

# TEACHING CRAFT AS AN ART: TEACHER'S REPertoire OF SKILLS AND STRATEGIES VIA PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT

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## Abstract

This research discloses one of the dimensions of the teachers' quality of work life among secondary teachers. It was found out that professional growth and development through continuing education had a significant correlation with the amount of trainings that the teachers had. The more training the teachers had engaged with, the better they become as a professional teacher. It equipped them to be more productive and skillful. They felt the great importance of this dimension in their teaching career. Teachers became aware of the current trends and innovations through career progression.

It also showed the greatest impact on the teachers quality of work life. Teachers positively embraced the significant contributions it could bring to the teaching profession and that secondary teachers could possess varied repertoire of skills and strategies in the teaching and learning process through professional growth and continuing education.

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**Keywords:** Continuing Education, Motivation, Trainings, Professional Growth

## Introduction

Education is life. It is a continuous and a social process as well. Such nature and philosophical foundations attribute to education claimed by our philosophers in education. Can education withstand its attributes if our educators remain contented with a status quo? If they continue to believe that their college education in obtaining their teaching career is sufficient to face the multi-challenges of the time. Teachers have the vital role toward country's economic growth and development so it is a necessity for them to update themselves with the modern trends and thrusts of the Department of

Education to cope with the rapid societal changes brought about by technological advancement affecting people's lives in day-to-day endeavor. Do we want them to be left behind?

Teachers have the great desire of growing professionally because they want to be more effective in their teaching career to improve and enhance their knowledge, skills and attitude toward their tasks (Obaob, 2009). Generally, it is a common knowledge that teachers want to improve their teaching performance, to receive constructive suggestions regarding the areas they need to work on and be commended for their job well done. This is not only true to teachers but even to other occupations man belongs to. Thus, teachers would like to experience growth and development, a sense of where one is going in one's work life because of work life is linked with professional development and profession is developed from such interaction of individuals within the organization. Like for instance, attendance to trainings, seminars and conferences are opportunities for continued learning and development as in further studies on master's and doctoral degrees.

Hence, institutions, business firms and other agencies particularly DepEd find ways that their employees or teachers will be given opportunities for personal growth and development. The Quality of Work Life of teachers is enhanced and performance is improved their productivity of the whole organization is also improved.

## **Methodology**

This dimension on the quality of work life utilized the questionnaire on professional growth and development with nine (9) descriptors using the 5-point Likert Scale. Preliminary steps were observed before the conduct of the survey questionnaire such as seeking approval from the higher authorities and the like.

This particular tool identified whether the school provided opportunities for the teachers to develop their special abilities, to improve the required skills in technology, to keep learning new things and whether the school had encouraged more programs for them to grow professionally. It also sought to find out whether the employer had concern of the employees' professional development and whether continuing educational opportunities were ensured. This dimension was correlated with the teachers' relevant attendance to trainings, seminars and conferences. In order to find out the importance of this factor in developing WQL, multiple regression using ANOVA was employed. A focus group discussion (FGD) using the interview questionnaire prepared and conducted by the researcher was utilized to validate the results of the survey.

## Results and Discussion

This dimension on teachers' quality of work life is shown in Table 1 that is, the professional growth and development. There are 9 items presented in this table. Eight items or 88.89% were favored by the teacher respondents. This implies that a teacher has always the desire to develop his own special abilities if there is an opportunity. Opportunity comes rarely in one's life that it should be grabbed when given a chance because when teachers' abilities are kept dormant then it's difficult to keep pace with the rapid societal change due to advancement of technology. Like for instance, the influx of electronic gadgets which can be employed for classroom instruction. Nowadays, children as early as nursery/kindergarten are already exposed and can manipulate computers. It is imperative that teachers must be ahead with two steps or more; hence, there is a need to develop one's skills and knowledge and even attitudes. The world is facing competitive forces even in the field of education. New facilities are provided by the institution of learning in order to maintain, develop and enhance high performance; thereby, attaining a very high quality of work life.

The need for training of teachers on technology is conducted in order to achieve the required skill and facilitate learning more efficiently. DepEd is prioritizing budgets for Information Communications Technology trainings for teachers. All secondary schools are encouraged to train teachers on the use of technology. Training of teachers on the use of technology, different teachings strategies in their areas of specialization, training on capability building and other skills training are needed by the teachers in the K to 12 curriculum. This is the focus of the department of education in training teachers in preparation for the Junior and the Senior high schools in the present curriculum implemented. Government spends millions for these several trainings conducted from national, regional, division, down to school levels of trainings and seminars. Teachers with enthusiasm and excitement availed these very generous trainings with free board and lodging, free transportation, free meals and registration, unlike in the past years when K to 12 was not yet implemented, teachers trainings were seldom conducted and if ever there were trainings teachers were hesitant because they have to spend their personal money that's why teachers are only selected especially those who can afford and close to the heart of the school administrator were usually chosen. Hence, ambivalent feelings were felt and joyful teachers for those who were chosen to attend trainings but frustrations for those who felt discriminated for not being sent to trainings.

Table 1 *Perception of the Teachers on Professional Growth and Development*

| <b>Descriptors</b>  | <b>N</b>   | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b>   | <b>Computed <math>\chi^2</math></b> | <b>p-value</b> | <b>Description</b> |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. I have the opportunity to develop my own special abilities.  | 190        | 4.14        | 0/63        | 154.34                              | 0.000          | Sometimes          |
| 2. Training programs on technology help an employee to achieve the required skill for the task efficiently. | 190        | 4.22        | 0.65        | 46.87                               | 0.000          | Always             |
| 3. My job requires that I keep learning new things.   | 190        | 4.44        | 0.59        | 67.87                               | 0.000          | Always             |
| 4. More opportunities offered for learning new things.  | 190        | 4.10        | 0.64        | 147.47                              | 0.000          | Often              |
| 5. Encourage more programs for employees professional growth and personality development.                   | 190        | 4.14        | 0.76        | 207.32                              | 0.000          | Often              |
| 6. Management encourages employees to step outside their comfort zone to improve & educate themselves.      | 190        | 4.10        | 0.70        | 124.74                              | 0.000          | Often              |
| 7. Employers are concerned with the employees ' professional development                                    | 190        | 4.04        | 0.71        | 136.44                              | 0.000          | Often              |
| 8. Management ensures continuing educational opportunities for those who are interested and qualified.      | 190        | 4.04        | 0.70        | 133.75                              | 0.000          | Often              |
| 9. I enjoy the opportunities I receive to constantly learn new things.                                      | 190        | 4.12        | 0.59        | 82.94                               | 0.000          | Often              |
| <b>Totality</b>   | <b>190</b> | <b>4.15</b> | <b>0.66</b> | <b>100.16</b>                       | <b>0.000</b>   | <b>Often</b>       |

*Ranges of the Weighted Mean:*

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| <i>1.000 – 1.799</i> | <i>Never</i>     |
| <i>1.800 – 2.599</i> | <i>Seldom</i>    |
| <i>2.600 – 3.399</i> | <i>Sometimes</i> |
| <i>3.400 – 4.199</i> | <i>Often</i>     |
| <i>4.200 – 5.000</i> | <i>Always</i>    |

All institutions are encouraged to offer programs for employees' professional growth and development to step out from their comfort zones to improve and educate teachers. Hence, employers should have great concern for such dimension. Consequently, the school administrator ensures

continuing educational opportunities especially those who are qualified and interested.

The teacher respondents being a part of the team were sometimes given the privilege and were proudly grateful to be counted as one. Being a part of the organization is an indicator of success. What one has contributed makes every teacher proud and boosted their quality of work life.

On the other hand, there is only one or 11.11% of the items responded always by them. Teacher respondents believed that their contribution to the team creates an impact on the overall goal in general. One's contribution to the group is not how big or small it is but more importantly how meaningful the contribution is. Robert H. Lauer (2003) said that meaningful work contributes higher quality of work life on the part of the employees and high academic performance on the part of the organization.

Emadzadeh, et. al (2012) cited that education is one of the organizations that considers success dependent on the use of committed teachers for the welfare of the learners. He further stressed that teachers are the most important and effective forces of education therefore attention to their work environment is one of the tasks of education. This is true to the sense that teachers are the front liners of educating our young children.

On the other hand, the teachers strongly favored on the descriptor on the importance of the use of technology. With the advent of the new technology, it is but necessary for teachers to always enrich their knowledge and skills on information and communication technology (ICT). It is one of the skills that we need to develop among the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. Teachers need to keep learning new things to enable them to assimilate in the era of globalization.

Some respondents in the FGD, when asked what contribution does it provide them in the classroom instruction on their attendance to training, seminars and conferences they happily commented this way:

*“It generally improves my classroom instruction and alleviates my sense of professionalism.”*

*“Foster better learning and enhancement on the part of the teachers and greater chances of a positive and fruitful transfer of learning to the students and to the whole community as well.”*

*“It helps me to be a transformed teacher in different aspect of my endeavor.”*

*“Improves my teaching profession and provides a lot of opportunities to adopt new techniques and strategies applied in my classroom instruction.”*

Similarly, most of the other respondents commented that their attendance to training really improves their teaching. All of these descriptors in the dimension of professional growth are more favorable for both teachers and the school administrators. During the conduct of the focus group discussion, many respondents expressed their enthusiasm and the benefits derived on professional development as quoted:

*“Teachers opportunities in attending trainings are overflowing, not like before that only a few are selected to attend the seminars but now almost everybody is directed to attend.”*

*“Yes. Trainings here and there are offered with free transportation, registration and board and lodging.”*

*“So happy for being sent two to three times a year and now I am an NC1 and NC2 holder. Thanks to my school principal who ordered and allowed me to be trained, all free.”*

*“So challenging and enhancing experience.”*

*“It’s a blessing for us old teachers. I was given a slot to attend trainings relevant to my subject area twice a year last year and twice again this year. Thanks to DepEd.”*

In contrary, there were some teacher respondents who sadly expressed of not being chosen to attend in the seminars. Here are as follows:

*“Seldom. I was not allowed to attend because I am retiring next year.*

*I am interested to grow professionally so I attended and spent my own money for fare and other incidentals.”*

*“Trainings are for professional growth and insights gained like new approaches, techniques in teaching are important to our learners. Why deprived me?”*

*“Very discriminating! School principal is giving priority on the young bud teachers to attend trainings. I also need them even though I have taught for more than 26 years already.”*

Opportunities for growth and development are for everyone not only for newly-hired teachers but also for those who have many years of teaching

experience. There is contentment when teachers are treated fairly and quality of work life is attained.

The study revealed that professional growth and development significantly correlates with trainings attended by the secondary teachers. . It simply implied that the teachers would grow and develop professionally if given the chance to attend trainings, conferences and conventions. It is imperative that DepEd should organize seminar-workshops to enhance the teachers' quality of work life. It also implied that teachers must be provided with adequate opportunities for trainings, seminars and conferences. Training is an avenue to which the teachers systematically acquire and improve the skills and knowledge needed to their teaching tasks (Condevillamar;2001;14-16).

The next table shows the correlation between professional growth and trainings attended. The results showed a positive correlation between the two. It implied that the professional growth of the teachers greatly depend on the trainings attended. This positive revelation would mean further that teachers must be sent for trainings, seminars and conferences in order to enhance their teaching prowess thereby yield a better quality of work life among secondary teachers.

Table 2 *Correlation Between Professional Growth & Trainings Attended*

| Variables                         | N   | r - value | t-value | p-value | Description              |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------|---------|---------|--------------------------|
| Professional Growth & Development | 190 | 0.593     | 0.000   | 0.000   | Significantly Correlated |
| Trainings Attended                |     |           |         |         |                          |

Training programs enable teachers to do more than simply implement particular techniques; they help teachers learn to think pedagogically, reason through dilemmas, investigate problems and analyze student learning to develop appropriate curriculum for a diverse group of learners (Semadeni;2009). Professional development is the key to school improvement; hence, institutions need to include training programs in their school plan for the general improvement and development of the school. Trainings must become an enjoyable, meaningful on-going process that motivates teachers to continually learn from one another and consistently apply best practices. One of the greatest challenges leaders face is motivating teachers to incorporate best practices especially tenured teachers who sometimes ignore innovations. Most educators already have developed habits of working alone instead with colleagues which hinders the improvement process (Semadeni;2009).

## Conclusion

The provision of opportunities for teachers' professional growth through attendance of trainings, seminars and conferences help much for the improvement of their content and instructional skills.

Teachers grow professionally to learn new insights, skills and knowledge, techniques and teaching strategies for the benefit of the learners. Effective classroom instruction is attained when teachers apply what they learned from seminars and conferences. When programs for professional growth are provided, teachers' knowledge on the current trends and policies of education are updated resulting to work contentment, thereby; boosting high quality of work life and achieving high academic performance on the part of the school.

Provision for faculty development among teachers is important in developing their quality of work life. It greatly created an impact on the teachers' teaching-learning process.

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