

The Need for In-Service Training for Teachers and It's Effectiveness In School

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Abstract

This essay discusses the need for in-service training for teachers and the effectiveness of in-service training in school. In-service training act as a catalyst for teacher's effectiveness. It is also a way of updating teachers' skills and knowledge for improving teaching and learning which lead to better job performance. In-service training is important for teachers to face new challenges and changes in the education world. In-service training is also a fundamental aspect to improve teacher professionalism. The effectiveness of in-service training is important so that teachers can apply the knowledge acquired in teaching and learning. Few factors that contribute towards the effectiveness of in-service training are role of administrator, attitudes of teachers, training needs and strategies in conducting in-service training.

Introduction

Training program in an organisation is a process by which people are taught with skills and given the necessary knowledge or attitude to enable them to carry out their responsibilities to the required standard in the present job and to undertake greater and more demanding roles for effective job performance. Organisations are facing many changes which are related to economic needs, social needs and technology needs. As such, training programme plays an important part to overcome these problems and to cater the needs of the organisations.

Training program is also important in the education sector same as the other sectors or organisations. The need for training in education particularly for teachers are important to improve the quality of education in Malaysia. Teachers are crucial in implementing educational reforms in accordance with the aspiration of the National Philosophy of Education. The success of a school curriculum is closely related to its effective implementation. Teachers have to be personally aware of the school curriculum, improve and enhance the necessary skills to interpret the concept changes accurately and to implement the modified curriculum according to its requirements, aims and objectives.

As such, the need for in-service training or staff development programme for teachers plays an essential role in successful education reform. It also serves as a bridge between prospective and experienced educators to meet the new challenges of guiding students towards higher standards of learning and self development. In developing the professionalisme status of teachers, the training program such as in-service training should not be run away from the reformation that occurs.

In-service training has for many years been the driving force behind much changes that has occurred in the area of teaching and learning. As in any other profession, it is vital that teachers keep up to date on the most current concepts, thinking and research in their field. This, in turn supports in their 'lifelong learning' as educators, as

professionals and as individuals who are responsible for the education of the next generation. Teachers play an active and vital role in the development of productive and dedicated Malaysian citizens.

The knowledge, idea, skills and attitude of the educator must be developed through an integrated and systematic way. According to Marsha & Naftaly (1999), one of the important components to improve the quality of education is through in-service training for teachers. With respect to this, even though there are many in-service training programmes organised by the Ministry of Education, State Education Department and District Education Office, but the effectiveness of in-service training in schools should not be taken lightly by school management and also teachers.

The need for in-service training for teachers

The need for in-service training in schools is getting more attention for teachers to equip with new knowledge and skills for them to face new challenges and reformation in education. In-service training can enhance the professionalism of teachers who can contribute to the organisation to achieve its goals. In-service training is a professional and personal educational activity for teachers to improve their efficiency, ability, knowledge and motivation in their professional work.

In-service training offers one of the most promising roads to the improvement of instruction. It includes goal and content, the training process and the context. According to Ong (1993), in-service training is the totality of educational and personal experiences that contribute toward an individual being more competent and satisfied in an assigned professional role. The primary purpose of in-service training is to enable teachers to acquire new understanding and instructional skills. It focuses on creating learning environments which enable teachers to develop their effectiveness in the classroom.

In this aspect, in-service training for teachers is the driving force behind much change that has occurred in the area of teaching and learning. It is vital that teachers keep up to date on the most current concepts, thinking and research in their field and also promote professional growth among teachers in order to promote excellent and effective teaching and learning environment for students. According to Kazmi, Pervez & Mumtaz (2011), in-service training for teachers enables the teachers to be more systematic and logical in their teaching style.

In-service training is a planned process whereby the effectiveness of teachers collectively or individually is enhanced in response to new knowledge, new ideas and changing circumstances in order to improve, directly or indirectly the quality of pupils' education. According to Abdul Rashid (1996), in-service training comprises two main elements, that is the fulfillment of pupils' learning needs and ensuring personal and career development of the academic staff.

In-service training is a fundamental aspect for the enhancement of teachers' professionalism related to the teachers' vision to improve the quality of their work. Through in-service training, teachers can identify and evaluate critically the culture of the school which can bring changes to the working culture. Studies by Ekpoh, Oswald & Victoria (2013) show that teachers who attend in-service training perform effectively in their work concerning knowledge of the subject, classroom management, teaching method and evaluation of students. Studies by Jahangir, Saheen & Kazmi (2012) also show that in-service training plays a major role to improve the teachers' performance in school.

Besides that, in-service training also provides teachers with ample opportunities to learn new concepts, methods and approaches through professional development. In-service training is a deliberate and continuous process

involving the identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff for furthering their job satisfaction and career prospects and of the institution for supporting its academic work and plans, and the implementation of programmes of staff activities designed for the harmonious satisfaction of these needs.

In-service training can also change the attitude and skills of teachers and further increase the performance of students. It also can help to change the procedures, approaches and practices teacher teach, the way student learn and would also help to create an excellent school culture in schools. According to Frederick & Stephen (2010), during the in-service training, teachers will schools management skills, evaluation techniques and master wider content areas of their subjects. For this reason, teachers and educational experts should increase their effort in fostering and implementing in-service training in schools so as to improve the effectiveness of development in schools.

In-service training have undegone considerable change in the recent years. As a practice, “result-driven in service training is concerned with changing behaviour and/or attitudes of teachers, administrators and staff members rather than being concerned with the number of participants in such programs”.(Ronald,2004:169). It is literally impossible today for any individual to take on a job or enter a profession and remain in it without any changes. Therefore “in-service training is not only desirable but also ab activity to which each school system must commit human and fiscal resources if it is to maintain a skilled and knowledgeable staff”.(Ronald, 2004:170)

The importance of in-service training should be looked in various perspectives. It promotes a very flexible environment and allow teachers to adapt with the working situation and it is also one form of motivation for employees or employers and it will continue to increase creativity in teaching and learning process. It also enable teachers to acquire new understanding and instructional skills to develop their effectiveness in the classroom.

In-service training for teachers should have a positive effect on teachers in increasing knowledge, communication with their involvement i n planning school activities and also it increased the staff motivation. Studies done by Thompson (1992) shows that, after going through in-service training, there are positive change in teachers attitude, increace self confidence and also follow up with teachers readiness in facing any various resistance situation. This shows that, training program that is planned and implemented well will give a positive effect on students, teachers and schools.

In-service training places teachers at the centre of any improvement effort and assumes that the work of the teacher and the visions that teachers have about improving their work. According to Owen, “the positive aspect concerning professional development of teachers are that the program will make sure that learning activities is planned and concentrated on empowering effectice teachers to correct policies, curriculum development, teaching and views on how to achieve high productivity and students performance”. (Owen, 1990:175). It is vital that the positive performance result from the students will bring profits to teachers themself based on the additional recognition from colleagues at work place and the administration. In-service training for teachers will not only bring positive effect to the teacher, but also students and school because the changes that is expected has a close relation between teachers,students and schools.

Effectiveness of in-service training in school

The important factor in conducting in-service training for teachers is the effectiveness of the programme. Many researchers stated that, an effective training programme should be conducted in the school itself because the teachers will be involved in the planning and implementation of the training from the beginning to the end. Besides that, the effectiveness of the training programme is very much related to the awareness of teachers for self-improvement and development. There are few factors that contribute towards the effective of in-service training for teachers in school. The factors are:

i. Role of administrator

In-service training must be proactive rather than reactive and its effectiveness depends on the extent to which it is personalised and based on positive constructs. In this aspect, in-service training in schools requires strong leadership. This leadership usually comes from the principal, but it is sometimes provided by an assistant principal. Administrators as leaders, establish an atmosphere of support and trust, offer incentives and rewards for participation and provide sustained moral and material support. Administrators should serve as a role models by participating fully in the training activities.

School administrators face the challenging task of providing for the professional development of teachers in their schools. According to Alice, “this responsibility is assigned to them because administrators have ready access to data that provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses of the individual staff members, the needs of the students, the weak areas of curriculum, the values and desires of the community and how their school measures up to Education Ministry’s goals and objectives”. (Alice Ong, 1993 :158). In this aspect, it is necessary for administrators to provide a process of involving teachers in the identification of professional skills that need to be improved and for involving them in the design of activities and programme to provide this skill development.

The principal of a school is the most influence person in implementing the in-service training even though he or she doesn’t involve technically. Principals own style, level of activity, authority, leadership and the relationship with teachers, seems to be interacted well with idea of school improvement. The principal is seen as the potential person to manage the in-service training, and also become the facilitator to the teachers. In this aspect, an administrator should play the role as a teacher, counselor and friend and must be able to give full support and encouragement to the teachers in training.

The role of principal is identified as significance in terms of creating a positive climate conducive to collaboration in matters pertaining to staff development. The absence of a supportive work context can create difficulties for teacher development and change-based initiatives. In this aspect, principals need to be pro-active in their creation of psychological conditions within their schools so that in-service training will be possible. The success of in-service training depend on attitudes and interpersonal relationship within the school. School principals is the best position to establish the conditions necessary for collegiality.

Principal’s leadership behaviour are related to the success of the school, the training program, evaluation and the decision making process. According to Steyn (2011), the effective of leadership are related to the active involvement of the administrator in learning and development process in the school. Besides that, Heaney

(2004) & Lee (2005) stated that, the principal or headmaster should be committed in identifying the training needs for teachers and prepare a suitable training based on their needs.

School administrators should create awareness regarding the need for in-service training for teachers. The need for in-service training must be identified and accepted by the staff's themselves. In this aspect, the administrators must be able to create the awareness among teachers by using a proper approach in order for the staff members to accept the responsibilities to attend the in-service training. The effective training programme depend on the administrator who are willing to stimulate and encourage staff members.

Teachers have the perception that evaluation that is done by administrator after attending the in-service training is very important and useful in motivating teachers. This is because the administrator was able to prepare specific data on certain aspect and help in overcoming classroom problems and at the same time give positive feedback on teacher's skill. The role of the principal or headmaster in making evaluation based on program objectives and also giving recommendation on teacher skills is one of the important aspect that principals are supposed to have so as to ensure achievement of the in-service training for teachers.

Obviously, the roles by the school and especially the administrator is very effective in bringing changes because administrator have to make sure the needs of the teachers in the school is fulfilled. Teachers have the view that the role of principal are important in making sure the success and effectiveness of the training program. Therefore, even though principals do not run the program in their school, teachers still hope the assistance and full support from principals when they attend any training program.

ii. Attitudes towards in-service training

The effectiveness of in-service training in school is also related to the attitude of teachers in school. Teachers should have a positive attitude towards in-service training organised by their school. Teacher's attitude towards teaching philosophy, in-service training and educational reform can influence their response towards training that is conducted. Attitudes are reflections of employee's beliefs and opinions that support or inhibit behaviour. "In a training context, we are concerned about employee's attitudes that are related to job performance". (P.Nick Blanchard & James W.Thacker :1999)

Relating to this, teachers that have high positive attitudes toward their job are more interested to try new techniques and strategies, including those that they have learn from training conducted in their schools. Apart from that, the objectives of in-service training in schools is to change attitude and work schedules of teachers so as not to depend solely on instructions or circulars that will cut down the emphasis on prescriptive culture. In this way, teachers will emphasis on team spirit and feeling of ownership as a source of importance when they attend in-service training and this will contribute towards the effectiveness of the training.

Attitudes are important issues for training because they effect motivation. Motivation is reflected in a person's selection of goals and the amount of effort expended in achieving those goals. According to P.Nick Blanchard (1999), goals and effort are influenced by how the person feels about things related to the goal. Because of the relatively strong relationship between a person's attitude and behaviour, attitudes that motivate teachers to perform or learn more effectively need to be addressed by in-service training.

Since teachers in schools participate in the planning and delivery of in-service training, it's only natural that they would consider the programs to be worthwhile. Teachers must have a positive attitude and consider that

continuous in-service training to be absolutely essential to their professional growth and the improvement of teaching. Teachers must describe in-service training as a 'way of life' in their schools – a way of life that they never want to give up and its effect is also important in changing teacher's attitude and confidence towards teaching and learning.

One of the important aspect in in-service training is self-development. To achieve self-development, teachers must have a positive attitude towards in-service training in schools. Teachers must be ready to attend training with a positive attitude and participate actively during training. Growth is personal in the sense that what motivates each individual is an individual matter. In-service training is self-development in that growth begins with a personal need and teachers develop by taking responsibility for their own growth with a positive attitude when attending a training program. This will definitely lead towards the success and effectiveness of the in-service training attended by the teachers.

iii. Needs analysis for in-service training

The primary purpose of in-service training is to increase the knowledge and skills of employees and thereby increase the potential of the school to attain its goals and objectives. The process of assessing employee needs is essentially the process of determining the discrepancy between the existing and the needed competencies of the staff. This analysis also must consider projected human resource needs. According to Robert, "the data obtained from the human resources inventories used in the human resource planning process along with the data obtained from needs assessment techniques provide the framework within which program goals and objectives can established". (Ronald W.Rebore, 2004: 119)

An effective in-service training must be able to identify systematically the needs of employees because it's the base to develop the objectives and the activities for training program. In identifying the training needs, many aspects have to be taken into consideration. It's important to understand that training need analysis is a process to identify employees that need training and what kind of training they need. A need analysis should precede the planning and execution of a training program. In a need analysis, the school administrator determines exactly what the staff training needs are, before designing a program to meet them.

There are several methods of determining which needs to focus on in the in-service training. The first method is to evaluate the school district's output variables such as performance levels and growth levels of employees, school community relations, employee-management relations, employee job satisfaction and the like. Another method is direct feedback from school district employees regarding what they feel on organisations development needs. The final method of determining training needs involves projecting. If the new programs, procedures or equipment are predicted, some type of corresponding training will be needed.

As can be seen, training needs analysis is important to determine the objective and the content of training and to identify the teachers really need training for their professional development and to improve their knowledge in many aspects of teaching and learning which will give benefit to the students. With this, the training will run well and will be very effective with the aim of improving the quality of the teacher.

iv. Strategies of in-service training

In-service training shall be implemented according to a through, comprehensive and well organised plan than includes goals, objectives, strategies, activities, materials, assessment plan and program evaluation procedures that are well defined and coordinated with each other. In making sure that the process of channeling knowledge becomes reality, the approaches used in presenting in-service training should be appropriate with the needs of the participants. Through the process of andragogy, an adult can obtain knowledge more effectively. This is based on theory that adults have higher level of self-development effort and learning through experience.

Each method and approach used in in-service training in schools have its strong and weak points. Therefore, to use the right methods or approaches should be suitable to the objectives, contents, ability of the participants and facilities available in the training program. (Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, 1992). The effectiveness of such method and approach used will depend on the knowledge, skills and discretion of the coaches or facilitators with respect to the concept, planning, implementation and evaluation of the approaches used.

The contents that is delivered should be suitable and be able to increase and develop the level skills, knowledge and positive attitudes of teachers. In schools, the contents are more emphasized on the subject syllabus, the pedagogy of learning, teaching and learning strategies of certain subjects or skills and classroom management. According to Matnoh Minan (1995), the suitable course content will only developed through observation, listening and feedback from potential participants by the facilitator or coaches.

A crucial important aspect in conducting in-service training is what kind of materials and media is suitable and effective in delivering the course content. The choice of equipments and materials must be suitable with the contents and training objectives that will be presented. The materials and equipments must be evaluated from time to time to make sure its effectiveness and suitability. According to Hacer (2012), the effectiveness of in-service training is also very much depend on the materials and resources used and whether new materials are created during the course.

In conducting in-service training in schools, time factor will affect the effectiveness of training. Too long of the training session will interfere the teachers concentration. While session held just after schooling time will not be suitable because teachers are tired after teaching. If it is conducted during weekend, some teachers would think that it is a holiday for them. Therefore, it is important to identify the most suitable time and session for training, teachers recommendation should be taken into account. This will make sure that teachers will be more ready and prepared to attend the training program.

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it clearly shows that in-service training is important for teachers in school as a tool for professional development and to enhance their knowledge and quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are facing new challenges and changes in the education world and it's important for teachers to equip themselves With new knowledge and skills by attending in-service training in order for them to play an important and effective role as an educator. Besides that, the effectiveness of in-service training is important to ensure that the training is suitable and bring positive effect to the teachers. The effectiveness of the in-service training is influenced by the role of administrator, teacher's attitude, needs analysis and strategies used in the training program.

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