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# Training and Retraining: A case of TVET Teachers in Malaysia

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## Abstract

Malaysia is a fast-developing country that needs skilled workforce to support its industrial growth. To meet this needs, it has established many training centers. There are around 194 technical-vocational schools in the country. They provide training for secondary school students. The TVET in Malaysia started with the implementation of the Razak Report 1956 and the Education Ordinance 1957. Other reports and education memorandums were also issued to support the TVET in the country. Although the theoretical debate on curriculum continues, it has been generally agreed that it should be seen as a plan for instruction, which should include a set of goals and objectives, and a plan for teaching. It consists of a statement of aims and objectives of content in terms of theoretical knowledge, practical skills to be required, attitude towards work and necessary support materials to be used in its presentation. Improvement of the curriculum is regarded as a core component of TVET. It is the goal of teachers to improve their skills and knowledge in order to produce good quality TVET. Many of teaching staff who were employed possessed necessary technical skills but non had more opportunity to undertake professional training. This shortage mainly affected technical education teachers. Most teachers are hired directly after they graduate from university or college. They do not have industrial experience. Many experienced and qualified individuals are not willing to be teachers due to the unattractive salary scheme. This paper aims to analyze the various issues affecting the TVET teachers in Malaysia. This process involves developing a curriculum, designing a program, and working with school leaders. It is usually carried out in collaboration with other organizations. Retraining is a process that involves acquiring a new skill or upgrading an existing one. The performance of teacher in TVET is important to make the Technical School in Malaysia is the selected school for parents to send their children and choose the TVET field as a career path. This paper aims to discuss the various factors that affect the quality of teaching in TVET and how these can be improved. It also explores the various strategies that can be utilized to overcome these issues.

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**Keywords: training, retraining, TVET**

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## Introduction

Schools offer teachers a great deal more than just the task of preparing students for work. The attention they receive is high, and the debates about their quality have produced numerous policy decisions (Dorothy and Jurgen, 1998). Improvement of

teacher quality is not an easy task. In Malaysia, many universities and teacher training institutions have been established.

In 1990, some universities and teacher's training institutions started offering specialized training courses designed to meet the vocational school needs of TVET teachers (Richard and Kenneth, 2002). Some universities in Malaysia also offer the courses that cater to the needs of technical teachers. All of the graduates of these schools have the necessary skills and credentials to teach in the schools in Malaysia.

This paper aims to determine if the training that teachers received in Malaysia will improve their TVET performance in the local school system. It also explores the factors that should be considered when developing a curriculum. For teachers with more than five years of teaching experience, the need for retraining is very significant. In many developing countries, this is a difficult choice to make (The Australian Centre for Organizational, Vocational and Adult Learning, 2003).

In the human capital framework, general education creates 'general human capital' and vocational and technical education 'specific human capital' (Becker, 1964). The former is portable and can be carried out anywhere, while the latter can be commonly utilized for a given job and can provide a more flexible work environment. The former can also make the worker more productive by imparting job-related skills. Both general and vocational education are very important to a country's economy and society.

### **Teacher Training in TVETT**

TVET teacher training can be defined as the process of developing knowledge and skills that will be useful in the immediate future or in the very near future. Training is concerned with the development of knowledge and skills to be used immediately or in the very near future and deals with developing people who already have or who are just about to enter a job (Micheal and Diane, 2008).

Vocational education and training is a learning activity that contributes to the successful economic performance of individuals and communities (Carter and Gribble, 1994). It is different from general education and training systems. In Malaysia, there are many universities and teacher training institutions that provide training for teachers. Some of these are the Technical Teacher's Training College and the University of Malayasia. Various courses are also offered in different industries such as construction, electrical and electronics, and automotive.

Within the training duration, they should attend industrial training for 6 months to have knowledge in their fields. The strength of this experience or we can call situated learning in a particular setting such as the workplace is that learning occurs where the problems to be solved are real or live (Chris, 2002). They were located in selected industries and will supervise by the person in charge there. During their training, lecturers will make sure that trainees follow the rules and regulations of the industry. This ensures that they will be prepared when they enter the teaching profession.

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teachers in TVET. This is mainly due to the government's policy to improve the teaching profession. Currently, many universities are offering programs in TVET to prepare teachers. They will then become teachers in technical & vocational schools. They will continue teaching in technical & vocational schools after they finish their studies.

Teachers can improve their skills by training at a university or through a training college. Also, by studying at a university, they can get hands-on experience with scientific equipment. Teachers are trained to improve their skills and academic content in order to make TVET programs more attractive for parents (National Centre for Vocational Research, 2006). What all the teachers needs in retraining which can improve their quality, curriculum content, approach of teaching & learning to make TVET is the main choice of parents to send their children to technical & vocational schools in Malaysia.

## **Developing Curriculum for Training**

The word curriculum refers to the educational path that a student or a trainee follows in order to acquire knowledge or skills. It is a complex and comprehensive set of documents that explains the various aspects of learning. In today's world, curriculum development is focused on the learner instead of the content of learning. This difference can be seen in the way it is conceptualized and taught. A curriculum in contrast provides information on the following aspects of learning: At whom is the educational process aimed? What goals and qualifications are to be achieved? What contents are to be learned? What teaching methods and aids are to be used? How is the result to be tested?

The effectiveness of a training system depends on its curriculum. It must be designed to provide the necessary skills and knowledge to enable employers to hire the right people. This curriculum can help students develop the necessary skills to cope with the various challenges that they might encounter in life. This curriculum helps people transfer their skills to another job or area of work without the need for entry requirements.

## **Retraining TVET Teachers**

Retraining refers to the process of acquiring or upgrading a particular skill. This can be done by accelerating the learning process or by joining other training centers. The performance of teachers in Technical School in Malaysia is very important to parents (Rojewski, 2002). This is why many parents send their kids to this school. Teachers should regularly attend retraining to improve their skills and knowledge so they can provide a better and more effective teaching style.

The need for retraining of TVET teachers in Malaysia started after the new assessment system for vocational students was introduced in 2006. The new approach of assessment for vocational students is competency-based education and modular system was implemented. Vocational education is a vital part of a student's

education that prepares them for a job market and provides them with clear career paths. The challenges of this situation are (Yusof Harun, 2008) ; retraining of teachers to enable them to teach any vocational subjects, getting industries to be mentors to enable the department to train students who are suitably skilled for the work place, developing multi-skill students and gaining international accreditation for the courses offered. This paper aims to analyze the elements of retraining that TVET teachers need to consider in their programs.

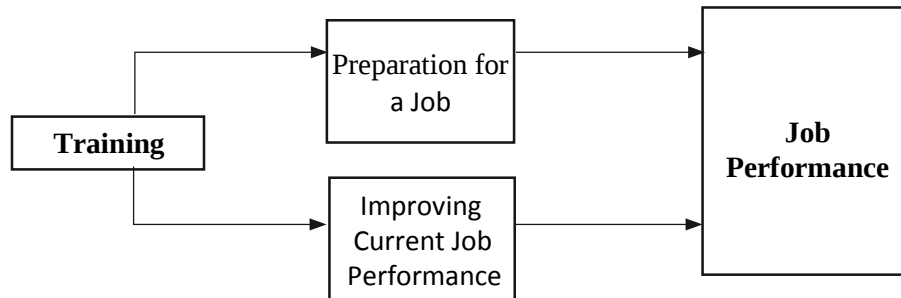


Fig. 1: Retraining need

### Program Design for Retraining

The program should focus on the development of an adult learning characteristic. This concept refers to the preparation of individuals for various activities related to learning. This program will help teachers develop lifelong learning skills by allowing them to adapt their learning experience to suit their careers' needs. In designing a training program, the objective is to demonstrate the skills and knowledge that the participant has acquired. This is done by proving the competencies identified in the training program. Competency is a process that can be obtained by individuals through the proper instruction and guidance. The need analysis should include a job or skills analysis to develop a training course for teachers. This analysis will allow identifying what is required of individuals performing.

Department of Technical Education Malaysia Ministry of Education is planning to re-train TVET teachers to meet the requirements of new environment. These

programs help teachers acquire the necessary competencies to be recognized by their respective training agencies. This program aims to provide international recognition for the skills of teachers and the training they provide. It will also involve the Skills Development Department of Malaysia. It will comprise accreditation of teacher's skills by Skills Development Department and international recognition in the implementation of competency-based education and training by international agencies.

Through the corporation between industries, teachers will acquire latest knowledge and skills. This special program aims to expose participants to the real world work environment, develop effective workshop management skills, and improve teamwork. These factors will contribute to the continuous learning process of teachers and students. They will also help them keep up with the latest trends in the industry.

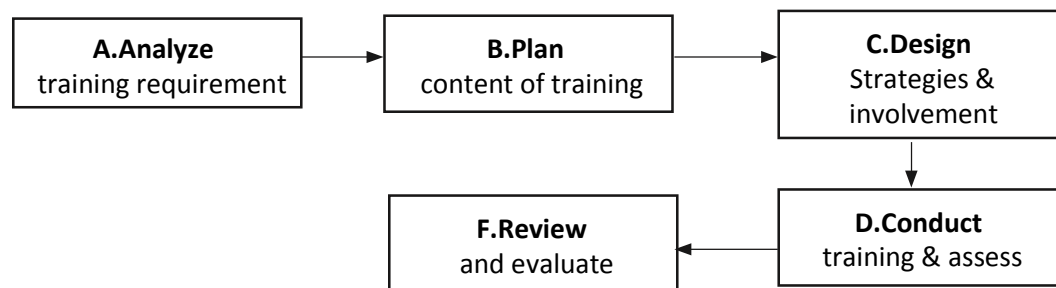


Fig. 2: Analysis Phase

### Methods of Learning and Materials

Changing pedagogy is an integral part of teaching and learning. It can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Although many people still use the traditional method of teaching, it is no longer necessary for them to be exposed to the latest trends in teaching. Instead, they can use various teaching methods and materials to improve their skills. The various methods of vocational education can

be utilized. These include project-based learning, blended learning, and problem based learning (Asian Development Bank, 2004). Students can use of various sources of materials besides the text books.

Problem-based learning can help students improve their problem-solving skills (Galgher, Resenthal & Stephen, 2004). The process of solving problems encourages students working together; learn critical thing skills and they will become self-directed learners.

Work-based learning is an approach that focuses on developing skills in an industrial work environment. Action learning is a method that can be used to prepare students for work-based training (Ashton and Johnny, 2002). This is different from traditional classroom training. Teachers should be able to know how to implement this method to prepare students in work-based experience. The skills and knowledge of the method are used to describe the essential elements of an occupation.

Project-based learning is a type of learning that uses the experience and knowledge of students to solve a real work problem. It helps students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Carter and Gribble, 1994). Teachers will give students the task integrate previous learning to using their experience in ‘real’ workplace and try to solve the ‘real’ work problem. It will help students more expose to real world of work and can be understood as the kind of thing that real workers do.

Technology has given us many new ways to learn. There are many new ways to learn, such as online, teleconferencing, computer assisted learning, and web-based distance learning. Blended learning has been around for a while, and although it is still not widely used, it is starting to gain popularity in the education industry.

## Involvement of Stakeholders

For the level of education to reach higher level, the participation of other stakeholder is needed. Parents and industries should know their role to more upgrading the vocational schools. The program for teachers training with industries attachment will contribute the new standard of TVET teachers. The industries will be mentors to enable the department to train students who are suitable skill for work place. This program will help the department improve the teaching standards of teachers by having them work with industries. With the right training and experience, teachers can be highly skilled in teaching vocational courses in schools (Daniel, 2003). This course aims to develop the theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary to enable teachers to effectively implement the vocational curriculum in their classrooms.

## Conclusion

The need for training and retraining of TVET teachers is very important in order to develop innovative and effective teachers. Implement of a coherent but flexible structure of teacher training programs on different level based on the high standard of teachers. Malaysia should have a new national TVETT teacher-training standards that will help identify and evaluate teachers who have passed a specific teacher-training program as an element of lifelong professional development. These standards should be developed in order to improve the training system for teachers. It should also be coordinated with the Skills Development Department to establish programs that can help improve the skills of teachers.

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