

Assessing the Impact of In-Service Training on Staff Performance at University of Education, Winneba Campus, Ghana

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Abstract

In-Service training (INSET) is an important means through which staff are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve overall goals and departmental objectives. The extent to which INSET achieves or impacts on organisational and individual performance is often questioned. Winneba Winneba Campus. Using an open and closed questionnaire, views were solicited from the non-teaching staff on the effectiveness of the forms of training method/delivery; impact on task/job) and how it had enhanced job as well as career development of staff. Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis. The outcome was that training had an impact on staff performance in terms of knowledge and skills gained. It was recommended that more research is undertaken on all UEW campuses to add to both literature and knowledge of INSET.

Keywords: Staff Performance, In-Service Training, Staff Development

Introduction

Throughout the world, organisations devote a significant portion of their funds and staff time to training with the expectation of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. This training also called continuous professional development' is defined variously; it used to be called 'in-service training'; the DfES defines it as "any activity that increases a teacher's knowledge and understanding and their effectiveness in schools and can help raise children's standards and improve teachers' job satisfaction". The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) defines it as "a planned and sustained series of activities, designed to improve a teacher's knowledge and skills" (Bell, 2005). Outside the classroom these definitions still hold and are applicable to that of non-teaching staff in any educational setting.

Given the considerable allocation of scarce resource to training, training managers need to regularly ask if their training efforts are giving them results they want. Managers need to understand whether parts of a training programme are effective, whether parts are ineffective or irrelevant and how the training might be improved to help staff transfer their new skills from the classroom to the workplace. A glance at the corporate strategic plan of the UEW,

one observes that it has set out, what the organisation is prepared to do in terms of staff development and training as 'to improve professional and academic competencies of staff training and development' p8 2.6. We all must accept that we can improve the way in which we work – and in order to do this we need to continue with our education. A motivates, enthuses and educates at the same time. But is often not clear whether the training has made any difference, or whether specific performance problems can be solved through training.

However, providing training to staff has many costs; the cost of resources involved in preparing and giving the training, the cost to participating departments in travel and lodging and the cost of staff being away from the workplace. To justify these costs, managers need to feel confident that the training they are providing, or asking their staff to attend, will make a difference in staff performance. They need to know that staff members have not only acquired new knowledge, attitudes and skills from the training but can, and do, put them into practice back on the job.

The desired long-term impact of training is to improve organisational performance and ultimately, to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals. It is difficult to demonstrate a direct link between training and these long-term results because of many factors other than training that are involved. However, it is possible to demonstrate the impact of training on staff skills and performance. For this reason, the survey focuses on the outcome level of evaluation (job performance of staff after training) with the assumption that good individual performance of staff after training will lead to strong organisational/departmental performance and eventually make a significant contribution to the achievement of desired organisational goals.

The table below illustrates types of evaluation and their purposes.

Types of Evaluation	Purposes
Needs assessment	Identify Knowledge, Attitude and Skills needed for acceptable job performance
Baseline	Determine trainee's level of Knowledge, Attitude and Skills before training
Input Evaluation	Assess elements associated with training: cost, selection of trainers and trainees, curriculum plans, venues, materials
Process Evaluation	Conduct assessments periodically during training and adapt the schedule, content, or approach according
Outcome	Assess new or improved Knowledge, Attitude and skills after training.

Source: Dfes

Benefits of In-Service Training

In-Service Training (INSET) provides opportunities for one to grow professionally and personally, ensures that services are of high quality, and helps attract other talented employees.

According to Lynch (2005), there are six indispensable benefits of in-service training in the immediate and long-term for one's company or organisation.

These benefits are:

- (1) **Quality Control:** Quality is consistently providing a high-level of service or products. INSET allows your staff to know and help maintain quality standards in your company. Lack of knowledge and misunderstanding of procedures or a company's quality standards and policy is a principal cause for lack of quality. Customers and clients may very well depend on consistency in your products or services as a basis for their own survival. If you start slipping, they'll dump you fast to save themselves and their client base.
- (2) **Standardization of Methodology:** Standardization revolutionized the manufacturing industry and helped the North defeat the South during the American Civil War. Implementation of high-level standards, along with quality controls, turned Japan from a third-rate producer of cheap, poor quality goods into an economic super-power. INSET levels discrepancies in knowledge of company functions, methods and procedures. An added benefit may well be the stimulation of creative thinking in development of new or offshoot products and services further building the profitability of your company.
- (3) **Builds Confidence:** The fact that you value staff enough to provide in-service training helps to build the staff's confidence in the business. INSET enables staff to perform better and grow in their capabilities. They feel better about their respective roles in the overall structure of the company, are more willing to contribute extra time, energy and personal resources into company projects. They'll feel that as the company grows, so will they. Your staff helps to grow your business.
- (4) **Promotes Personal Development:** For staff members who inherently want to grow INSET provides a knowledge and skills improvement path that promotes personal development. Staff members are encouraged to continually learn, grow professionally and develop their job skills. Often an initial INSET program spurs staff enrolment for advanced study in their field.
- (5) **Attracts Better Staff:** Word gets around. If your business is known for providing in-house training at little or no cost to employees, those outside the company, with skills you need and a professional mindset, will seek you out. Progressive professionals want growth and development to spur their advancement opportunities. A company with a solid series INSET programs will act as a magnet for much needed, quality personnel. If your programs are low cost or cost-free to employees, even better. You

should promote your INSET program also help to distinguish your company and your staff as true professionals.

- (6) **Reduce or Eliminate Turnover:** “I do my job, put in my time and collect my pay” may be attitude of some workers. It’s also an attitude common in a penitentiary. INSET programs tend to help weed out the “deadwood” since covertly there is expectation for staff development. Those not interested tend not to like the “pressure” and will soon leave for “quieter” pastures. Think about it: are you growing a business or raising sheep? And you’re not running a Cell Block either, are you? Let the deadwood go and wish them well. You definitely don’t need the hassles they’ll ultimately bring. Quality personnel, on the other hand, will tend to stick with your business as long as they feel a progressive development policy is being promoted. INSET offers a solid anchor for progressive-thinking, improvement-oriented staff.

Carter McNamara (1997) also sums up the benefits of training as:

- Increased job satisfaction and morale among employees
- Increased employee motivation
- Increased efficiencies in processes, resulting in financial gain
- Increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods
- Increased innovation in strategies and products
- Reduced employee turnover
- Enhanced company image, e.g., conducting ethics training (not a good reason for ethics training!)
- Risk management, e.g., training about sexual harassment, diversity training.

Practitioners and researchers alike have noted that a well-trained workforce is an important component of the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers in the global economy. This study compares four secondary wood industry sectors on their approaches to, and perceived benefits of, training production employees. The study was based on an Internet survey in the autumn of 2003 of subscribers to a major wood industry publication. A sample of 197 firms was split into four type categories (cabinets, household furniture, contract furniture, and millwork) and two size categories (fewer than 50 employees and 50 or more employees) and compared on several questions related to training of production employees.

Some differences were found among the firm types and between the firm sizes. However, the firms were similar in a number of respects. The majority indicated that the return on training was positive, and firms agreed on average that training was critical to their future competitiveness. Implications for domestic competitiveness are noted based on the findings (Bumgardner *et al.*, 2005).

The benefits enumerated above though one may say is for the corporate world, the fact should not be lost those universities and for that matter UEW have resemblance of a corporate entity therefore the immediate or long-term benefits of INSET apply to her too.

Purpose

In 2004 there was a merger of the Staff Development and Training Unit of the Personnel Section and the Continuing Education Unit of the Institute for education Development and Extension (IEDE) and named Centre for Continuing Education. After two years of being given the mandate to organise professional development activities/programmes for staff and faculty of the University of Education, Winneba, the centre for Continuing Education (CCE) of the Institute for Education Development and Extension undertook an impact assessment to:

- determine the effect of in-service training on individual job performance (on-the-job application of new knowledge, Attitude and Skills).

Methodology

A survey was undertaken to assess the impact of in-service training on staff performance at University of Education, Winneba Campus. An open and close-ended questionnaire was designed for this purpose which solicited responses on the effectiveness of the forms of training method/delivery; impact on task/job and how it had enhanced job as well as career development of staff. Descriptive statistics was used in the analysis.

Population

The Winneba Campus comprises the following faculties and support units:

- Faculty of Educational Studies
- Faculty of Languages Education
- Faculty of Science Education
- Faculty of Social Sciences Education; and
- School of Creative Arts

The support units include the sections under the Registrar's department, Development, and Library Services. The population for the study covered all non-teaching staff of the University based at the Winneba Campus. The assumed total target population was 798.

Sampling

Purposive sampling technique was employed. This technique was used in the sampling process because participants who had the in-service training belonged to certain categories of staff whose knowledge, attitude and skills needed to be updated to enhance job performance. Out of sample size of 100 a total of 72 personnel responded to the questionnaire. Table 1 indicates the numbers of personnel who responded as having had in-service training for the past two years since the merger.

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Personnel who had undertaken in-service training in past 2 years

Sex	Yes	No	No Response	Total
Male	33	19	2	54
Female	14	2	-	16
Total	49	21	72	72

The personnel were drawn from the departments/sections/units listed below:

- Library
- Security
- Secretarial staff in the administrative and academic units
- Development Section
- Administrative staff
- Porters in the students' halls of residence

The personnel who attended the in-service training were from various departments, sections and units of the University of Education, Winneba Campus out of these numbers the porters, library staff and security personnel were in the majority.

Form in-service took

The in-service took the following form:

- Workshop;
- Seminar and;
- Lecture

From Table 2 below, some respondents were not quite sure of the form in-service took. This though in no way affected the impact on their performance as may be noted later.

Table 2: Form in-service took

Sex	Workshop	Seminar	Lecture	No Response	Combination	Total
Male	12	3	15	21	3	54
Female	11	1	2	2	-	16
No Response	2	-	-	-	-	2
Total	49	21	72	72		72

Number of Years at UEW vis-à-vis any in-service Training in the Last 2 years

Participants were to indicate the number of years they had worked at University of Education, Winneba and if they had any in-service training in the past 2 years. Table 3 revealed 49 persons have been given in-service training. This revelation buttresses the TTA definition of in-service training as a planned series of activities to improve one's knowledge and skills.

Table 3: Any in-service training in 2 years

Number of Years at UEW	Yes	No	No. Response	Total
0 – 2	4	3	-	7
3 – 5	22	10	-	32
7 – 9	7	3	-	10
10 – 13	16	5	-	21
No Response	-	-	2	2
Total	49	21	2	72

Impact of In-Service Training

49 participants acknowledge that they gained new Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) in various ways. The various ways in which the in-service had enhanced their job performance were largely in the efficiency and effectiveness of their output. These they indicated were in the use of computers to enter and retrieve data as well as other computer applications without any assistance; handling enquires from visitors and students; proper records management and filing; report writing; fire fighting techniques and gained self-confidence to handle issues that crop up in day-day activities on the job.

In response to how the KSA had influenced their career development 30 of respondents stated that it had equipped them with skills to handle higher responsibilities.

When it came to the methodology, respondents 47 respondents indicated that the delivery/teaching methods were appropriate. The reasons given were that methodology facilitated the understanding of topics, the resources used were also adequate and topics were relevant to their jobs.

Respondents were quick to react that though the delivery/teaching methods were appropriate and enhanced their understanding; they would have liked or expected the duration for the in-service programmes to be longer. 18 respondents however said there was no need for changes/modifications.

38.9% undertook the in-service training in order to advance their career. Interestingly 30% did not respond to the question, @upon what basis did you have to undergo the in-service training?

Conclusions and Recommendations

Out of target respondents of 100, 72 responses were obtained and from the discussions generated above the training were appropriate. These facilitated the understanding of issues and participants gained adequate KSA. One may conclude that in-service training is important because it enhanced job/task performance.

From the conclusion drawn, ne may recommend that in-service training is not limited to the Winneba Campus alone since KSA acquired could be impacted at the satellite campuses as

well. It is also recommended that longer time/duration is allotted for in-service training and all staff mandated to attend.

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