In-Service Training Program for Newly-Recruited Teachers in Higher Education: A Critical Analysis of the Case of Algeria

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Abstract
The need for in-service education of teachers, particularly newly-recruited ones, cannot be underestimated. There is a constant need for teachers to obtain new knowledge about curricula, psychology, and pedagogy, and analyze and conduct new research regarding teaching and learning. Consequently, the Algerian authorities have attempted to introduce a comprehensive in-service training program targeting novice teachers aimed at raising their efficiency in the profession. This study aims to examine and evaluate the in-service program for newly-recruited teachers at the tertiary level organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research between 2016 and 2020, and offers suggestions on how to remedy and improve the current program to increase teachers' professional skills in Algeria. To achieve this aim, the views and suggestions of newly recruited teachers from different faculties of the University of El-Oued Algeria regarding the issue of in-service training were investigated. The current study is descriptive, and a structured questionnaire was administered to fifty (50) teachers, the cohorts of 2016/17 and 2017/18. The results demonstrated that the current in-service training program should be subjected to successive modifications based on teachers' professional needs.

Keywords: in-service training program, newly-recruited teachers, teachers' professional development, higher education.

Introduction
In-service education as a type of professional development is a necessity in enhancing the work performance and motivation of teachers in the field. The need for in-service training or staff development programs for teachers plays an essential role in successful educational reform. Teachers' education programs serve as a bridge between prospective
and experienced teachers to meet the new challenges of guiding students towards higher standards of learning and self-development.

To meet the growing need for education in a global economy, new knowledge, and cultural and democratic needs, it becomes imperative to provide sound in-service education for teachers to update their knowledge, skills, and experience. Continuous professional development of teachers has gained great importance in recent years. This situation is accepted as a professional duty in several countries. This duty is generally included in legal regulations, employment contracts or mutual agreements as a condition. In some countries, it is an obligation to participate in different training programs for professional development, and Algeria is not an exception.

During the academic year 2016/17 the Algerian government represented by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research passed legislation that makes in-service training for newly-recruited teachers at Algerian universities and research centers obligatory. The objective of this teachers’ education program is to create sustainable systems that will increase teachers' professional knowledge and skills in Algeria. The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research created a “Cell of Pedagogic Accompaniment” at each university and university center to take the responsibility for the implementation of the unified in-service training program and to send reports about the results each year.

The current research paper is an attempt to explore newly-recruited teachers’ perceptions of the official in-service training program to evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency in developing teachers’ professional competencies and to provide the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Algeria with remedial insights to improve this teacher education program. This study tries to answer the following key questions:

– What are the newly-recruited teachers’ perceptions of the current in-service professional development program?
– How do teachers evaluate the effectiveness of this in-service training program?
– What are the strong and weak points of this professional development program?
– How can this official teachers’ education program be improved from the viewpoint of the targeted teachers?

**Literature Review**

**Definition(s) of In-Service Training**

Somo Hamza claims that “In-service training can simply be defined as the relevant courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate to upgrade his professional knowledge, skills, and competence in the teaching profession” (Hamza, 2018, p. 31). Hence, “it encompasses all forms of education and training given to a teacher who is already on the job of teaching” (Osamwonyi, 2016, p. 83). It is also defined as “all activities and set of training that is required for quality improvement and professional development of teachers” (Saiti & Saiti, 2006, as cited in Sayedwali, 2015, p. 3).
According to Billing, “in-service education is staff development which is a deliberate and continuous process involving the identification and discussion of present and anticipated needs of individual staff for furthering their job satisfaction and career prospects, and of the institution for supporting its academic work and plans, and implementation of programs of staff activities designed for the harmonious satisfaction of these needs” (Billing, 1976, as cited in Osamwonyi, 2016, p. 83).

Another definition of in-service training was given by Akhter and associates, who noted that “in-service training includes all the activities which are designed for the professional development and skill-building of teachers” (Akhter, et al., 2011, as cited in Sayedwali, 2015, p.4). Teacher training is “essential for the professional improvement of teachers as it keeps them abreast of the latest information associated with their profession” (ibid.).

Thus, an in-service training program in any organization by which people are equipped with skills and provided with the needed knowledge, competencies, and attitudes (Jala, 2022) aimed at “enabling them to carry out their responsibilities to the required standard in the present job and to undertake greater and more demanding roles for effective job performance” (Labiso, 2019, p. 6719).

**Principles and Benefits of In-Service Teacher Training**

Stoops and associates introduced some basic principles that should be taken into account when designing any in-service training program. These include the following points:

- Any in-service program should emerge from the recognized needs of the educational institution and the community,
- The selection of the appropriate supervisors is the pillar of accelerating in-service professional growth and achieving the desired objectives,
- In-service training program supervisors should create a constructive atmosphere that will stimulate the desire of teachers for professional development,
- Improving the quality of education is the primary goal of in-service education,
- In-service training programs should accelerate effective research and advance education,
- In-service education programs should be cooperatively initiated, planned, and implemented (Stoops et al., 1981).

Hayes (1995), on his part, explored the procedures used in teacher development that are common in any in-service teacher education program, and the principles underlying them. One of these principles is that *normative re-education strategies offer the best prospect of securing changes in behavior*. Kennedy explains that underlying “normative re-educative strategies” state:

*The idea is that people act according to the values and attitudes prevalent in a given society or culture and that accepting change may require changes in deep-seated beliefs and behavior* (Kennedy, 1987, p. 146)
Hayes underlines the importance of these strategies in examining deep-seated beliefs as well as revealing principles which underline an innovation. All of these are in line with considering teachers as active participants who are trying to make a change (Hayes, 1995).

The second principle is orientated around the idea that all teacher development activities should be classroom-centered (Haynes, 1995). He also states that “In-service training activities should be seen as having direct relevance to teachers’ everyday university situations” (Haynes, 1995, as cited in Bettinnelli, 1998, p. 149).

The third key principle is that trainers should themselves be teachers. In this context:

One of the inadequacies of many teacher-training activities throughout the world is that the trainers actively stop being teachers, and are training others to do something that they no longer do. It is only common sense that you should practice what you preach, but the training of others must be grounded in one’s practice and not in some desiccated prescription deriving from almost forgotten – and even sometimes very limited – experience (Duff, 1988, p. 111 as Cited in Hayes, 1995, p. 257)

Therefore, Hayes emphasizes the importance of selecting teachers that currently work in the classroom as trainers (Hayes, 1995).

Finally, the training methodology should be largely task-based and inductive, and training or professional development sessions should value participants’ existing knowledge. In-service teacher training has several fruitful results if it is applied based on the agreed-upon principles. Imogie highlighted the benefits of in-service teacher education in the following summarized points:

- Providing teachers with ample opportunities of updating their knowledge and skills towards better objective performance and advancement in status,
- Providing opportunities for increasing the number of trained and qualified teachers in educational institutions,
- Providing opportunities for teacher education institutions to provide service in an essential area of national development. (Imogie, 1992, as cited in Osamwonyi, 2016, pp. 86-87)

**In-Service Teacher Training in Algeria**

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research created “The Cell of Pedagogical Accompaniment“ for the benefit of newly employed teachers. This cell was established based on Ministerial Resolution No. 932 of July 20, 2016. According to Article 02 of this decision, this cell aims to equip the newly recruited instructors through an in-service training ready-made program with the necessary knowledge and skills associated with the art of teaching at the university.

Also, this cell is charged with developing and following up the pedagogical accompaniment program, through the tasks specified in the decision, which are:

- The suggestion of pedagogical strategies for training and higher education.
The implementation of the pedagogical accompaniment program has been put into effect for the benefit of newly-recruited university teachers and to inform those who are concerned with its content and aims.

– The selection of professors who should supervise this training program from experienced professors at the level of each university across the country.

– The evaluation of the participation of teachers involved in the training.

According to the text of this decision, the pedagogical cell was formed to provide effective in-service professional development for the newly recruited instructors at the university, and it was installed by the university directors of each higher education institution.

To achieve the set of objectives of this professional development program, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research designed ready-made educational content that was sent to the different Cells of Pedagogical Accompaniment created at all Algerian higher education institutions. The program is adapted and modified each year based on the annual reports sent to the central cell at the level of the ministry by the universities’ cells. The program of pedagogic accompaniment includes organizing workshops and training sessions, particularly in the following subjects:

– Teaching the principles of the university legislation,
– Introduction to didactics and pedagogy,
– Psychology and educational psychology,
– The principles of preparing and designing lesson plans and pedagogic communication,
– Student assessment and evaluation,
– Distance teaching and learning,
– The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in teaching.

It should be noted that the language of instruction in this newly recruited teachers’ education program in Arabic. French as a second language and English as an international foreign language and the world’s lingua franca are also central subjects in this pedagogic accompaniment program.

The university cell prepares its annual program and passes it at the level of the scientific council of the university to be approved; then, a copy of the program is sent to the minister in charge of higher education. By the end of each academic year, the cell of pedagogic accompaniment sends the results of the implementation of its program with a set of recommendations to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Research Method

Description of the Method

This study aims to evaluate the in-service training program targeting the newly recruited teachers in higher education with special reference to the groups of the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18. This evaluation is based on investigating whether the set objectives of this professional development program designed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research have been achieved. Meanwhile, the study attempts to
shed light on the hindrances that may prevent the achievement of these objectives. The current research is a descriptive study aiming at identifying the newly recruited teachers’ views, attitudes, and suggestions on this in-service training program via utilizing a structured interview to solicit information from the participants.

**Sampling**

During the academic years 2016/17 and 2017/18, the University of El-Oued, Algeria, recruited 32 and 25 new teachers respectively. The participants of the study include fifty (50) novice teachers who participated in the in-service teacher training program during the academic year 2016/17 and 2017/18. The number of participants is divided equally between both academic years, with twenty-five (25) instructors in each. The participants were selected randomly as using random sampling would be much easier, more convenient, and give similar results especially when the study was conducted with different teachers in the same program. However, the researcher ensured that both sexes were included and all the university faculties were represented. Table 1 gives the details of the sampling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Gathering Tool**

A structured questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool comprising twelve items where the respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with each statement. The statements were divided into three axes. The first axis investigates the respondents’ attitudes towards the in-service training program; the second is devoted to the participants’ views towards the professional development program methodology and content; the third is dedicated to stating the respondents’ suggestions to remedy the current program to make it successful and effective. The participants’ suggestions were represented in terms of recommendations that were given to the Cell of the Pedagogic Accompaniment at the University of El-Oued, Algeria to be inserted in the annual report that would be sent to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The findings of the study of respondents’ attitudes towards the in-service training program (Table 2) demonstrated that most of the newly recruited teachers at the University...
of El-Oued, Algeria expressed positive views and attitudes toward the contributions of the in-service training program to their teaching profession. All the respondents (100%), agreed that in-service teacher education for novice teachers is a necessity as it has positive effects on their professional development in terms of renewing and adapting their knowledge and skills in the profession. Similarly, a great proportion of the informants (94%) believed that this type of professional development program enhances newly recruited teachers’ professionalism. Nearly half of the participants asserted that the poor content of the professional development program may lead to teachers’ dissatisfaction.

Table 2
Teachers’ attitudes, views, and suggestions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 1: The respondents’ attitudes towards the in-service program:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Novice teachers need in-service teacher training to renew and adapt their knowledge and skills in the profession.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The in-service training program enhances newly recruited teachers’ professionalism.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– In-service teacher education can be a kind of distraction to novice teachers due to its poor content.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The in-service teacher training program motivates newly recruited teachers to adapt themselves to different teaching situations and contexts.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 2: Teachers’ views on the in-service training program methodology and content:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– There are mismatches between the in-service training program content and novice teachers’ professional needs.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Implementing a unified in-service teacher education program at all Algerian higher education institutions may hinder the program objectives’ achievement.</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research should be flexible by allowing each university to design its in-service training program under its supervision.</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The in-service training program should be based on the newly recruited teachers’ professional needs and the educational institution’s wants.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Axis 3: The respondents’ suggestions for remedying the program:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education should take up much space in any professional development program.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Developing research skills should go hand in hand with equipping novice teachers with knowledge associated with teaching at the university.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The in-service training program for newly recruited teachers should be extended to the life-long profession of instructors.</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– The in-service teacher education program should take the form of workshops based on faculty division where each faculty’s teachers have their specialized workshops.</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When examining the newly recruited teachers’ views on the in-service training, 56% of the study’s entire population said that novice teachers’ professional needs were not taken into consideration in designing the current professional development program (Table 2). In the same vein, about 48% of the participants stressed that implementing a unified official in-service training program for all novice teachers at all Algerian higher education institutions is not the right decision as it may make the program objectives unachievable. The alternative, according to 52% of them is allowing each university to design its in-service training that satisfies both novice teachers and the educational institution’s needs.

The last part of the teachers’ questionnaire was exclusively intended to provide Algerian education policymakers with suggestions and recommendations to modify and adapt the current teacher in-service training program to satisfy novice teachers’ professional needs and educational institutions’ expectations. In this respect, 88% of the targeted population expressed their desire to acquire ICTs literacy in the field of education through an in-service training program that gives much attention and importance to this fundamental issue (Table 2). Likewise, 86% of the newly recruited teachers agreed that subjects centered around developing research skills should be incorporated in any modification targeting the current in-service training program. In the context of examining respondents’ responses, 74% suggested the extension of the program to more than one academic year to ascertain its effectiveness while 78% recommended specialized workshops for each faculty as there are differences in novice teachers’ academic disciplines.

**Recommendations and Pedagogical Implications**

The study concludes with recommendations based on the participants’ views on remediying the existing teacher in-service training program. Besides the results of this research, recommendations are provided based on relevant research results regarding this topic. These suggestions should be given to the Cell of Pedagogic Accompaniment for the newly recruited teachers at the University of El-Oued, Algeria, and through it to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, at the highest level. These recommendations include:

– The in-service teacher training program is central and universities are using this standard curriculum. This centralized program prevents designing training content adapted to the needs of newly recruited teachers and particular localities. Thus, it is recommended that the current official centralized training program should be subjected to serial adaptations and modifications based on the professionals’ needs and expectations. Meanwhile, the specificity of each higher educational institution and the academic discipline of each newly recruited teacher should also be taken into account.

– The in-service training program should focus on job-related tasks that are real, practical, oriented, and relevant to the participants (Dar & Gupta, 2021; Tuncel & Cobanoglu, 2018).

– The delivery of the training content should not deny the necessity of incorporating developing ICTs and research skills on the part of novice teachers in any reforms targeting the current in-service professional development program. Likewise, the content should be delivered in the form of specialized workshops tailored to each faculty.
- Trainers should be selected deliberately from experienced, knowledgeable, and specialized teachers, and the nomination of trainers should be left to the deans of the university’s different faculties.

- Time organization of the training should be effectively planned and active participation of novice teachers in the training process should be enhanced and emphasized (Tuncel & Cobanoglu, 2018).

- Education of teachers should consider newly-recruited teachers as autonomous professionals, reflective practitioners and researchers. In this context, in-service education would not be reduced to just attending the program.

The research results and above mentioned recommendations are in line with modern theoretical understandings of the teaching profession (autonomy, reflectivity) and with European education policy regarding in-service teacher education (European Commission & European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2021).

**Conclusion**

The Algerian government spends enormous amounts of time and money on in-service professional development. In the framework of this study, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research attempted to provide effective in-service training for the newly recruited teachers in each academic year starting from the academic year 2016/17, aiming at equipping novice teachers with the necessary new professional skills and knowledge to adapt to the new professional context.

However, a considerable representing sample of novice teachers perceived the ineffectiveness of the current in-service training program as their academic and professional needs were not taken into consideration in designing the program content. Hence, the planning process should be carefully and systematically carried out to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of the in-service training. An important starting point in planning and conducting in-service teacher programs should be participants’ needs which have been previously carefully analyzed.

This research work did not deny the importance and necessity of in-service teacher professional development, particularly for novice teachers. However, participants’ views and suggestions should not be ignored by professional development program designers and education policymakers.

**Literature**


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Program stručnog usavršavanja za novozaposlene nastavnike u visokoškolskom obrazovanju: kritička analiza slučaja Alžira

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Ključne reči: program obuke na radnom mestu, novoregrutovani nastavnici, razvoj profesionalnih veština nastavnika, visokoškolsko obrazovanje.

Apstrakt