

# English Language Teachers' Perceptions of PAAET's Professional Development Programs: Implications on Guideline Formulation for Training Programs

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## Abstract

Teachers' professional development is a life-long and continuous process in which teachers are expected to upgrade their knowledge, master new skills, and change their practices, since advancement in their teaching career has an impact on their students' achievement and education reform. This study determines the teachers' assessment of professional development programs at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) in Kuwait. The study utilized a quantitative research method using a survey questionnaire, which was distributed online to 31 in-service teachers. Results indicated the infrequency of teachers' development program in the institution. Teachers who had stayed at least nine years had undergone 1 to 3 training programs. Training on soft skills is perceived to be relatively more effective than training on hard skills. Nevertheless, majority of the teachers attended relatively more hard-skills training than soft-skills training programs. Thus, hard-skills training should further be planned to improve effectiveness since more training is provided in these areas.

**Keywords:** professional development, in-service teachers, teacher development, soft skills, hard skills

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background Information

Teachers' professional development refers to how the teachers learn and how they apply the lessons that they have learned in practice to support the learning process of the pupils. Both individual and organizational factors have an effect on the teachers' professional learning and development. Understanding the effects that the factors have on the learning process of the teachers is important in the improvement of the quality of the services that they provide to the students in the institutions (Postholm, 2012). With the possible variety of individual and organizational factors, training, either pursued individually or extended by the institutional affiliations, is a factor that provides this impact on students.

Teaching principally rests on the teacher's professional learning process because it directly affects the students' learning and achievement. The qualifications obtained by the instructors during the institutional and voluntary training have an immense contribution to the learning process of the students. The teachers gain the teaching skills, as well as complementary skills, through various development programs they go through during their teaching careers. The possession of competencies, therefore, ensures the desired quality of the teaching-learning process. To ensure that the inputs to the teachers' competencies produce the expected outcomes, an assessment of these training programs is important. Program evaluations allow the determination of better decisions about program direction, allocation of resources, program design, implementation, management, efficiency, and evaluation; a better understanding of the program and the trainees' needs; better cohesion and collaboration among the program team and other stakeholders; and better means of effecting the desired outcomes (Zorzi, Perrin, McGuire, Long, & Lee, 2002). From the assessment, appropriate adjustments can be made in future development programs to address specific training needs. Specific guidelines can be identified to formulate and to implement more meaningful

teachers' development programs.

This study examines the perceptions of teachers on teachers' development programs so that guidelines for developing and implementing effective training programs for third-level education teachers. Determining these perceptions should help in identifying which types of programs produce the desired impact in developing the competencies of teachers. The guidelines which will arise from these evaluations can also help in focusing resources in enhancing teachers' skills. Institutional efficiency can be promoted as programs that are ineffective can be improved through the identification of the specific components of the training program.

The current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine from an assessment of teachers' development programs the practical approaches for program formulation and implementation.
- To help design meaningful teacher development programs based on the guidelines.
- To ensure that the elements of the development programs are carefully considered in the planning of training programs to avoid ineffective results.

These intentions only fall within the boundaries of the specific types of teachers' development programs. Thus, the resulting guidelines arise only from the outcomes of the evaluations of the sample population.

### *1.2 Research Problem*

In line with the changing student needs and industry demands for college graduates, educational institutions' teaching and learning processes are placed under emphasis since these processes directly contribute to the students' ability to achieve success in their chosen fields. Teachers are significant inputs to these processes. The factors contributing to the teachers' competencies are also important inputs in determining the qualifications of the teachers and the quality of their teaching. More training and effective training are key inputs to teachers' work performance. To ensure that these development programs provide what they are intended, the evaluation of the training programs needs to be conducted. The assessments can provide indications of the effectiveness of the training; hence, these also indicate if the teachers have imbibed the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their teaching functions. However, since teachers' development programs may fall under specific types of training, the need to identify which specific type which is ineffective should allow for adjustments to become effective. These adjustments can be executed through the formulation of guidelines so that the assurance of program success and the teachers' teaching-learning processes can be better assured.

### *1.3 Purpose of the Study*

This study's primary purpose was to determine the teachers' assessment of professional development programs at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) in Kuwait. The assessment shall lead into the formulation of guidelines in the design and implementation of teachers' development programs for PAAET's English Language teachers in the college level. The formulation of guidelines intends to streamline program offerings that will contribute to the increased effectiveness of the different teachers' development program in the institution. These guidelines can be used in designing and implementing the training programs. The evaluations of the previous programs should help to pinpoint specific areas which need improvement and to strengthen further areas that may be perceived effective. The institution should benefit from the guidelines through having a ready reference in making decisions about how programs can better match the needs of teachers, as well as how these programs can increase the teachers' competencies. The guideline should provide the means to improve the training and to allocate resources.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Evaluations are important institutional feedback mechanisms. In the directions of Higher Education, the emphasis on learning and student outcomes calls for the need for assessments (Praslova, 2010). The evaluation mechanisms should allow for determining the effectiveness of the institutional purpose. Since the teacher is the main input to learning and student outcomes, the inputs to the teachers also deserve to be assessed as these directly affect the goals for students. Hence, the role of evaluations can be theoretically grounded on systems theory, which indicates that social organizations are open systems and are affected by the environment in many ways. These ways include the inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback. Through feedback, the organization gains information as it relates to the environment. How the organization uses the information provides the appropriate adjustments which should lead to the organization's proper functioning. Feedback is an important aspect of a functioning healthy system (Praslova, 2010; Farjad, 2012). Organizations must know how the training programs are aligned with the institutions purpose. Therefore, these programs must be examined based on their effectiveness. For a tertiary-level

institution to remain relevant in a dynamic environment, evaluating its processes and using the results of these assessments provide for a continuous adaptation of the institution's program offerings.

Praslova (2010) argues that schools toil against how assessment is used to improve educational processes. Accrediting bodies are also criticized to be unclear with selecting the right measures and instruments. Higher education institutions may choose and use different gauges and instruments which do not establish a logical relation between the gauges and the school's concerns. These institutions are identified to experience challenges in applying a sustainable and meaningful evaluation program that is valuable to the school. Nonetheless, the schools can benefit from the formulation of guidelines from evaluations that emanate from the distinct consideration of educational purposes as well as the link of the indicators to training effectiveness. In general, there is a need to develop a convenient and systematic basis which can assist Higher Education to be more purposeful in their evaluation efforts. The intention of creating guidelines arising from evaluations proves the use of appropriate information in formulating teaching-learning processes, either for teachers or students.

Moreover, Kirkpatrick's four level model of training evaluation criteria assists in providing a full understanding of the use of evaluation tools. This model includes four levels of criteria such as reaction, learning, behavior, and results. Being most popular, often cited, and applied in Higher Education, the use of this model helps to get feedback on the effectiveness of training efforts, which are differentiated and more specific (Praslova, 2010). Relating the systems theory, Kirkpatrick's model presents usefulness in making adjustments.

The reaction criterion is the first among the four-level model, which comprise of the perceptions of the trainees. These are represented by teachers' evaluations of the training program and by the self-report about the impact to the teachers' levels of competencies. Reactions are more often evaluated due to the ease of collection. The next criterion is learning, which are, in the case of teachers, the different forms of instructional approaches and other teaching skills. The teachers' performance or skill demonstration indicates this criterion. The third criteria is behavior, also referred to as transfer criteria. The on-the-job performance or the effects of training on work performance should indicate this measure. The effectiveness of training for teachers is determined by the transfer of this training to the students (Farjad, 2012). Teachers should be able to determine the objective indicators of their performance. In teaching, this may be evident in applying new approaches in delivering lessons that indicate increased student interest and learning. Behavior in the workplace is also another way to measure this criterion. Teachers can observe themselves relate with superiors when receiving guidance in their work or with peers when working along with them in projects or cooperative teaching opportunities. The final criteria, results, are indicated to be hard to evaluate since these may be measured through student satisfaction, improved teacher morale after training, or productivity or profitability gains for the institution (Praslova, 2010). Noticing a combination of both tangible and intangible aspects makes known the cited difficulty in detecting and assessing these things. Additionally, these criteria appear to be secondary outcomes since the subject of training involve teachers. Students' learning and effects to the educational institutions' operations are these secondary outcomes, while effects to teachers' competencies are the primary outcomes. The stakeholder perspective explained in Praslova (2010) is identified through the specification of these primary and secondary outcomes. Thus, the complexity suggested rests in the variety and possible conflict of interests of the stakeholders. In summary, the four criteria or levels help point to the usefulness of evaluation, which leads to the formulation of guidelines for training programs to ensure their effectiveness.

### **3. Review of Literature**

Various studies advocate continuous learning and development for the teacher as the practice ensures better teaching qualities, which affect the quality of learning for students. Development programs abound, but not all of them guarantee the development of skills effectively. Skill development programs for teachers are wide-ranging in literature and indicate varying effects to the development of competencies for the teacher. This section presents the related studies through the quality of professional development programs and the need for guidelines.

#### *3.1 Developing Teacher Development Programs*

Wong and Yeung (2003) argue that feedback is the most crucial aspect of designing and developing educational programs for instructors. Perceptions of the participants' course about the effectiveness of the delivery lead to the redesign of the program as to its appropriateness. They claim that the survey questionnaire is the best tool to obtain feedback from program participants, and Likert-scales are used to get their perceived effectiveness of the program. They also believe that surveys are recommended to be kept at minimum length to encourage completion. These surveys also need to be simple and have good construct validity. Furthermore, self-funded programs use these evaluation tools to determine the level of participant satisfaction and their tendencies to recommend the program to others. This study suggests the use of participants' perceptions to determine effectiveness of a training program,

which reinforces the use of perceptions in this study. The participants' feedback contains perceptions that allow them to gauge within themselves the impact of development programs.

Another study provides a more detailed perspective of determining the effectiveness of a teacher training method. Rizvi (2010) developed a classroom observation schedule designed to assess the efficacy of a teacher training approach called the Cluster-Based Mentoring (CBM) Model. This model integrates the contextual realities and different needs and priorities of the teacher, the school, and the educational system. The study details the development of the classroom observation schedule, which can be used to develop the guidelines specified in this research. Construction of the observation schedule included the capture of authentic and reliable classroom practices. CBM Model's breadth covered every significant observable activity related to classroom teaching practices and student behavior, such as teaching approaches, teaching skills, teaching aids, student evaluation procedures, students' behavior, appearance, and visual aspects of teacher-student relationship. The second part of the development of the classroom observation schedule included the observation schedule refinement. A pilot study was conducted to refine the conceptual understanding and data collection tools. The refinement criteria encompass consistency and the schedule's ability to yield data pertinent to the CBM model. Consistency is established through the assurance of internal consistency of the subscales by using Cronbach's alpha. Other criteria for consistency enlist relevancy and representativeness of the content domain and measurement task and technical and structural quality. Findings in this study led to the execution of small changes in the structure and the training program. However, the techniques used in this study provided insight into the design and the program's execution since a set of criteria would have been identified to ensure improved outcomes.

Measurement of development programs in specific fields of teaching also provides insight into the nuances of teaching subjects. Bell et al. (2010) examined a development program for teaching mathematics. The knowledge of teachers who took the program was compared with colleagues who had not taken the program. A survey questionnaire was also used to determine the teachers' assessment of the program and its outcomes. The results indicated better knowledge than the comparison group. The outcome was mostly attributed to the facilitator's experience. This element in the training program shall be used as one of the aspects in developing the evaluation instrument for development programs. Other contributory factors to the teacher's increased knowledge were program features and interaction scales among participants and facilitators. The teachers were observed to be actively engaged and supportive of each other, compounding the learning atmosphere. For institutional training, this feature appears to be an evident feature since attendees to the institutional training may likely belong to the same organization. Hence, the probability of social interaction and support appears to be an inherent feature. Programs outside of the institution may not immediately present this benefit unless the training programs allow for time to develop these interactions.

Similarly, Soine and Lumpe (2014) studied the importance of the measurement of the characteristics of teacher professional development. The study employed a more complex approach with its cross-sectional ex-post-facto study. Like Rizvi (2010), the study employed consistency measures of the instrument through Cronbach's alpha for the survey instrument. The purpose of the study was to refine tools that measure the characteristics of professional development. Essential components to the professional development program included skills, knowledge, thinking, application, and relationships, as specific indicators for each were identified. The resulting characteristics included active and engaged learning, focus on content, coherence with teachers' needs and circumstances, collective participation, and duration. Overall, the instrument was found to be a viable tool in capturing the teacher's perceptions about professional development characteristics. This study also supports the use of perceptions in assessing professional development programs, which contribute to the use of a similar approach in evaluating training.

In another study by Darling-Hammond, Hyster, and Gardner (2017), the effective professional development programs comprise seven characteristics. These characteristics included: focusing on content, incorporating active learning and utilizing adult learning theory, supporting collaboration, which are typically in job-embedded contexts, using models and modeling of effective practice, providing coaching and expert support, offering opportunities for feedback and reflection, and is of sustained duration. The researchers further suggest that having a number of these characteristics simultaneously is sufficient to evaluate a professional development program successful or effective. Though, programs can contain all seven characteristics as provided in the Reading Recovery Program illustrated in their paper. The study also recommends using Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to produce high quality of teaching and student learning. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), when PLC is properly implemented, it can be an active, collaborative, and reflective job-embedded feature. As a result, this is beneficial for student learning because teachers gain a shared understanding of what is good work, misunderstandings about students, and effective suitable instructional strategies for professional

development programs. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) also, specify conditions where professional development programs' effectiveness is inhibited. These inhibitive conditions are clustered at the school and system levels. For the school level, these limitations include the lack of time allocated to teaching curriculum that uses the newly acquired knowledge and skills, the need to use a pacing guide for teaching mandated curriculum, lack of professional development programs in addressing students' learning needs, lack of resources, and management issues. The researchers indicate that the lack of resources is the most significant limiting factor. For the school level, four overarching areas were identified. These are identifying professional development programs' needs, selecting approaches that are most likely effective, implementing approaches that have quality and fidelity, and assessing program outcomes. The study is comprehensive to include implications for policy, implementation, and practice. Practically, the guidelines that will be formulated as an outcome of this study address the limitations identified here.

Yoon et al. (2007) criticized single-shot, one-day workshops since these are superficial, fragmented, and non-cumulative. They upheld the need for sustained, intensive, and content-focused programs, similar to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) contentions. Additionally, professional development programs must be aligned with and directly relate to national academic content standards, student achievement, and assessments. These programs also need to enhance the teachers' knowledge of their subject areas and advance their understanding of instructional strategies arising from scientific research. Regular evaluation is also advised to guarantee success. On the other hand, it is assessed that single-shot, one-day workshops may be conducted to reinforce skills or to provide updates that may not necessarily take too long. Besides, these types may be designed as a series and on an interval, which may suit specific intentions.

García and Weiss (2019a) stated that professional training and continuous implementation of teacher development programs helped teachers adapt to changes in what is required to teach and examine. It also helps in the prosperous early career transitioning of novice teachers from training colleges (pre-service teachers) to the classroom (Martin & Christopher, 2020). Effective programs help educators improve their practice, too. According to DeMonte (2013), most of the training programs that occur do not align with new teaching strategies and other professional-learning activities. The study also unearthed a fundamental disconnect between high-quality professional development and integration into a classroom situation because they are too generic and unrelated to the everyday practice of teaching and teachers' attitudes. The study provides insight into the need to establish the connection between high-quality professional development programs and application to the classroom. There must be an effort to bridge the gap from the criticism of being too generic or irrelevant to daily practice of teachers.

### *3.2 Soft Skills in Teachers' Professional Development*

Soft skills can be defined as personal non-academic traits that enhance teachers' interactions, performance, and viewpoints (Tang, 2017). Elements of soft skills may include teamwork, problem-solving, professional morals, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, friendliness, and personal habits. Teachers' soft skills are essential because they help manage the demands of a classroom effectively. Alasfour (2017) posits that the acquisition of soft skills in teachers can have an impact on their quality of teaching and student achievement.

Consequently, soft skills can boost competency and upsurge teachers' ability to subsidize collective transformation and progression. Ngang et al. (2015) observed that when teachers acquire soft skills and apply them in the workplace, the teaching and learning processes become more inclusive. Research by Martin and Christopher (2018) further raised awareness on the significance of soft skills by encouraging teachers to adopt them at the beginning of their teaching career, because they are beneficial when solving problems in various scenarios. Accordingly, soft skills have been shown to supplement hard skills: for instance, the combination of effective communication, critical thinking, and pedagogical skills in classrooms as a teaching exercise package helps students analyze complex situations and make justifiable evaluations. By integrating the soft skills, teachers can convey ideas and thoughts with clarity, while as reciprocal, students become active listeners and provide relevant responses. Attainment of these skills, therefore, can affect the quality of teaching and learn in schools. According to Tang (2017), soft skills can be developed through activities, practice, and working experience in actual situations. The skills can also be acquired in events, such as encouraging free thought processes among learners, promoting lifelong learning because teachers and learners can systematically disseminate information. The study also considered soft skills acquisition as imperative in teachers' career development and enrichment. The evaluation of soft skills then aside from hard skills must be integrated in assessment form as these skills are evidently included in how the teachers perform in their workplaces.

### *3.3 The Importance of Using Guidelines in Teacher Development Programs*

A professional development program is a plan, also referred to in the educational sector, as continuing professional

development for teachers. It contains specific goals and the means of achieving them, which also provides an outline for what should be done and directs the actions that should be accomplished. The plans are synchronized which the teacher personally wants to progress and may vary with other teachers since the goals may relate to the role or job level desired or improve teaching styles or capabilities. Plans may come in various forms, and guidelines can be one of them since guidelines provide a future direction for action. The following literature on the importance of guidelines and their use informs this study and helps develop teacher development programs.

Vega (2015) asserted that sustained professional learning and refinement of teaching practice contribute most significantly to promoting students' learning. The development of systems contributes to the sustainability of the learning process. The development of systems here implies the need for tools and frameworks, such as guidelines, for teacher training. Specifically, the inclusion of collaborative and job-embedded feedback cycles facilitates the critical reflections on the teaching practices. Moreover, administrative support is identified to play an active role in the learning processes of teachers. The implementation of such guidelines may require the support or cooperation of other members of the educational institution. This feature allows teachers the social structures for using the information from evaluation instruments.

Arnold (2020) emphasized the necessity of developing guidelines, especially for those who are new in the teaching field. He stated that the guidelines give support to teachers' competencies contribute to the instructional design and the development of the knowledge base. The guidelines were developed based on research-based tasks and operationalized into Gilbert's Behavior Engineering Model in his study. Data, resources, and incentives are identified to provide the most influence in affecting change in performance. According to Arnold (2020), the guidelines can be represented through a handbook for instructors, and the designer of the guidelines must analyze the environment for causes of performance gaps. Through a provision for these causes, the effectiveness of the guidelines should be underway.

Furthermore, DiGennaro Reed et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of using behavioral skills training to provide teacher support. According to their study, an intervention plan followed by teacher training and progress monitoring, which attempt to resolve the struggles with implementation, is essential to provide adequate teacher training. In their study, the researchers developed a behavior-science based model of consultation to train and support teachers. The model consisted of initial teacher training and ongoing teacher support, whereas the teacher training portion consisted of instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback. Specifically, the ongoing teacher support portion included a schedule of observations, progress monitoring, feedback and rehearsal, and directed coaching. These guidelines focused on scheduling classroom observations, recording treatment integrity data, and frequently delivering performance feedback and reinforcement after initial training. Besides, if the teachers still struggle even with the support, in-classroom coaching or directed rehearsal can be used.

As guidelines present benefits for undertaking programs for development, writing the plans is an essential part of the process. Guzder (2019) recommends a nine-step plan for professional development. These steps include:

- An assessment of the current level of competency in a particular skill.
- The identification of specific goals.
- A gathering of information relevant to the desired goals. This step suggests the role of evaluation tools in obtaining information that may be useful for improving teaching competencies as a goal in the educational institution.
- The identification of professional skills already possessed and the gaps from the ideal skill set or teachers. This process can also be aided using evaluation instruments as this allows the comparative identification of what is and what is not present in the teacher's capabilities.
- The methods in which the goals can be accomplished.
- The determination of the timeline in the accomplishment of the goals and specific targets.
- The commitment of the previous steps in writing.
- An evaluation of the plan.
- The measurement of progress.

Moreover, Guzder (2019) offers several methods for developing the skills. The methods enlisted include; mentoring and peer observation, observation visits to other schools, workshops, education conferences and seminars, and research. Learning is guaranteed in shadowing colleagues, regardless of their levels. Guzder believes that witnessing enables a more comprehensive perception as the senses are directly engaged in the actual scene. Furthermore, the teacher being shadowed also benefits from the peer observation as constructive feedback

is part of the process. Besides, observation visits to other schools also provide similar benefits as peer observation. However, other learning opportunities are obtained from observing behaviors that may be a result of the organizational culture. Workshops are another method of acquiring skills, as it provides a chance to discuss experiences and engage in internal reflection. Another method is attendance at education conferences and seminars, where teachers can choose particular areas of expertise that they need to enhance. Like workshops, teachers also gain from meeting and discussing teaching methods with other teaching professionals. A final method in the list of Guzder (2019) is research. The teacher's professional development is primarily on one's responsibility, as searching for sources of information and reading are upon the teacher's initiative.

The studies discussed show that professional development programs are vital to the continuous learning of the teacher. Tools measuring the programs are devised to ascertain quality to ensure the effectiveness of the programs. The tools also help in the improvisation of the program so that objectives can be better achieved. Due to the lack of studies for third-level education, this study's venture is expected to contribute insight to the competencies required for the teaching process. Also, the need for plans emphasizes keeping track of goals and directing the actions for more efficient learning. Moreover, to ensure the effectiveness of the guidelines for implementing teaching plans as a teachers' development program, the characteristics, elements, and components of the guidelines and the development program itself must be considered in the guidelines' formulation. The gaps raised here need to be considered to avoid the replication of the same inadequacies.

#### **4. Methods and Techniques**

The descriptive design appears the most appropriate for the objectives of this study as it aims to identify the experiences of teachers with teachers' development programs. These experiences indicate the evaluations of teachers for such programs, which assessments shall become the basis for the formulation of guidelines in teachers' development programs. These evaluations helped in identifying the features and gaps of these programs. Their identifications provided insights into which aspects of the program contribute significantly to teacher's competency.

##### *4.1 Instrument of the Study*

The research used a survey questionnaire comprising of 12 closed-ended questions, as presented in Appendix 1. The questions were self-made, arising from the collective observations and identifications of the strengths and weaknesses of various training programs. With these types of questions, the respondent is given a range of possible responses which the researcher determined (Nunan, 1992). In addition, open-ended questions were added to allow the respondents to answer in open text format. This feature in the questionnaire enables respondents to elect their responses based on their complete knowledge, which allows for the variety of experiences with teachers' development programs.

The questions are divided in two parts: demographics and the assessment of teachers' development programs. Teachers' years of experience and rank describe the population demographically. These information help to indicate the probable extent of training received or not received considering the number of years of teaching experience and the probable implication of the training received or not received in attaining their rank. Inputs from these questions also provided insights into the respondents' rationale for selecting their responses for the questions in the second part of the questionnaire.

In the second part, teachers were asked to indicate their evaluation of training programs. There is no specific teachers' development program assessed in the questions as the general experiences of teachers with these programs are determined. The collective experience in teachers' development programs is intended since an implied comparison of the teacher's experiences can help determine what worked and what did not work. These responses should help in determining the criteria or guidelines for preparing effective training programs.

The questionnaire included Likert Scales to indicate the teachers' perceptions of the degree of effectiveness of the teachers' development programs. The respondents are also asked to evaluate the specific aspects of the programs to determine their specific contribution to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the programs.

##### *4.2 Sample of the Study*

The COVID-19 pandemic presented constraints in reaching probable respondents to the study. Thus, the researcher opted non-probability sampling. The method involved non-random selection based on a convenience sampling, which allowed the researcher to easily collect data from participants. However, this type of sampling technique is appropriate for extraordinary and quantitative research (Showkat, 2017). The aim is not to test a hypothesis about the abroad population but to develop an initial understanding of a small population. This type of sampling is mainly based on ease of access by responding to a public online survey. Also, voluntary response samples are often

slightly biased since some individuals would naturally be more inclined than others to volunteer in research (King, 2011). As such, this approach in sampling is preferred.

The sample involved third-level education Kuwaiti in-service English Language teachers of from PAAET. As the researcher is affiliated with the same institution, and given the constraint, these teachers are within reach and willingly provided the inputs to the study. A total of 31 teachers of English Language in the institutions of PAAET participated in the study (out of 80 teachers). Thus, the outcomes of the study should be delimited by the perceptions and experiences of this sample population.

#### 4.3 Procedures and Tools of Analysis

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the researcher distributed the questionnaires online, through their email addresses, which were obtained from PAAET database. Data gathering was scheduled for a month (September 2020) to allow time and the potential delay in receiving participants' responses.

The responses were coded, tabulated, and interpreted using SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the data. Data were presented in frequencies of responses and in Likert Scales indicating the participations' perceptions of the effectiveness and contribution of the different teachers' development programs to their competencies. The use of the Likert Scales also permitted the comparison of the various elements of training programs to their perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness. The Likert-type attitude scale is considered a reliable and valid instrument for attitude measurement and has been applied to various fields of study (Maurer & Andrews, 2000). It is also easy to construct, it does not require any personal judgments, and it is easy to complete (LaMarca, 2011). To interpret the Likert Scale, the qualitative responses were assigned quantitative scores to determine the central tendencies of the responses. Specifically, the scores signify the perceived effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the types of teachers' development programs attended by the teachers. The weighted averages of these ratings were taken to determine the overall rating for each of the type of training programs. Subsequently, these ratings were compared to determine which type of training program is perceived most effective. To test statistical significance of the Likert Scale results, the 2-sample t-test and is used.

For questions where an option for the respondent is given since their answer is not among those which are provided, the different responses were first classified into themes. The responses were then counted as frequencies.

### 5. Results and Findings

This section presents the quantitative data analysis from the survey. The data and interpretation provided insights to the teachers' general perceptions about teachers' professional development programs. Insights from the data and their interpretation helped form the guidelines for formulating teachers' development programs.

#### 5.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Among the 31 English-Language teachers surveyed from PAAET, majority of the teachers or 51.6% have been teaching for over 12 years. About 22.6% of these teachers have served for 9 to 12 years in teaching. The English Language teachers in PAAET have been in their teaching professions for a significant number of years. These years may suggest their exposure to teachers' development programs since teachers with less years of experience may have undergone none or little exposure to teachers' development programs. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the 31 Kuwaiti tertiary-level English Language teachers of the institution.

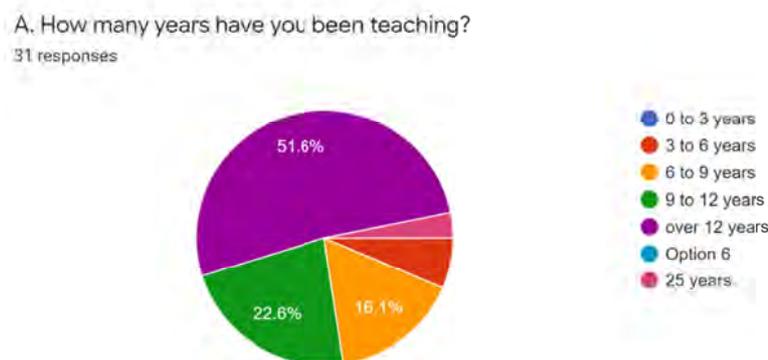


Figure 1. Years of teaching experience of the respondents.

The greater majority of the respondents or 59.38% of the sample population are ranked as instructors, whereas 31.25% are assistant professors. The data reflects the institutional rankings of teachers which approximate the number of years of teaching in PAAET. More senior teachers, with longer number of teaching experience, are also ranked higher. Figure 2 further details the ranking of the respondents, which also includes associate professors and professors, at 3.13% and 6.25% respectively.

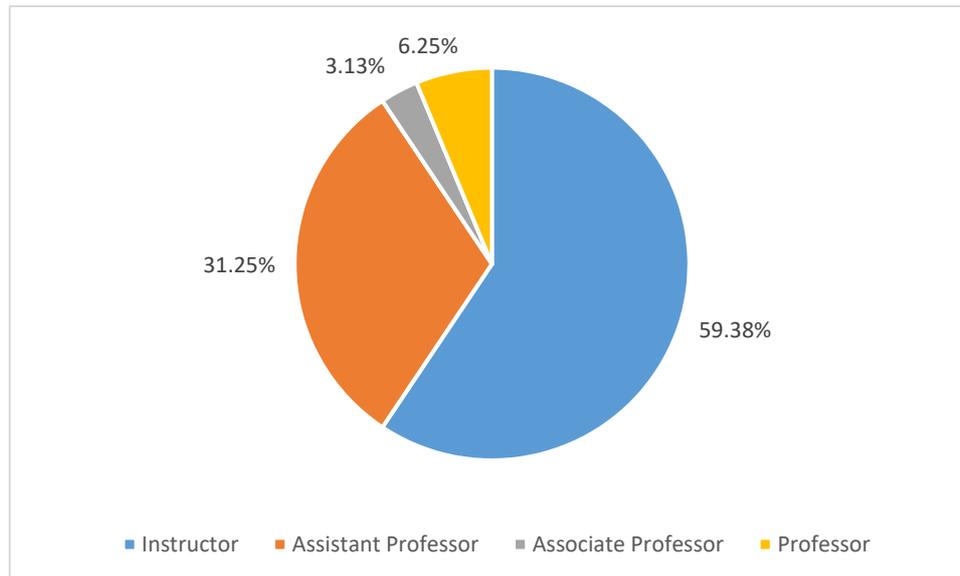


Figure 2. Teaching rank of the respondents

The implications of the demographic information indicate the provision of teachers' development programs to specific groups. Logically, increased competency in any given career is expected higher in the latter years of experience. However, this may not always be a guarantee as individuals may have strong and weak areas, which overall competency may be affected. Although the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher is not within the scope of this study, the specific training programs may be undertaken or provided by the institution as a result of the institution's needs assessment practice.

A cross-tabulation is presented in Table 1 to show what profile of the PAAET faculty mostly informs this study. The data reveals that instructors who have undergone 1 to 3 teacher's development program or 28.13% of the sample provide most of the evaluations for training programs. This implies that there are more teachers in the lower ranks for the English language in PAAET. Furthermore, it may be assumed that since the teachers are relatively new in their jobs that they have undertaken fewer training programs than those who may have already demonstrated more competence as evidenced through their ranking.

The table also shows that majority or 50% of the teachers underwent only 1 – 3 training programs. Though most of these teachers are instructors, approximately 56.25% of teachers who underwent 1 – 3 programs, there are also six assistant professors and one professor.

Majority of the faculty members or 53.12% have been teaching for over 12 years. Removing the five faculty members who have not undergone any training program or a total of 27, the data further shows that the majority of the sample who are instructors comprise 66.67% of those have been teaching for over 12 years. This observation does not support the earlier observation that rank connects to the number of years of teaching experience. Specifically, many of the instructors are still at the Instructor rank despite the years of teaching. Moreover, these teachers have undergone more training, yet which number of training does not seem to affect rank.

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of faculty demographic profile

Underwent a TDP	Number of Programs	RANK								Total	%
		Instructor	%	Assistant Professor	%	Associate Professor	%	Professor	%		
Yes	1 - 3	9	28.13%	6	18.75%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	16	50.00%
	4 - 6	2	6.25%	1	3.13%	1	3.13%	0	0.00%	4	12.50%
	7 - 9	4	12.50%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4	12.50%
	> 10	3	9.38%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	9.38%
No	0	1	3.13%	3	9.38%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	5	15.63%
Total		19	59.38%	10	31.25%	1	3.13%	2	6.25%	32	100.00%

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of rank, number of programs attended, and years of teaching

Rank	Number of Programs	Years of Teaching								Total	%
		3 to 6 years	%	6 to 9 years	%	9 to 12 years	%	over 12 years	%		
Instructor	1 - 3	1	3.13%	2	6.25%	3	9.38%	3	9.38%	9	28.13%
	4 - 6	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	1	3.13%	2	6.25%
	7 - 9	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	0	0.00%	3	9.38%	4	12.50%
	> 10	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	2	6.25%	3	9.38%
Subtotal		1	3.13%	3	9.38%	5	15.63%	9	28.13%	18	56.25%
Assistant Professor	1 - 3	0	0.00%	2	6.25%	0	0.00%	4	12.50%	6	18.75%
	4 - 6	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	1	3.13%
	7 - 9	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	> 10	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Subtotal		0	0.00%	2	6.25%	0	0.00%	5	15.63%	7	21.88%
Associate Professor	1 - 3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	4 - 6	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	1	3.13%
	7 - 9	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	> 10	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Subtotal		0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	1	3.13%
Professor	1 - 3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%
	4 - 6	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	7 - 9	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	> 10	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Subtotal		0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%	0	0.00%	1	3.13%
Total		1	3.13%	5	15.63%	6	18.75%	15	46.88%	27	84.38%

From the demographic data, although majority of faculty members take training programs, these training programs do not show bearing on rank. Furthermore, the number of training programs taken does not suggest any impact to the number of years of teaching experience. It is presumed that those who have more teaching experience may have more of the competencies developed over time. On the other hand, the observation for PAAET may also mean that an explanation for remaining in the Instructor despite the number of years of teaching indicate that teachers have not developed the competencies needed. Thus, they are given more training. In this line, there is an impression that the institution's teacher's development programs do not lead to the development of competencies enough to move up the teachers' ranks. Therefore, further reviews of the training programs in determining the impact of training programs to ranks and years of teaching experience seem necessary, at least for the institution's English Language teachers in the third level.

### 5.2 Types of Teacher Development Programs

Most teachers or 83.9% of the sample population indicated to have undergone a professional development program. Only 16.1% have never gone through any training, although these teachers are not considered as new teachers, as most of these teachers have been teaching for at least nine years.

Most teachers indicate to have undertaken various development programs. Among the programs on teacher development, the top three programs mostly undertaken include instructional approaches, communication and presentation skills, and personal development programs. About 61.5% of the teachers participated in training programs on instructional approaches. There were 57.7% of the teachers who received training on communication and presentation skills. And there were 53.8% of the teachers who underwent training on personal development. The data also presents that participant undertook least the programs on syllabus development and writing and organizational-membership skills. Figure 3 presents the types of teacher's development programs undertaken and the frequency of the teachers' exposure. These findings suggest that there is less need or emphasis on taking programs for developing soft skills.

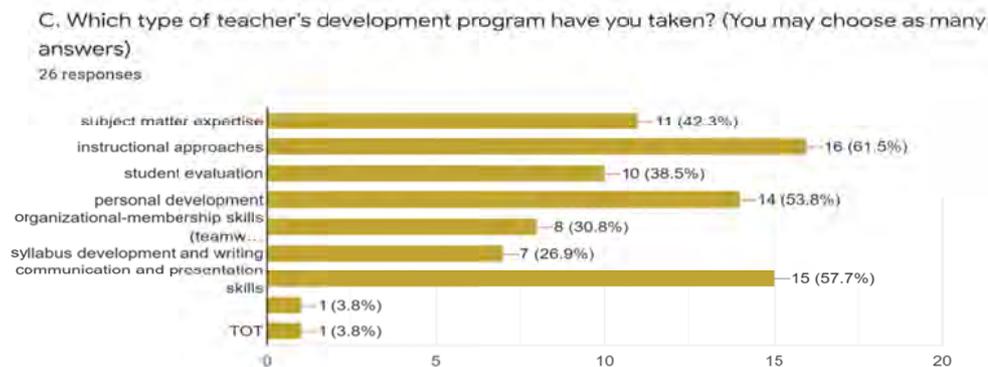


Figure 3. The type of teacher's development program undertaken

The respondents gave an overall rating of the seven programs of 2.43. This means when 4 is given as a numerical equivalent for an effective rating, moderately effective is equated with 3, fairly effective with 2, and ineffective with 1. Thus, the overall rating signifies a qualitative equivalent between fairly to moderately effective. The program with the highest weighted rating is organizational-membership skills. However, the 2.67 rating, although the highest, still means a rating between fairly to moderately effective. Although this is a soft skill, participants indicated a relatively better impact of this program. Personal development has a weighted rating of 2.57, which program is also on soft skills development. The t-test result of 0.061712 shows that with degrees of freedom at 4, and critical value of 2.776, under a two-tailed value of 0.05, the means of the weighted rating for organizational-membership skills and personal development cannot be concluded to be significantly different. Both types of programs are a little more than fairly effective but less than moderately effective.

Classified as a hard skill for teaching, communication skills received an effectiveness weighted rating of 2.55. This type of training was ranked third in the effectiveness of the program. Under similar t-test conditions, and with a t-value of 0.92191, the weighted rating for communication is also not found to be significantly different from personal development, the program ranked second. If personal development programs are not significantly perceived to be different from organizational-membership skills programs and training on communication skills are also not significantly perceived different, then all three types of training programs are not perceived different. Therefore, they are all perceived to be at least fairly effective but not enough to have moderate impact.

Among the programs listed, the evaluations indicated that the training on soft skills is found relatively more effective; whereas the training on student evaluation is rated least effective, with a weighted ranking of 2.20. This least effective training when tested if significantly different from the other types of programs also show no difference in impact, with a t-test value of 0.74265. Thus, overall, the different types of teacher's development programs are rated fairly effective. This perception suggests that the training programs can further be enhanced for improved effectiveness.

Table 3 presents the effectiveness rating of each of the development programs. Results also indicate that although the soft skills development programs have been less undertaken by teachers these programs are evaluated to be relatively more effective than the training for hard skills. This suggests then that the institution should look into the programs on hard skills development and determine areas that need improvement.

Table 3. Effectiveness rating of teachers' development programs

Area	Ineffective	Fairly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Total Respondents					Weighted Average	
	1	2	3	4							
subject matter expertise	4	4	7	2	17	4	8	21	8	41	2.41
instructional approaches	3	8	6	3	20	3	16	18	12	49	2.45
student evaluation	5	5	4	2	16	5	10	12	8	35	2.19
personal development	3	7	7	4	21	3	14	21	16	54	2.57
organizational-membership skills	1	6	5	3	15	1	12	15	12	40	2.67
syllabus development and writing	4	6	3	2	15	4	12	9	8	33	2.20
communication and presentation skills	2	9	5	4	20	2	18	15	16	51	2.55
Weighted Average											2.43

### 5.3 Perceived Benefit of the Development Programs

Teachers identified that the training programs they have attended provided practical knowledge and approaches. Since teachers can provide multiple responses to the question, respondents indicated this benefit, which comprised 35.59% of the total mentions. Attendees to those programs found that they can apply the skills taught in the programs. This is closely followed by indicating that the programs provided additional knowledge and skills, which comprised 33.90% of the total mentions. This benefit suggests that the teachers recognize that more skills were added to the skill set the teachers already possessed. This obvious claim leads to point to determining which of these mostly mentioned benefits are derived from which particular programs.

Since instructional approaches appear to be the type of training mostly attended by teachers, the specific benefit obtained from the program is deduced. This is done by matching the elected type of benefit with the type of program per respondent. The data shows that out of the 16 who identified undertaking instructional approach training 93.75% or 15 teachers found the program to provide practical knowledge and skills. From the same 16, 14 or 87.50% identified the programs they attended to provide also additional knowledge and skills. Thus, majority of the attendees of their respective training programs find the training programs both practical and an addition to their knowledge and skill set.

The next mostly attended types of training are personal development programs and communication and presentation skills training. Both are individually undertaken about 17.72% of all the total programs attended by respondents. About 46.67% of those who attended instructional approaches training also attended personal development and communication and presentation skills training programs. About 43.75% of those who also attended instructional approaches also rated the personal development programs and communication and presentation skills training as to have provided practical knowledge and skills. Since majority of those who obtained practicality in knowledge and skills application also identified obtaining additional skills, the same benefits are found to be obtained in personal development and communication and presentation skills training programs. About 85.71% of those who attended these programs considered the programs to not just provide practical knowledge but have also added to their knowledge and skills.

Only 10% of the total programs attended indicate that the programs teachers have attended filled in a competency gap. About 66.67% of the teachers indicated that filling in of the competency gap is for instructional approaches. Surprisingly the teachers who indicated these answers have at least six years of teaching experience. If these answers would have come from teachers with less years of experience, these responses would be better justified. Teachers with longer years of teaching experience are assumed to have better levels of competencies. However, since the observation is based on a small sample conclusions here are limited to this group. Nevertheless, this should provide insights for the perceived competency gaps of PAAET's English Language teachers.

### 5.4 Suggested Teacher's Development Programs

Respondents were asked which type of training program they need to enhance their knowledge and skills. Most teachers or 33.33% of those which indicated answers said syllabus development and writing. This is followed by instructional approaches from 25% of those who indicated a response. Although these needs arise from the perceived lack of skills in these areas, teachers' experience of difficulty on such tasks should justify the need to

provide training in these areas.

### *5.5 Limitations of the Study*

The current study was limited to a sample size of thirty-one (31) participants that comprised English language teachers from PAAET. The sample size was relatively inadequate for statistical measurement because of conflicts arising from Kuwait's cultural context, where research studies involving human participants are less common. However, since the study was well-designed and interpreted carefully, it is expected to yield reliable or precise estimates from the sample size.

Furthermore, as the study only involves English Language teachers, the conclusions may reflect only the perceptions of the teachers in this department. Teachers in other departments may have attended other development programs which elements in their design vary with those attended by English Language teachers. Also, with studies involving perceptions of respondents, their unique evaluations represent only those which they have experienced; and are thus, subjective. The scope of the evaluation may be limited by the teachers' recall of the training programs they attended in the span of years that they have been teaching. This evaluation is not intended for any specific program and encompasses all development programs the teachers have undertaken through those years. The time that has lapsed between this evaluation and the participation in the development programs can be a factor in the accurate assessment of the training. Though the teachers belong to the same institution, another factor that could contribute to the differences in evaluation is the teachers' voluntary attendance to programs outside of the mandate of the institution or probably provided by another institution the teachers' may be previously employed. PAAET may not have organized these programs and as such may be a confounding factor to the overall assessment of the effectiveness of the training.

### *5.6 Significance of the Study*

This study's significance emancipated from the implementation of professional development programs for teachers. Assessment is crucial to implement a suitable curriculum that will satisfy the English teachers' needs and requirements in the classroom to be at par with the continual global development in the educational domain. Findings and recommendations from this research will be of immense benefit to:

- English teachers at PAAET in Kuwait and the curricula specialists. The study provides important directions the institution can take to address the competency needs of teachers, allowing them to deliver an effective curricula and instructional methods.
- Researchers: This helps future researchers to explore further other obstacles or barriers in designing and implementing effective teachers' development programs.
- Teacher educators: This study is critical for designing and implementing professional development programs for teachers. It helps educators improve teacher training and professional improvement plans for education by incorporating specific instructional elements that address teachers' and learners' needs.
- Educational institutions: The guidelines are also intended to allocate properly the institutional resources through the identification of effective and ineffective aspects of the development programs. These should assist decision-making in training programs' resource allocation processes.

## **6. Conclusion**

The use of evaluation tools for the conduct of teacher's development programs provides meaningful information to gauge the effectiveness of such programs. The teacher's feedback is helpful in making decisions about training programs and its implementation. The evaluation can provide an understanding of what works and what does not work. The institution as well as teachers can find out and focus on areas of improvement and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the faculty. Another use of the evaluation is gauging the past performance of previous development programs. An understanding of what went wrong in these programs can help provide better development programs for teachers. The institution can better assess if it is meeting its training objectives and the resulting quality of teaching and learning of students. Moreover, the evaluation is a way for teachers to express how they feel and what they would like to change so that development programs better align with the teacher's training needs.

Along with these benefits of evaluating teacher's development programs is the formulation of guidelines or policies to have optimum use of evaluating these programs. The guidelines are meant to ensure that future teacher's development programs become more effective. From the findings in this research, a training needs assessment needs to be deployed to all teachers, particularly to teachers with less years of experience. While early on in their career, the teachers should be reinforced with the appropriate tools to perform their teaching tasks.

Considering that many teachers are beyond 12 years of teaching, and still with the rank of instructors, the institution should review its current systems of ranking teachers. If the institution's policies reflect stringent criteria for promoting teachers to succeeding ranks, there is a need to review if the training received by teachers result in higher competencies enough to be promoted to the next level.

Guidelines also need to be established which ensure the quality of training programs. A checklist of implementations for training programs needs to be established. This checklist reflects the items listed as features of the development programs shown in the survey. Expected standards need to be specified for each of these features to provide the possible maximum impact to teacher's development.

## 7. Recommendations

Effective professional development programs are known to impact teaching-learning processes positively. Therefore, supporting these programs is fundamental for ensuring high-quality teaching practice. The study recommends for PAAET to formulate programs for the beginning teachers more than the teachers with longer years for experience. With the lack of years of experience, the younger teachers are expected to be in the process of still discovering their strengths and weaknesses and build upon the opportunities to enhance the competencies. Although, the probable limitation for providing more training to the younger teachers may be the guarantee of stay in the institution to realize the returns for training. Nevertheless, teachers with regular status or those with predetermined number of years of service may be provided more training. A separate study may be undertaken to determine which teachers are likely to stay and serve in the institution. Another guideline in the provision of teachers' development program is the enhancement of hard and soft skills. Both are regarded to contribute to the overall effectiveness of a teacher's work. Thus, the institution should include in its design of training programs both types of skills. The needs assessment results should also indicate which programs may be more relevant to the teachers' situations. Future studies can also indicate how the institution's needs assessment programs are used in the design and implementation of teachers' training. Moreover, since the study only included English Language teachers, research to include teachers in other subject areas may be conducted to give a more comprehensive insight to the effectiveness of teachers' development programs in PAAET.

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## Appendix A

### Survey Questionnaire

This survey questionnaire aims to determine measures for teacher development programs. Your honest answers shall aid in the analysis and understanding of measurement tools in teacher development. Thank you for your participation.

#### A. Demographics

1) How many years have you been teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_ 0 to 3 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 to 6 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 6 to 9 years

\_\_\_\_\_ 9 to 12 years

\_\_\_\_\_ Over 12 years

2) What is your rank?

\_\_\_\_\_ Instructor

Assistant professor

Associate professor

Professor

**B. Measuring Teacher Development Programs**

1) Have you undergone a teacher’s development program?

yes  No

2) How many programs have you taken?

1 to 3

4 to 6

7 to 9

More than 10

3) Which type of teacher’s development program have you taken? (You may choose as many answers as possible)

Subject matter expertise

Instructional approaches

Student evaluation

Personal development

Organizational-membership skills (teamwork, collaboration, etc.)

Syllabus development and writing

Communication and presentation skills

Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

4) Among the development programs you have experienced, please rate them according to their effectiveness.

	Ineffective	Fairly effective	Moderately effective	Highly effective
Subject matter expertise				
Instructional approaches				
Student evaluation				
Personal development				
Organizational-membership skills				
Syllabus development and writing				
Communication and presentation skills				
Others, specified				

5) To what reasons do you attribute the effectiveness of your selected teacher development programs? (You may choose as many answers as possible).

Filled a competency gap

Provided more practical knowledge and approaches

Improved level of competency

Provided additional knowledge and skills

Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

6) Which teacher development programs catered to these reasons for effectiveness? (Please check corresponding answers).

	Filled a competency gap	Provided more practical knowledge & approaches	Improved Level of competency	Provided additional knowledge & skills	Improved soft skills	Added soft skills
Subject matter expertise						
Instructional approaches						
Student evaluation						
Personal development						
Organizational-membership skills						
Syllabus development and writing						
Communication and presentation skills						
Others, specified						

7) Among the teacher's development program or programs you have identified ineffective, to what reasons do you attribute their ineffectiveness? (You may choose more than one answer).

\_\_\_\_\_ Ineffective speaker or resource person

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor program design

\_\_\_\_\_ Insufficient time for training

\_\_\_\_\_ Lack of resources provided

\_\_\_\_\_ No new knowledge introduced

\_\_\_\_\_ Failure to meet program objectives

\_\_\_\_\_ Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

8) Which teacher development programs do you attribute the reasons for ineffectiveness?

(Please check the ones you have undertaken)

	Ineffective speaker or resource person	Poor program design	Insufficient time for training	Lack of resources provided	No new knowledge introduced	Failure to meet program objectives	Others, specified
Subject matter expertise							
Instructional approaches							
Student evaluation							
Personal development							
Organizational-membership skills							
Syllabus development and writing							
Communication and presentation skills							
Others, specified							

9) Which teacher development programs do you think has contributed to your profession, and to what extent is its contribution to your development as a teacher?

	Little contribution	Fair contribution	Moderate contribution	Most contribution
Subject matter expertise				
Instructional approaches				
Student evaluation				
Personal development				
Organizational-membership skills				
Syllabus development and writing				
Communication and presentation skills				
Others, specified				

10) What areas do you still need development?

\_\_\_\_\_ Subject matter expertise

\_\_\_\_\_ Instructional approaches

\_\_\_\_\_ Student evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal development

\_\_\_\_\_ Organizational-membership skills (teamwork, collaboration, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Syllabus development and writing

\_\_\_\_\_ Communication and presentation skills

\_\_\_\_\_ Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

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