

Perceived Teaching and Learning Needs Reflected during the In-Service Teacher Training

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Abstract

Teachers especially those who are teaching elementary and high school students need to upgrade their teaching practices in order to become effective and efficient facilitators of learning. It is in this context that this study is conducted in order to present the perceived teaching-learning activities needs among basic education teachers in the three campuses of the University of San Carlos, Cebu City, Philippines as expressed during their In-Service Teacher Training. The study employed the quantitative-qualitative research design and used the researcher-made survey questionnaire to look into the ten items under Teaching-Learning Activities to determine which item teachers need to be trained and retrained on. The data were solicited during the teachers' In-Service Teacher Training period conducted on May 2015. It was found out that designing interesting and meaningful classroom activities, strategies in teaching and assessment procedures were identified as the most needed areas that teachers want to be included in their in-service training. As these expressed needs were indentified, the teachers' in-service training becomes a venue for teachers' instructional development needs to be addressed so as to maximize their students' learning outcomes.

Keywords: In-Service Teacher Training, Perceived Needs, Teaching Practices, Teaching and Learning Needs

1. Introduction

The need for teacher's professional development programs is of increasing interest (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, Espinosa, 2017) in this age of educational technology. For school administrators to facilitate impactful teacher professional development, a shift in thinking that goes beyond the acquisition of new skills and knowledge to helping teachers rethink their practice is required (Patton, Parker & Tannehill, 2015). A teacher engages in professional development program in order to enhance instructional delivery. One dimension of this preparation is the in-service teacher training that schools provide as part of their faculty development plan. This training provides opportunities for teachers to be updated with trends and issues in their discipline at the same time reflect on their teaching practices so they can enhance both their personal and professional qualities as facilitators of learning. This paper presents the results of the Teacher Training Needs Assessment Survey conducted among the University of San Carlos (USC) Basic Education Teachers based on their In-Service Teacher Training experiences on May 2015. Using the researcher-made survey questionnaire, teachers were asked to rate the five areas being looked into namely: Teaching Learning Activities, Campus Ministry, Guidance, Testing, and Administration. This paper will only highlight the summary results on the five areas of the training. Based on the findings, Teaching Learning Activities was found to be more needed followed by Administration, Guidance, Testing then Campus Ministry. It was noted that there is a need to standardize the teachers' training in order to be relevant and useful for the teachers.

Teacher's In-Service Training is an important aspect of a school's faculty development plan as it provides opportunities for teachers to upgrade and improve their teaching practices. Teachers bring to formal in-service programs differing attitudes and beliefs born of years of life and work experience, positive and negative, that profoundly affect learning outcomes (Bullough, 2009) and influence the teachers' way of teaching as perceived by their personal experiences (Bollough and Baughman, 1997). The professional life of a teacher is accompanied by a set of expectations such as professional behavior, the ability to communicate, team working, reflecting and learning (Denby, 2012). It is during in-service teacher trainings that teachers reflect on their own teaching practices as that they get to be reminded of this realization. As such, teachers need time to reflect on their teaching practices as these are part of both their personal and professional

development that are oftentimes neglected due to magnitude of tasks and deadlines they have to attend to. There is no agreed-on terminology used for in-service professional development programs. “Staff development” and “in-service training” are sometimes used for short-term workshops or short courses that offer teachers information or ideas, often abstract and unrelated to teachers’ work (Cochran, Smith & Lytle, 2001). They can be based on the delivery of information by experts to teachers, whose role is largely passive. “Professional development” or “continuing professional development” (CPD) are used for a continuous, career-long program that encompasses more comprehensive teacher learning and relies strongly on more-active forms of learning, sometimes facilitated in workshops but often in teacher groups at the school or cluster level (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). The “newparadigm” of professional development has moved away from short-term teacher-training events where information is transmitted by an expert to a group of attentive listeners to a more constructivist model (Lind, 2007) where she advocates the constructivist model based on the recognition that learning takes place over time and that active learning requires opportunities to link previous knowledge with new understandings (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001 and Upitis, 2005).

In the Philippines, the term In-Service Teacher Training refers to the school’s faculty development program for teachers to be aware familiarize the school’s policies at the same time improve their teaching skills. Schools regularly conduct annual in-service training for their teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning process, the quality of students’ outputs and outcomes, and the quality of teachers that both relate to their self-efficacy and professional development. With the recent educational reform, the implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (K+12 Educational Program), more teachers need in-service trainings to cope with the demands of the new educational system in the country. In fact, 140,000 teachers undergo training for K+12 program last May 7 to June 1, 2012 (Ronda, 2012) <http://www.philstar.com/headlines/807429/140000-teachers-undergo-training-k12-program>. As teachers attend in-service teacher trainings, they bring with them varied classroom experiences that they want to improve or share best practices on what works in their classes. However, not much has been written nor being documented on how the training has helped the teachers in terms of improving their classroom performance and even their personal and personal self-worth as a teacher.

The University of San Carlos Basic Education Department provides a regular in-service training to their teachers annually. This training is usually held during summer particularly during the last week on month of May and would even extend to first week of June. This becomes a requirement to all teachers for personal enhancement and professional development in order to prepare them for the start of the new academic year. The training usually takes about two weeks and the topics vary depending on the need of the school and the availability of resources and speakers. The In-Service Teacher Training is one of the means to achieve the school's faculty development plan that provides professional development among teachers. The in-service training for teachers is a basic component in planning for teachers' professional development. Thus, every year schools provide this training for teachers to improve their classroom practice and their professional competence. It is then important to document, monitor, and evaluate the in service training and solicit feedback from the teachers themselves in order to improve the program and respond to their needs. In this connection, this paper presents the teachers' training needs based on the five areas identified in order to provide feedback on how the training can be improved to help develop both the personal and professional efficacy of the teachers will eventually lead to more productive learning outcomes.

This study looks into the perceived needs on teaching-learning activities among basic education teachers as reflected during their In-Service Teacher Training. A survey was conducted among the teachers soliciting information on their training needs based on their classroom practices. These needs were not responded in their training. Since teacher training is supposed to be the venue for teachers to express their need to improve their classroom practice, then the training should be responsive to their needs as facilitators of learning in the classroom. Training needs vary in different professions yet training needs assessment and analysis have common intentions of improving a practice (Clarke, 2003). The purpose of a training needs assessment is to identify performance requirements and the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by an agency's workforce to achieve the requirements. <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/planning-evaluating/> Training Needs Assessment, March 16, 2015.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employed the qualitative-quantitative, descriptive research design with the purpose of looking into the teachers training needs based on the five identified areas. These are Teaching Learning Activities, Campus Ministry, Guidance, Testing, and Administration. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was used to solicit data on the teachers' in-service training needs that relate to both their personal efficacy and their professional development. This was the In-Service Teacher Training Needs Assessment Tool that was used to collect the needed data. Part one of the questionnaire solicit the respondent's profile based on their personal profile, professional background and teaching experiences. Part two solicited information on the teachers' training needs based on the five areas. They were asked to rate these areas according to which ones are mostly needed in relation to how they can improve their teaching practice. In addition, they were also asked on how relevant the topics were, how useful were the information in terms of classroom application, and how their personal efficacy both as a person and as a teacher were improved during the in-service training conducted.

The data were solicited during the teacher's In-Service Teacher Training conducted on May 2015 in the University of San Carlos, Basic Education Department. There were twenty four male teachers and one hundred twenty female teachers from the three different campuses (Montessori Academy, North Campus and South Campus) where the needed information were collected. These teachers handle subjects from different learning areas.

3. Results and Discussion

The relevance of a teachers' training is in its application to classroom practice. In order to determine the significance of the teachers' in service training in the Basic Education Department of the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, Philippines. There were five dimensions of the training program which were rated by teachers based on what is the most needed to the least needed during their training. Table 1 shows the result of the survey on the teachers' in-service training needs.

In-Service Teacher Training Dimensions

There were five identified areas during the in-service teacher training that were looked into namely: These are Teaching Learning Activities, Campus Ministry, Guidance, Testing, and Administration. Teacher-respondents ranked these areas based on what they believed to be important in improving their teaching practice.

Table 1 shows the summary and the corresponding priority needs among USC Basic Education teachers in terms of the most needed to least needed areas for their in-service training. 47.22 % of the teachers indicate Teaching Learning Activities as most needed compared to the other areas. This is attributed to the fact as teachers they want to improve their teaching performance by recognizing what they really need in their classroom teaching to become more efficient and efficient in their classroom tasks.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Administration	21	14.583	3
Campus Ministry	10	6.944	5
Guidance	33	22.916	2
Teaching Learning Activities	68	47.222	1
Testing	12	8.333	4
Total	144		

Table 1. In-Service Teacher Training Dimensions

In organizing in service trainings, schools must take into account the teachers' pre-existing teaching practices and find ways on how to improve their instructional delivery. As such, they should ask the teachers on what aspect of their teaching they feel inadequate so needed scaffolding activities can be designed to be incorporated in the in-service teachers' training. Next to teaching Learning Activities is Guidance which is 22.92 % and followed by Administration which is 14.58 %. Teachers have also expressed their need in handling students' behavior in the

classroom thus this ranked second on their in-service training needs. This implies that teachers have difficulty managing students in the classroom due to varied personalities and family background where some problematic behaviors surfaced during classroom interactions. Third in the rank is Administration. Teachers expressed some lack of support among some administrators that deprives them of fully delivering the services intended. This is concretely manifested in forms of intrinsic and extrinsic support. It was noted that for Administration, teachers also expressed the need for open communication between the administrators and the faculty in order to ensure that teachers' academic, professional and even personal needs must also be considered when administrators make decisions for it can also affect the teachers' performance and actuations in class. Fourth in rank is Testing which got 8.33% then least is Campus Ministry which is 6.94 %. Testing is also identified as a needed area for this is where the students' previous are validated in relation to their present academic standing. Last on their expressed needs which is close in number with testing is Campus Ministry.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of the survey conducted regarding the in service trainings conducted every year, teachers expressed their sentiments on how they can best be helped and supported in their quest to improve their teaching ability that will lead to improve student achievement. In response to the challenges expressed by the teacher-respondents in the study, it was noted that teachers need to undertake a more specific training on their expressed needs that will lead to a more productive and meaningful teaching.

The in-service teacher training is an avenue of realization and provides opportunities for teachers to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback on how they can enhance both their personal and professional development as a teacher. The experience of having such kind of training is a way of evaluating and monitoring what the teachers need in order that they become effective and efficient facilitators in their classes and can help them perform their tasks successfully in school. With these, the following are recommended:

1. The In-Service Training for USC basic education teachers must be programmatic and developmental. Programmatic means that there should be a focus on what specific teaching skills must be addressed. The teaching skills must be based on the field of

specialization of the teacher. Developmental means that there is a need to determine the teacher's current teaching abilities first before he or she will undergo the training, and an assessment and monitoring scheme to find if the teacher has improved.

2. Regular classroom observations and peer mentoring must also be in place to ensure that what has been delivered during the training is implemented in the classroom. This way, the teacher's skills can be validated.
3. It will be more efficient and effective if the training materials are in modular form so each teacher can monitor his/her own progress based on how he/she accomplishes the tasks reflected in the module. This will also paved the way for the standardization of the in service training program.

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