An Assessment of the Project for Cooperation between Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University and Maha Sarakham Municipality by using the 360 Degree Assessment Model

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Abstract: The cooperative agreement between The Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University and The Municipality of Maha Sarakham City is to provide education development to the community. Various educational methods and practices have been applied to support the Municipality of Maha Sarakham city's overhaul of responsibilities towards the City's development in Social and Economic policies. The University will provide academic experts, lecturers, development programs and training seminars, while the Municipality will provide funding for the training projects. The 360° evaluation method is compared to as a new wave of Assessment method that managers can trust and depend upon. Managers can be reassured that the evaluation is capable to assess current trends and modern policies. Other benefits include a justified appraisal that is valuable and trustworthy to the organization. This method of evaluation has been applied to assess the impact and success of cooperative programs between the 2 institutions in the past. Returned results indicate that all participants all favor the topics of Context, End Results, Input, Feedback and Training Processes. But that the projects still lacked follow ups. Committee members should follow up by re-evaluating the progress of the teachers. The Faculty of Education should determine that regular follow ups be performed once or twice a month after training. Questionnaires for each session and topic should include the opinions of trainees and that more time be allocated for discussion. And that workshops and short session training programs are preferred because it would be more effective.

Key words: 360° assessment model, Maha Sarakham University, municipality of Maha Sarakham, cooperative project, teachers development

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate purpose of developing education is human development. This is based on the principle that humans have the capacity to learn and develop throughout their entire life.

Education is an important element in the development of Individuals, Society and Country. Education is a process that enables humans to live a quality life and live with society in peace. They will be able to use the gained knowledge to appropriately support the development of the country and react, adapt to modern situations.

Evaluating Projects is a procedure of gathering and analyzing the compositions of the entire project by using various methods of measurement. The purpose of evaluating is to provide decision making information to decide if the project is to be continued or not. Systematic evaluations can provide information in regards to the effectiveness of the project, the benefits and disadvantage of each process, the purpose of each

project, the planning and the end results which will indicate if the project succeeded in its purpose (Somboon, 1998).

The 360° assessment model is a new wave of evaluation that managers can trust and depend upon. Managers can be reassured that the evaluation is capable of evaluation of current trends and modern circumstances. Other benefits include a justified appraisal system that is valuable and trustworthy to the organization. This method of evaluation is better than previous methods in the past because everyone within the organization acknowledges their participation in the process which will lower prejudice towards appraisals and end results (Manoon, 1999).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research focused on the results gathered from administrators, committee members, teachers and educational officials within the Municipality of Maha

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Sarakham City and the participation of officials from 7 Municipality schools in the Province of Maha Sarakham. The 360° assessment model was used to evaluate cooperative projects between The Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University and Maha Sarakham Municipalty in which 5 main topics were evaluated which included Context, End Results, Input, Feedback and Training Processes. Individuals involved in the research included 1 director from the Educational Division, 3 instructors, 7 school directors and 177 teachers.

Participants: Most of the participants in this research, were females, which made up 72.9% of 188 participants. All participants were between 36-55 years of age and 70.1% had more than 16 years of teaching experience.

Instructors and committee members: About 53.3% of committee members were female and the most were less than 40 years of age. They were experts in the educational field and generally performed their duties by giving lectures and as an evaluator. Most of the instructors participate in 1-2 regular seminars and training programs per month. They are also, engaged in writing educational texts, books and research studies. Literary works include Class Room Research Studies and Project planning. Other activities and seminars that they are engaged in include topics in Basic Thai language, The Techniques of Teaching Mathematics and the Assessment of Using Thai Language, Learning Integration, Developing Judgment and thought processes, Guaranteeing Quality Development within schools, The Development of Teacher's Academic Standings and Internal Research Studies in classrooms.

Data collection: Interviews and survey questionnaires were the tools of choice for data collection. Statistic involved in the research included Percentages, Average Indexes, Standard Deviation and Descriptive Analysis to comprehend the final data.

RESULTS

The cooperative agreement between The Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University and The Municipality of Maha Sarakham City is to provide education and local development to the community. Numerous educational programs and practices have been successfully applied to support the Municipality of Maha Sarakham city's overhaul of responsibilities and towards the City's ongoing development of Economy, Society, Politics, Education and Human Development of all citizens

and especially, the Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Arts and Heritage. The University provides support in the form of academic experts, lecturers, development programs and training seminars. Training programs and various evaluation or assessment practices were applied that best met the requirements of the participants. The Municipality will provide funding for the training projects and training location if required. This research is aimed to examine various training projects that were conducted during the fiscal budget of 2005-2007 by using the 360° assessment model.

Example of cooperative projects between the faculty of education of maha sarakham university and the municipality of maha sarakham city
Exchanging knowledge of development teams of schools in the municipality of maha sarakham city: The purpose of the project was to train teachers within the Municipality to develop and understand what is needed to develop quality education. The seminar proceedings were executed by lectures from experts in the field of quality educational development.

The re-evaluatioin of development teams in schools in the municipality of maha sarakham city: The purpose of the seminar was to analyze the change and impact after the 1st seminar (The Exchanging Knowledge of Development Teams of Schools in the Municpality of Mahasarakham city). End results were gathered and documented to assess the quality of schools within the Municipality and the data was applied to develop different areas of the schools. The training program was carried out by lectures from experts and followed by team presentations from each of the schools.

The development and proceeds of quality municipality school systems in the city of maha sarakham: Lectures were given by experts on understanding the effective procedures to develop quality school systems. Data collected during the seminar would be used for future studies and analysis.

Seminar and workshop to develop quality management of learning systems for teachers of schools in the municipality of maha sarakham city: The purpose of the training was to train teachers how to conduct internal research studies in class rooms to develop a more efficient learning process for students and provide a solution to their learning disabilities. The training was carried out by lectures from experts and a workshop where teachers produced a framework of their research for their class and presented their project to others.

The workshop for management of integrating school activities and internal class room research studies for schools of the municipality of maha sarakham city: The purpose of the seminar was to train teachers to effectively integrate internal classroom research studies into school activities and effective procedures in conducting research studies.

Re-assessment of development teams of schools of the municipality of maha sarakham city: The purpose of the project was to re-evaluate past training programs and their objectives. The data collected would be later used to evaluate the quality of the schools. and measure the efficiency and effectiveness of each individual school. Lectures by experts were first given followed by detailed presentation from the development teams of each school.

Assessment model 360°: The 360° Assessment Model is evaluating feedback information of precedent daily activities. Each individual will receive feedback from many sources such as from friends, family, co-workers and from independent evaluators. The provided feedback will be both beneficial and harmful. They will also be valuable and dangerous and they will also praise and ridicule (Wilson, 1997). The 360° Assessment Model is a full circle evaluation system that involves self evaluation and feedback appraisals from others. The assessment involves 7 procedures (Kate, 2000).

Accepting the truth: Participants must accept and believe that the 360° assessment model can provide effective and efficient methods to self improvement. The process and appraisals received will guide the individual to find solutions to problem solving and personal development. The assessment process will indicate what needs to be improved because the feedback from other participants is direct, unmodified and no screening beforehand.

Self evaluation: The purpose of the assessment must be clearly defined and the topics, being evaluated must be precisely indicated. Each of the topics must also justify the benefits, disadvantages and actions that require improvements. Examples of topics to evaluate include Leadership Qualities, Customer Oriented, Problem Solving Skills, Innovative Ideas and Actions, Creativity and Techniques.

Planning interviews: Planning should be carefully laid out by determining who will provide the feedback information such as managers, co-workers and yourself.

Preparing feedback information: Organizers should instruct participants to prepare their emotions, suppress their temper and be calm. Instructors should carefully prepare participants to sincerely accept the feedback from others no matter what the results may be.

Interviewing: Important procedures to follow include, Participants must not get angry and argue with offending appraisals, Participants should analyze the feedback carefully and thoroughly, Participants should openly ask for advice and recommendations to improve themselves, Participants must be sincere and follow the recommendations and action plans for improvement after the appraisals.

Analyzing feedback: Sometimes feedbacks will have many meanings or can be interpreted more than one way. Participants must define and list out all the possible meanings of the feedbacks. Then solutions to improve upon each of the items must be determined and answered.

Action plan: A clear action plan must be generated and followed to improve upon the results of the appraisals.

DISCUSSION

The 360° assessment model was applied to evaluate the cooperative projects between the Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University and The Municipality of Maha Sarakham City. The main topics of the evaluation included context, input, end results, feedback and evaluation processes. The teachers were unanimously in agreement about the overall evaluation topics and that the topics selected met requirements. The topics which received the most approval rating, organized from top to bottom were the end results, input, feedback and training processes. The management committee also agreed that the topics met expectations but had different approval ratings of the topics. They mostly gave the context topic the highest priority and importance.

Context: Context Sub-Topics included Support human development according to individual potential, Conform with Municipality Policies, Pre-study of the demands and pre-requisites of the schools before defining training activities. Clear action plan, The existence of a central office to coordinate projects with well defined areas, The project can fulfill the requirements of educational development in rural communities, The project is of value to the schools in the community, the projects supports local campuses to have a role in the development of education.

All committee members agreed that all context topics were adequate and justified. And give the highest importance to the project supports local campuses to have a role in the development of education, conform to municipality policies and the existence of a central office to coordinate projects.

Input: Sub-Topics included 12 items. The training format is adequate and conforms with the level of knowledge and capability of the teachers, The training format is adequate to meet development requirements, The training conforms to the Municipality's Human resource development policy, Training activities emphasize the development of Municipality Officials, Adequate communication and audio visual equipment, Adequate training period, Participants have adequate basic knowledge of the training topics, Participant's enthusiasm to participate in the training activities, Follow ups are in accordance with the cooperative projects, The numbers of participants are adequate in proportions to the training activities, Instructors have sufficient knowledge and experience according to the training program. Training topics meet the requirements and interest of the participants.

Teachers give the most importance to Training activities emphasize the development of municipality officials, instructors have sufficient knowledge and experience according to the training program and the training format is adequate and conforms with the level of knowledge and capability of the teachers.

Training process: Training Processes include good public relations and Promotion of the training project, training activities are clearly defined, 3. Instructors arrange tests before training to evaluate the teacher's basics, time allocated for theory and hands on activities are adequate, the training proceedings are executed according to, the schedule, instructors follow up and revise the training contents, instructors provide opportunities for questionnaires, Committee members are sincere in arranging the activities, the training format emphasizes on analysis and synthesis to develop a clear understanding and diversified evaluation methods such as exams and debates.

Teachers gave the most importance to committee members are sincere in arranging the activities, The training proceedings are executed according to schedule and The training format emphasis on analysis and synthesis. Committee members also agree on all of the training processes but give higher importance to Instructors providing adequate time for questioning, Follow up by instructors and Promotion of the training Project.

End results: Evaluation topics include Teachers and participants acquired supplementary knowledge and experience from training, participants are confidant in organizing classes after the training, teachers gained knowledge and experience in creating internal classroom research studies. Teachers are able to apply to required

knowledge from training towards developing their teaching methods, The training helped developed knowledge in conduction internal classroom research studies and were capable of creating diverse teaching programs, training activities provided knowledge and experience that can be directly applied to their job responsibility, the training increased the teachers capability to create more diverse teaching courses, the training provided confidence in the participants occupation, participants achieved increased understanding of the problems of their teaching courses and methods, the training course provide a chance to exchange experience and knowledge among participants, the Training provided teachers to develop a systematic thinking process that helped resolve the learning disabilities of their students, the teachers were able to convey the gained knowledge to others, the teachers are pleased at the format of training, the teachers are more confidant in applying the gained knowledge to implement in classrooms with efficiency and the gained knowledge can be used as basics to participate in other activities.

The teachers viewed all topics at high levels and gave the highest importance to applying the knowledge in developing their teaching methods, The teachers were more confidant in applying the knowledge in classrooms with efficiency and the teachers capability to create more teaching courses. The committee members also agreed on all of the topics but gave importance to The exchange of experience and knowledge among teachers, Teachers acquired knowledge in organizing classes and The training activities provided knowledge that can directly be applied to their job responsibilities.

Feedback: Topics included participants feel that they are respected within their schools and office, participants received progress in their occupation, learning activities and courses are more efficient and effective, teacher's academic publications are appreciated, teachers can create internal class room studies to help the development of the students, teachers are able to present their development achievements.

All of the topics were given good reviews by teachers in which they choose the most important were Teachers are able to present their development achievements, Learning activities and courses are more efficient and effective and Feelings of respect within their schools and office. Committee members viewed most important were Participants received progress in their occupation, Learning activities and courses are more efficient and effective and Teachers are able to present their achievements.

CONCLUSION

The 360° assessment model is a format of evaluation that involves the different analysis of information in the past from each individual evaluator. The information will include the opinions and appraisals of co workers, friends, leaders and subordinates. The process involves upward and downward appraisals. This type of evaluation can provide efficient feedback from all involved parties in every aspect. This evaluation method is also known as Multiple Source Appraisals. The method is a useful tool to evaluate the responsibilities of the individual that is based on their job requirements and actual daily activities. The important methodology of the process is that every individual within the organization affects one another which is healthier than appraisals by a single manager (Weerawat, 1997). Many institutions and large organizations mainly use 360° assessment model because of its fairness and just appraisals. The most important improvement received from feedbacks is the improvement of Information systems within organizations. Other benefits and purpose of using the model include management processes and cost cutting measures (Edwards, 1996).

Teachers, officials and project committee members viewed that the cooperative project succeeded the main objective and the evaluation was satisfactory in regards to context, input, process, feedback and end results. Follow ups were adequate but could be improved. There should be more supervision of follow up activities. Discussion periods should be expanded to give more time for questioning and more time for conclusions on each individual issue. More time will provide additional clarity to develop the learning and teaching capabilities for teachers within their organizations.

Educational division directors, educational supervisors and school administrators viewed the project for cooperation was appropriate and that teachers and students had better development in organization learning and teaching in accord with the teachers needs for supplementary knowledge. Teaching behaviors were positive and the teachers enthusiastic with the impact on schools due to the methods of learning, tracking and evaluation process by conducting internal class room research studies. Teachers eagerly participated in the studies and produced frameworks and action plans which gave students a better chance to develop their learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The cooperative project between The Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University and The Municipality of Maha Sarakham city should be continued because of the positive impact in the development and the increased efficiency of teachers and students. Involved party's should continue to organize these projects so that training programs are continuous and in a formal matter. The cooperation of participants and management from all organizations involved will make it more expedient.

The cooperative project still lacked follow ups. Committee members should follow up by re- evaluating the progress of the teachers and trainees. The Faculty of Education of Maha Sarakham University should determine that regular follow ups be performed once or twice a month after training. Each training section or project should be performed by including questionnaires and surveys to receive the opinions of the trainees and teachers in regards to what kind of training they prefer. Workshops and short session training programs are examples of what teachers prefer because it would be more effective in their view.

Research should be extended to the study of the cooperative projects between the 2 institutions on an empirical basis and to study the side effects and influence it has on trainees.

Further research should be supported to study the training format of professionals in the education field and the factors that influence the change of educational institutions in the Municipality of Maha Sarakham City.

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