

After Viewing

- Ask participants to share their notes with the same elbow partners they had before (**2–3 minutes**).
- Debrief by asking volunteers to share some points from their notes about the Key Understandings with the larger group.

Key Understandings

Participants may note the following observations while viewing the video clip.

A shift in thinking, understanding, and practice may be necessary to implement job-embedded professional learning.

- Teachers are learning together as a staff, in the school.
- The administrator is a co-learner.
- Leadership is shared.
- Research on teaching and learning (Venn diagram activity) is examined and discussed by the group.
- Teachers across a range of subjects are learning together.

This approach aligns and connects teachers' work and fosters collaboration, which promotes student achievement.

- Professional learning is informed by student data.
- Teachers are working with student data in their subject areas, but all share a focus that connects their work.
- Teachers seem comfortable discussing session content: they are sharing views, building trust, and demonstrating openness with one another.

Exploring the Parameter

Pose one of the following Guiding Questions for participants to discuss in their table groups (**5–10 minutes**). Ask groups to summarize their discussion and designate one member to share a key point with the larger group.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the components of effective and engaging job-embedded professional development?

Characteristics of job-embedded professional development include these:

- topics that are responsive to needs indicated by student data
- a safe and trusting environment
- shared leadership, a sense of collegiality, and collaboration
- the involvement of everyone, including administrators
- opportunities to implement next steps and share results

2. How would the professional learning that occurred in a job-embedded model have a positive impact on student achievement?

- Teachers and their colleagues would be supporting one another and working together to monitor their practice and examine the resulting student data.
- The direct involvement of administrators in the learning would increase their understanding of students' needs and their ability to support staff.
- A positive culture of learning across the whole school is more likely to develop.

Facilitator Notes

District and **school leaders** will need to understand and further investigate how to encourage and support staff in sharing the leadership for planning, implementing, and assessing job-embedded professional learning. These processes are complex.

School leaders may need to encourage an understanding of the rationale for this parameter. They can provide opportunities for staff to consider the pros and cons of both off-site professional learning and job-embedded professional learning. They will have to be able to clearly articulate research that supports an emphasis on job-embedded professional learning as key to increased student achievement.

University educators can contribute to the success of job-embedded professional development in schools by building an awareness of its importance in their students and by including the skills of professional collaboration in their programs. A range of job-embedded approaches can be undertaken, discussed, and critiqued.

Applying the Parameter

Consider the group's focus at this stage and then select an activity.

- **Awareness:** Is the group working toward developing an understanding of the parameter? See Activities 1 to 8.
- **Analysis:** Are group members critically analyzing the concepts or strategies presented in the parameter and assessing to what extent they agree with them? See Activities 1 to 7.
- **Planning:** Is the group ready to begin thinking about how to implement the parameter in its school or district? See Activities 1, 2, and 7.

Planning Next Steps

The facilitator's role is now to guide participants in determining what they as individuals or as a group will do to move the theory of this parameter into practice in their work setting. Specific to Parameter 7, next steps may include the following:

- **District leaders** may explore the current range of job-embedded professional learning within their districts (and the ratio) and carefully plan the steps that will embed more such learning in schools, for example, fostering a shared vision, developing and monitoring a consistent focus for learning, and providing resources and support necessary for school leaders to fulfill new responsibilities.
- Both **district** and **school leaders** may develop plans to provide training in coaching, consulting, and collaborating skills as a way to support the work of literacy leadership teams.

It is important to record and monitor the progress of the group's plans for implementing the parameter.

Making Connections

Related Parameters	Themes	Recommended Readings
<p><i>Parameter 2:</i> Designated Staff Member for Literacy</p> <p><i>Parameter 4:</i> Principal as Literacy Leader</p> <p><i>Parameter 6:</i> A Case Management Approach to Monitoring Student Progress</p>	<p>Change Knowledge and Expertise</p> <p>Professional Learning</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Shared Leadership</p>	<p><i>R3:</i> Great Expectations: The Transformation of Lake Wilcox Public School</p> <p><i>R7:</i> Creating a Culture of Change</p> <p><i>R8:</i> Change Knowledge</p> <p><i>R9:</i> Getting Acquainted with the Essential Nine</p> <p><i>R10:</i> Learning-Focused Classrooms: Patterns of Practice</p> <p><i>R15:</i> Building Professional Community in Schools</p> <p><i>R16:</i> On-the-Job Learning</p> <p><i>R17:</i> Use These 6 Keys to Open Doors to Literacy</p> <p><i>R19:</i> Transformational Leadership for Challenging Schools</p> <p><i>R20:</i> Building the Capacity to Lead</p> <p><i>R21:</i> What the Teacher Leader Needs from the Principal</p>