



Polishing the skills: Training evaluation of basic teaching training course

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Abstract

Evaluation of every activity is essential to determine the impact of a program to the participants. However, due to lack of coordination and planning this aspect of training is most of the time neglected. As a result, a mismatch of expectations may happen between the institution and its employees. This action research was conducted to explore the significance of the basic teaching training course. It specifically sought the expectations of the teachers; the benefits and impacts of the training and the suggestions which the participants offered for the improvement of the succeeding trainings. Using the survey questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the researchers found that the participants had high expectations on the conduct of the training and the believed that the training was not only helpful in developing their teaching but also their abilities to decide for the appropriate lesson materials. Further, they saw that the training had enhanced their self-confidence and improved their teaching performances. They suggested that continuous trainings may be conducted; invite expert and experienced speakers, and conduct regular post-training assessments.

Keywords: polishing the skills, training evaluation, basic teaching training, far eastern university - nrmc

Introduction

Background of the Study

Any training cannot be called a success unless an evaluation is conducted. However, only few institutions would venture into an evaluation for the notion that the results may not be favorable. Zaineb (2011) observed that contemporary institutions 'lack the mechanism of training evaluation' because they are unwilling to pay for an honest to goodness evaluation and don't want to hear ceremonious feedbacks from the participants. On the other hand, Tozman (2012) mentioned that evaluation in itself may not be as accurate as they an organization may think.

Despite the above drawbacks, the researchers believed in the pro-active role of training evaluation and the mission of the university, 'to provide outcomes-based programs.' It means that the university believes in the importance of evaluation through research because it becomes a basis for program development, improvement and innovation.

The basic teaching training course was conducted among the faculty members from different schools and departments of FEU Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation. On the other hand, this evaluation research was conducted to determine the reactions and the benefits gained by the teachers from the training; to gather the participants' views on their teaching improvements and to obtain essential suggestions for training improvements. This study may resemble similarity with other evaluative researches; however, this study used the combined closed and open-ended questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion for triangulation.

Lastly, the lack of training evaluation assessments in the university sparked the conduct of this study. This evaluative study was first step towards the development and improvement of most if not all trainings and seminars in the future.

Research Problems

The main purpose of this research was to determine the impact of the HPEU activities to the participants and therefore make pertinent actions based on the results. Specifically, this research sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the expectations of the participants of the basic teaching training course?
2. How the basic teaching training course helped the participants' teaching skills?
3. What was the participants' view on the impact of the basic teaching training on the students' assessment on their performances?
4. What were the participants' suggestions to improve the teaching training course?

Theoretical Lens

To have a smooth understanding of the evaluation of the training, the researcher was guided by *The Kirkpatrick Model* developed by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959. This was considered by many institutions as best in understanding the results of any training. This model takes into consideration four levels of criteria:



Level 1 Reaction measures how participants react to the training. Level 2 Learning analyzes if they truly understood the training. Level 3 Behavior looks as if they are utilizing what they learned at work and Level 4 Results determines if the training had a positive impact on their work (Kirkpatrick, 1994).

This model was appropriate to this evaluative study because the basic training seminar determined how the participants found the training (Level 1). It also obtained the participants experiences on how the training helped them improved their teaching performances (Level 2). Moreover, it also gathered their observations on how students reacted to their teaching performances (Level 3) and it also asked what suggestions they could offer for the improvement of succeeding trainings (Level 4 & 2).

Definition of Terms

The following terms used in the title of the study were defined for common understanding of concepts:

Polishing the skills. This is idiom which means strengthening what was already available. Polishing means refining rough surfaces so that it appears adorable and pleasant. For skills, polishing is the final phrase before those skills can be called within the standard.

Training evaluation. It refers to the conduct of assessment on the training conducted. It a means to determine whether the training was successful or needs improvements.

Basic teaching training course. This refers to the training given to the participants to improve their teaching skills.

Method

This section presents in detail the research design, instruments used in the study, how the study was conducted, the participants and the limitations of the study.

Research Design

This research used the descriptive and evaluative methods. Descriptive method is appropriate to this study because it ought to determine the participants' attitudes towards the training; what are the impacts of the training to the performance of teachers as viewed by students; and what changed had the training brought to the participants. Glass and Hopkins (1984) mentioned that descriptive research involved obtaining information that give descriptions of events and then organizes, tabulates and describes the information collected. Krathwohl (1993) on that other hand said that descriptions of information gathered were followed by creative exploration, and served to organize the results to validate those explanations. In this study, the information obtained through survey questionnaires were organized according to the research problems and were triangulated with the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) interviews. Thus, a reliable intertwining of information was obtained.

Moreover, this study also utilized evaluative method because it was anchored on the objectives of the training. Thus, this research specifically determines the outcomes of the basic teaching training to the participants and sought to find suggestions for improvement of the program. Greenhalgh (2017) and Slade and Bottoms (2017) agreed that evaluative research "assesses whether the planned actions have produced the expected outcomes." While Jongen, Schröder-Bäck, and Brand (2017) averred that evaluative research is a good technique which allowed sound and evidence-based decisions.

Additionally, the selection of the participants in the survey questionnaire and in-depth interview was done purposively. All participants of the basic teaching training course were given the questionnaire; however, only five participants were selected for the in-depth interview. Creswell (2013) and Lichtman (2012) mentioned that purposive sampling gave an opportunity to select the most effective informant for the study. The five participants were selected for an FGD because they were the most eager and participative participants. Moreover, there were the ones' who were available. Before the interview was conducted, proper protocols and code of ethics were strictly followed. Krueger and Casey (2009) mentioned that FGD is a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment.

Research Instruments

This study used two instruments in acquiring pertinent information. The first instrument was the survey questionnaire which was given to the participants after the conduct of the training. This questionnaire contained closed and opened questions which focused in getting the participants' expectations and suggestions on the basic training course. Second was an in-depth interview (Focus Group Discussion). It was conducted among the selected participants. The information obtained from the FGD were necessary for triangulation, reliability and veracity of the previous information gathered from the survey questionnaire. Hartley and Sturn (1997) pointed out triangulation as the 'pertinent point of intersection' while San Jose and Mortos (2017) averred that it a key to increase the reliability of the findings of a study.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the basic teaching training course were the faculty members from schools and departments of FEU Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation. All participants were medical practitioners and are currently teaching.

Procedures in Gathering Information

The important information needed for this research were obtained using the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) from the same participants. In gathering those essential information,

the researchers observed the following steps. Kothari (2004) pointed out that in scientific inquiry, objective, logical and systematic conduct of procedures were of importance.

The first step was mapping for possible research problem. It was found that the university lacked evaluation of every training conducted. Moreover, it was also observed that during the accreditations, evaluation of trainings was one of the requirements. Hence, we decided to conduct an evaluative research to address the problem. Second, we decided to determine what methods were suitable for the research. Creswell (2007) mentioned that after the problem was identified, the next thing to do was to determine what methods suit the problem. We decided to use the evaluative and descriptive and to utilize survey questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Third, formulation of research survey questionnaires and interview guide questions focused on the research questions were made. These instruments were given to expert validators for comments and suggestions. Althof, Rosen, Symonds, Mundayat, May, and Abraham, (2006) suggested that questionnaire validation was necessary to determine whether the questionnaire measures what it should be measured. Further, Mallol, Gracia-Marcos, Aguirre, Martinez-Torres, Perez-Fernandez, Gallardo and Baeza-Bacab (2007) mentioned that questionnaire validation evaluates the construct validity of the instrument. After the validation, the dissemination of the survey questionnaires was done. They were given to the intended participants of the study. Moreover, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was separately conducted among the selected participants. The results of the survey questionnaire were tallied while the outputs of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were collated. Lastly, these information were given to the data analyst for statistical treatment, data analysis and interpretation.

Trustworthiness of the Study

Handling the truthfulness and veracity of research was always an issue especially when a study used qualitative method. Although this study also used quantitative data, the researchers chose to explain how they handled the qualitative information. Mays and Pope (1995) mentioned that qualitative method was commonly viewed as lacking scientific strength; while Koch and Harrington (1998) pointed that it's because of its subjective and lacking the ability to generalize results. Thus, in addressing the issue of trustworthiness, we followed the essential criteria introduced by Riege (2003), Shenton (2004), Creswell (2007) and Sparkes and Smith (2009). These criteria were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) the credibility can be obtained through a long-term encounter and consistent observation of the participants; on the other hand, Patton (1999) mentioned that credibility is observed when the purpose of research is attained. In this study, one of the researchers was familiar with all the participants and had a very close relationship with them. The participants were his colleagues; hence, there was no more feeling of animosity among them. On the other hand, the researchers observed strictly the procedures to attain the objectives of this research.

Transferability, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), Cobbo and Forbes (2002) and Creswell (2007) can also be addressed if investigators 'provide sufficient description as to whether the findings may be applicable or transferable to another study. Moreover, Tanner, He, Westwood, Firmin, Pennell, and Thalassemia International Federation Heart Investigators (2006) and He, Kirk, Firmin, Lam, Chu, Au, and Aydinok (2008) suggested that the transferability of a research paper could be obtained if results of the study could be disseminated. In this study, the researchers provided thick descriptions in all parts of this research particularly in the results and discussion. Further, the researchers believed that the findings of this study could be essential for future researchers who also have interest in assessing trainings; thus, disseminating the results of this study.

Dependability is literally defined as replicability or repeatability of the study (Trochim (2016). The procedures followed in this study could be replicated in future research evaluations. Thus, the procedures may become guidelines in conducting training evaluation research. Lastly, Cope (2014) said that confirmability showed the researchers honestly in presenting the veracity of the information. May (1997) also mentioned that triangulation of information reflects confirmability. In this research, these two aspects were addressed. In terms of veracity of information, the researchers

discussed in the procedures how the information were gathered and presented in the results through thematic analysis. These could not be possible if information were fabricated or invented. Likewise, the survey questionnaire and in-depth interview results were triangulated to attain robust results.

Limitations of the Study

Limitation of the study was relevant on research because it allowed focus (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli, 2009) and delineation (Bhatt and Grover, 2005). Thus, this study was confined only to 20 faculty members who participated in the basic teaching training course. Moreover, the information obtained were collected through survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Questions involved were based on the objectives of the program. Likewise, this study only described and evaluated one training. Furthermore, this study did not measure the satisfaction of the participants on the training rather it determined the impact of the training to their teaching performances. Also, it gathered suggestions and comments which may improve the succeeding trainings.

Results

This section presents the findings of the survey questionnaires and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among the participants of the basic teaching training course. It also deals with the answers raised in the research questions.

Expectations on the Basic Teaching Course

Table 1 showed that majority of the participants had high expectations on the basic teaching training course. This finding was confirmed by the reactions of the participants in the in-depth interviews. Generally, the FGD participants found the training was helpful to both the new and the old teachers because it provided guidelines on how to make good delivery of lectures.

Table 1. *Expectations on the basic teaching training course*

Description	Frequency of Response	Percentage
High	12	60
Intermediate	7	35
Low	1	5
No expectation	0	0

Benefits of the Basic Teaching Training

Table 2 presented the responses of the participants on the benefits they obtained from the basic teaching training course. It showed that the training was able to improve the delivery of their lessons. On the other hand, they gained ideas which they used in developing their teaching materials. Furthermore, the training heightened their self-assurance because they deciphered the fundamentals of teaching. Conversely, the responses in the FGD were typical and variant. This indicated that that the participants were not in unison in terms of the advantages of the training.

Table 2. *Benefits of basic teaching training*

Theme	Frequency of Response	Core Ideas
Enhancement of classroom activities	Typical	- making class activities dynamic & interesting - giving various ideas on proper lecture
Improvement of teaching materials	Typical	- offering flexible instructional strategies
Intensification of self	Variant	- advancing confident in conducting class & assessment method

Impact of Basic Teaching to Performance

Table 3 showed the influenced of the basic training course to the teaching performances of the teachers in the classroom. It further revealed that majority of the participants (85%) agreed that the training helped in the improvement of their performances as seen in students' assessment. This finding was corroborated by the FGD results. The participants revealed that the basic teaching training course enhanced their lecturing skills and helped them focused on the appropriate things to be done in delivering their lessons. It indicated that the participants seriously applied the knowledge they gained to their lessons; thus, it resulted in the enhancement of their classroom teaching performances.

Table 3. *Participants' view of the impact of the basic training course to their performance*

Description	Frequency of Response	Percentage
Not aware	1	5
Improved students' evaluation	17	85
Unsatisfactory students' evaluation	0	0
No effect	2	1

Suggestions for Improvement

The basic teaching training course was generally applauded and recommended by the participants. However, they suggested that more seminars on teaching methods may be done; that longer seminar period may be allotted for continuous learning; that they may be a demonstration class; that new and experienced speakers may be invited; and that conduct of post-seminar assessment may be regularly conducted. These suggestions may be incorporated in the next planning of the university's human resource and development department. Moreover, these suggestions aimed at enhancing the trainings in the future and satisfying the expectations of the participants.

Discussions

This section presents a summary of the findings based on research questions and offers analysis by providing related literatures. In the same way with the findings, this section is also divided according to the sub-problems.

Finding the Basic Teaching Course

Trainings are conducted to enhance the skills and abilities of the participants. In the basic teaching training course, the participants have high expectations that the training refreshes and helps them equip with essential ideas which they can use in the delivery of their lessons. The participants' high hope implies that they have clear idea of the objectives; how the training will be conducted; and what benefits they could gain from the training. Fernando, McAdam, Youngson, McKenzie, Cleland and Yule (2007) mentioned that well-defined and accurate learning objectives, good preparations, approachability significantly improve trainees' expectations and learning experiences. Moreover, the participants are exuberant for the training because they were not graduates of education rather they were medical practitioners (medical doctors, medical technology and nurses) who are assigned to teach medical students. Biech (2015) pointed out trainers' expectations serves as opportunity for them to share their skills, knowledge, and topics which interests them. Thus, Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas and Cannon-Bowers (1991) were correct when then mentioned that participants' training expectations, reactions, and performances were related the training's outcomes. This goes to indicate that participants need to be informed of the objectives and purposes of the training so that they can speculate the outcomes and therefore make their expectations met.

Benefits and Impact of Basic Teaching Training

Providing healthcare professionals with teaching knowledge and skills is considered important in improving their teaching effectiveness (Steinert, Mann, Centeno, Dolmans, Spencer, Gelula, and Prideaux, 2006). Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Kusurkar, Volman, Beishuizen, and

Croiset (2017) mentioned that medical teachers often see themselves as doctors or researchers rather than as teachers; hence, they lack the ability to deliver the lessons the way it should be.

The basic teaching training course has positively benefited the participants not only the lesson delivery of the participants but also their self-image and worth. This finding corroborates with Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset and Beishuizen (2017) who averred that 'staff development programmes significantly strengthen teacher's identity. In the same vein, Baral, Nepal, Paudel and Lamsal (2017) mentioned that medical practitioners expressed enhanced role as teachers after attending a teaching training.

In terms of impact, participants revealed that there is an improvement in the ways they deliver their lectures. Also, they become focus to their teaching. However, their responses are varied. It indicates that the participants have different and isolated teaching needs. Relating this to their expectations, the participants have high hopes to have a training which they think could address their specific teaching needs. This finding is congruent with the study of Steinert, Mann, Centeno, Dolmans, Spencer, Gelula and Prideaux (2006) made a systematic review of teachers' development programs in medical education. They found that after the training positive changes in their teaching attitudes, increased knowledge of educational principles. Moreover, these developments are observed by their students.

Suggestions for Improvement

The participants to the basic teaching training have provided their insights on how the succeeding seminar-workshop would be improved and interesting. They believed that long term teaching seminar would be advantageous and more beneficial in their teaching practice. Opfer and Pedder (2010) pointed out the continuous training would result in stronger participation of the involved individuals while Kempen and Steyn (2017) found it as a key initiative in raising standards.

Further, they believed that inviting experienced speakers and doing demonstration class are effective.

Lastly, they believed that post-seminar evaluation is essential for the continuous improvement of the program. Post-seminar evaluation looks into the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of the training (Karim, Huda, and Khan, 2012); examines changes in participants' attitudes on the relevance of the training (Steele, Mulhearn, Medeiros, Watts, Connelly and Mumford, 2016); and offers avenue for recommendation (Pradhan, Keuskamp and Brennan (2016).

Conclusions

This section contains the inference of the findings of this research. Moreover, it also offers implication of the outcomes of the study.

Obtaining high participants' expectations on a training is essential because it an indicator of their willingness and openness to learn. Thus, training needs analysis may be organized and planned ahead of time. Clear training objectives and outcomes may also be formulated and communicated to the participants to keep their expectations and willingness.

Having a post-assessment in training is an indication of openness for improvement. The success of a training is not only measured on how dynamic the speakers are; on how conducive the venue is; on how cooperatives the participants are; on how the palatable the food are; and how the entire proceedings have taken place. A post-assessment speaks not only of goodness but also the inappropriateness; thus, giving the organizers a room for improvement.

For a university to be in line with the standards, conduct of regular research training may be strength and continued. It is only through this evaluative research the training may be improved and innovated.

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