

BRIDGING THE GAP TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

by:

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When academic performance is poor or desired outcomes are unmet, many research studies focus on student factors. However, why do we always concentrate on the student? Can we consider another perspective? What if the problem lies in the effectiveness of teachers rather than the motivation, intellect, or background of the student?

Teachers and their methods significantly affect learning (Candrasa & Cen, 2023). Studies show that contributory factors can positively or negatively impact performance. One of which is teacher effectiveness (Briones et al., 2022). Kilag et al. (2023) acknowledged that teachers faced challenges that affected their performance due to limited support for their professional development.

According to studies, effective teacher Professional Development Programs (PDPs) that emphasize pedagogy, practical teaching practices, experienced trainers, and long-term school-based training are most effective in addressing these challenges (Popova et al., 2022). Effective programs typically prioritize practical classroom experience, continuous professional development, and alignment with the specific needs of students and society (Asfahani et al., 2023).

The Department of Education (DepEd) provides these requirements. These include In-Service Training (INSET), Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Teacher Induction Program (TIP), school-based training, national and regional conferences and workshops, specialized training programs, and action research and Development

Programs. These programs aim to enhance the quality of teaching, improve educational outcomes, and support career advancement. But if provided, what caused the problem with PDP?

Teachers exhibit low attendance in PDP despite the availability of these programs. Contributing factors include heavy workloads, financial constraints, lack of support, irrelevant content, low motivation, and insufficient incentives.

Teachers consistently engage in various tasks beyond the classroom. Many of them are tasked have additional work at home even beyond classroom hours and working schedules. This workload hindered them from participating in available PDPs since they were already loaded with tasks they had to accomplish.

Teachers are often breadwinners. It requires them to provide for their families financially. Though there are available trainings that they can attend, they are restricted that may require them such as registration fees, accommodation, and travel expenses.

Follow-up and support in the training could also raise an issue. Without consistent mentoring, coaching, and monitoring of their progress, teacher-acquired competency will not result in immediate improvement in practice.

The relevance of training affects motivation to attend PDPs. Needs assessment must be done so that specific challenges that need to be improved and resolved will be the topic of the program.

The motivation of teachers to attend PDPs is also affected by their work demands, which overwhelm them. They feel burned out and demotivated.

Incentives also play a role in teachers' motivation to attend training. They often direct it to their needs in promotions and goals. The absence of recognition or incentives opt them not to prioritize the training.

To address these challenges, improving access, making PD more relevant and practical, offering financial support, and creating stronger links between PD and career advancement could help boost teacher attendance and effectiveness. Numerous studies prove the importance of the teachers in the learning process. Investing in them and motivating them to attend PDPs is not a waste.

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